

From the Chair

The value of diversity in the profession

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is committed to ensuring that high quality opportunities are available to obtain training to become a psychologist. The 4+2 internship is an important training route. The Board is grateful for the feedback on the 4+2 internship it received in response to the call for submissions in the last newsletter. The review of the 4+2 guidelines is one of a number of priorities of the Board in 2012. The Board aims to streamline the process and reduce the burden on supervisors and interns. Similarly, the Board is developing the 5+1 internship guidelines as there are increasing numbers of universities offering fifth year programs. The future National Psychology Examination for provisionally registered psychologists in their sixth year is one of the other ways that the Board is able to reduce the burden of the internship, through setting a single national standard whilst recognising the diversity of internship placements and supervisory arrangements. Similarly, supporting supervisors by providing high quality training options that recognise their contribution to the profession is another priority. One of the new features of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) is that accurate statistics on the psychology workforce in Australia are available for the first time (www.psychologyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx). The

February data shows there are 28,632 psychologists, of whom 7,550 (26%) hold an area of practice endorsement. A closer view of the statistics reveals an uneven distribution of psychologists with an endorsed area of practice across the country, with some areas of practice having no practitioners in some states or territories. Access to psychologists with specific skills should be available across Australia, as this is in the public interest. The Board is engaging with the accreditation agency, heads of university programs, Health Workforce Australia and professional societies to ensure that all areas of psychology practice remain viable in the future.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair, Psychology Board of
Australia

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Psychology supervisor list now available online

The Board has published a supervisor list on its website, which is searchable by location and supervision category.

The searchable list is accessible from the Supervision page under the *Registration* tab on the [Board's website](#). The list includes the name and principal place of practice of supervisors which is already held on the [National Register of Practitioners](#). The list also includes additional information about the types of supervision a psychologist is eligible to provide and, where consent has been given by the psychologist, their contact email address.

The list of approved supervisors is accessible by practitioners and the general public and is particularly useful for fourth year psychology students and provisional psychologists seeking a supervisor for the 4+2 program, and final year Master and Doctorate students and general psychologists seeking a supervisor for the registrar program leading to area of practice endorsement.

The searchable list includes over 5,200 psychologists, including those who were approved as supervisors by a state or territory board prior to commencement of the National Scheme and were automatically recognised as approved supervisors by the National Board.

It also includes psychologists who have applied and been approved as a supervisor by the National Board after 1 July 2010.

Enquires about the list of Board-approved supervisors can be sent to psychologysupervisor@ahpra.gov.au. Approved supervisors who wish to update their information, add further supervision types, or be removed from the list can email [this address](#) or contact their [local state office](#) directly.

For further information, including frequently asked questions, please go to the Supervision page under the Registration tab on the [Board website](#).

Board events

The Board held the first forums of 2012 in Tasmania in February where registrants learnt about supervision and supervisor recognition, the National Psychology Examination, specialist recognition, provisional registration including 4+2 and 5+1 pathways, and continuing professional development. The presentation slides from the Tasmanian forum are available on the [Board's website](#).

Registration renewals report

Thank you to registrants for renewing their registration on time.

By the end of the late period 96% of psychologists had renewed their registration. An additional 1% submitted then withdrew their application for renewal and a total of 3% of psychologists did not renew their registration. A total of 25,356 psychologists with general registration have renewed on the register.

Reasons for withdrawing a renewal application or not renewing at all include retirement, moving overseas or family leave.

Please ensure your contact details are up to date to receive important information from the Board, including registration reminders.

Social media and the registered psychologist

Many psychologists use electronic media on a daily basis in both their private and professional lives. However, engaging with social media such as Facebook and Twitter without careful thought can have potential negative legal and ethical consequences for practitioners. For example, issues of confidentiality, privacy and therapeutic boundaries

that are a particular feature of psychology practice can be threatened in various ways by social media use.

It is important that psychologists are familiar with the risks and know what steps to take to avoid them.

AHPRA and the National Boards are currently developing a social media policy to help guide practitioners on the acceptable engagement in social media, from a registration perspective. This will be published in coming months.

In the meantime, practitioners can consult the Australian Psychological Society's *Guidelines for providing psychological services and products using the internet and telecommunications technologies* or the joint document of the Australian Medical Association and its partners' *Social media and the medical profession: A guide to online professionalism for medical practitioners and medical students*. The latter useful document is freely available at <http://ama.com.au/socialmedia>.

Regional board chair profile



Barry J Fallon (BA(Hons), B.D., M.A, PhD) is a Registered Psychologist with an endorsement in Organisational Psychology. He is current Chair of the ACT/Tasmanian/Victorian Regional Board and was a member of the Psychologists Registration Board

of Victoria for six years. Barry is also a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society of which he served as President (1995/6 – 1996/7). He has over 30 years experience of applied psychological research and tertiary teaching following his doctoral studies. He was the Foundation Professor of Psychology at the Australian Catholic University. He is an Honorary Professor at Deakin University and a Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Previously he was a member of staff in the Psychology Department at the University of Melbourne where he was the convenor of the Post Graduate Program in Organisational and Industrial Psychology.

Barry has experience in a wide range of applied psychological research that has been conducted at the Federal, State, and local levels. This experience has included the conduct of evaluations at the individual, program delivery level, and at the wider State and Federal levels where policy matters were of concern.

Practitioner audit pilot

A pilot to test practitioners' compliance with mandatory registration standards is now underway. The pilot is being run jointly by AHPRA and one of the Registered Practitioner Boards (Pharmacy), to set up the auditing framework for the use by the other nine currently regulated professions later this year. This includes determining the frequency, size and type of audits required, as well as establishing a methodology and process for reporting findings.

