



Communiqué

24 August 2012

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). This communiqué highlights key issues from the 33rd meeting of the Board on 24 August 2012. At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

Agency Management Committee appointments

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council recently announced appointments to the AHPRA Agency Management Committee. All five current members have been re-appointed for various terms, and three new members have been appointed. The appointment terms range from 12 months to three years, allowing for future staggered appointments to balance renewal with experience. All the appointments commence on 3 September 2012. Ministers have issued a Communiqué on the appointments and AHPRA has released a brief media statement, both of which are [published on the AHPRA website](#).

Consultation update

Review of accreditation arrangements for the psychology profession

Under the National Law the accreditation authority appointed by Health Ministers for the psychology profession is the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC). The National Law requires the 10 National Boards that joined the National Scheme in 2010 to review the arrangements for the exercise of the accreditation functions no later than 30 June 2013.

The preliminary consultation process has recently commenced and a public consultation paper will be released and published on the website later in 2012.

Social media policy

The 14 National Boards have developed a joint draft policy on the use of social media by registered health practitioners to clarify the National Boards' expected standards relating to social media use. The recent advent of social media, and its expanding use from a social networking tool to a medium for commercial/business related information sharing and advertising, has prompted the need for clarity. The development of the policy has been supported by requests from health practitioners and professional associations seeking guidance from the National Boards on this issue.

The preliminary consultation process has recently commenced and a public consultation paper will be released and published on the website later in 2012.

Social media issues will also be looked at in the review *Guidelines for Advertising of Regulated Health Services* which is scheduled as part of the major publications review in 2013.

International criminal history checks

A consultation by all 14 National Boards, including the Psychology Board of Australia, on options for refining international criminal history checks used to assess applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia has recently closed. The submissions are now being reviewed and will be published on the website soon.

Health Professions Agreement

In the interests of transparency and accountability, the Psychology Board of Australia and AHPRA have for the first time published