Practitioners will be selected at random for audit, and those being audited will receive an audit notice letter outlining what they are required to do to comply.

The purpose of the audits are to ensure that registered health practitioners are meeting the mandatory registration standards (such as continuing professional development and professional indemnity insurance), and that the public has access to ethical and adequately trained practitioners.

New FAQ's and Fact Sheet on advertising

On 1 February 2012, the Board published an advertising *Fact Sheet and FAQ* on its website (on the FAQ page under the 'Standards and Guideline' tab). These documents should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines for advertising regulated health services*.

The issue of advertising guidelines was covered in the last newsletter. Section 133 of the National Law lists what constitutes unacceptable advertising, including:

- making misleading claims
- offering an inducement such as a gift or discount (unless the relevant terms and conditions are also included) or a time-limited offer
- using testimonials
- creating unreasonable expectations of beneficial treatment, or
- encouraging the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of a service.

Psychologists are encouraged to read these recently released documents to ensure their advertising complies with the guidelines.

The Board is taking a more structured approach to dealing with advertising breaches, as outlined in the Fact Sheet. The Board does not offer advice directly to practitioners about their advertising. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to know and adhere to the Guidelines.

Any concerns about another health practitioner's advertising can be brought to the attention of the closest Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia.

Advertising guidelines and specialist title

In addition to the advertising issues above, psychologists need to ensure compliance with the title protections of the National Law. Psychologists should not use the word 'specialist' in their titles as s.118 of the National Law prohibits the use of the title 'specialist' by any practitioner who is not included on an approved specialist register. There is no approved specialist register for psychology.

However, the National Law also includes a transition provision at s.281 which, despite s.118, allows psychologists who held specialist registration in Western Australia on the day before participation day (18 October 2010) to use the title 'specialist health practitioner' or another title they were previously entitled to use; that is, 'specialist forensic psychologist' for a transition period of three (3) years. A notation appears on the Register of Practitioners at www.ahpra.gov.au for psychologists affected by this transition provision.

Only psychologists with general registration and with an approved area of practice endorsement may use a title that indicates that they hold an endorsement. For example, a psychologist who has been endorsed as qualified to practise in the area of clinical psychology may refer to himself or herself as a 'clinical psychologist'. A person who does not have an endorsement for clinical psychology must not use the title 'clinical psychologist' or any other title that may lead the public to believe that the person holds such an endorsement. This applies to each of the nine areas of practice approved for endorsement. Psychologists should avoid using the word endorsed in their titles (that is, should not use a title such as 'endorsed clinical psychologist'). Inappropriate use of titles may constitute behaviour for which health, conduct or performance action may be taken (maximum penalty \$30,000).

DOHA – Medicare mental health services under the Better Access initiative

On 1 February 2012 the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler MP announced that the Government will be reinstating the additional six allied mental health services available under 'exceptional circumstances' from 1 March 2012, for a limited period up to 31 December 2012. The Department of Health and

Ageing will shortly be distributing a new Fact Sheet and Questions and Answers on this change to all GPs and allied mental health professionals delivering Medicare mental health services under the Better Access initiative. The Fact Sheet and Questions and Answers are available on the Department's website at:
www.health.gov.au/mentalhealth-betteraccess

Department of Health and Ageing – eHealth records

To ensure consumers and health professionals are ready for the launch of the eHealth records program on 1 July 2012, the Department of Health and Ageing have released brochures that explain eHealth records in greater detail and outlines the key benefits an eHealth record will bring. To view the brochures please visit
www.yourhealth.gov.au/ehealth

Have your say: Consultations

Consultation is an important part of the Board's engagement with psychologists and members of the public. The feedback provided is greatly valued, and informs the Board's development of registration standards, codes and guidelines. Current and past consultations are published on the Board's website under the [News](#) tab. Submissions for consultation paper 12 and 13 have now closed. Thank you to all those who provided feedback.

Smaller certificates equal smaller environmental footprint

When renewing your registration in November last year you will have noted that your certificate of registration is now A5 size. The change has been made to halve the amount of paper used for this purpose. The content and style of the certificate remains the same.

Co-regulatory system in New South Wales

On 19 November 2009, the Health Practitioner Regulation Act 2009 ("Act C1") was passed in New South Wales. In effect, this meant the National Law was adopted, except for:

- definitions of health assessment, performance assessment, professional misconduct, unprofessional conduct and unsatisfactory professional performance, and

- mechanisms for dealing with complaints, investigations, health and performance assessments, disciplinary proceedings and mandatory notifications

Bill C2, to establish the infrastructure to manage these matters, was passed on 8 June 2010. The Bill confirms the current co-regulatory framework in New South Wales involving:

- the government funded Health Care Complaints Commission; and
- instead of existing Boards, a Council for each of the 10 professions registered under the National Law; and
- a Tribunal for each profession with a permanent Chair, members appointed as required by the Councils and registry support provided by the staff supporting the Councils

This means that, the NSW State Office of AHPRA and the NSW Regional Board only deal with registration and accreditation matters and not with notifications. The National Law provides that any notification received, in any AHPRA office, which relates to conduct occurring in New South Wales, must be referred immediately to the HCCC or the relevant NSW Council.

This different system is the reason why a rebate for NSW registrants appears on the [Schedule of fees](#). The NSW Health Care Complaints commission is funded by the NSW Government, not by AHPRA. So while registrants in other jurisdictions are required to pay fees that fund the registration, accreditation and notification services provided by AHPRA, NSW registrants fund the registration and accreditation services provided by AHPRA, and complaints services provided under the NSW law but not the NSW Government subsidy to the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission.

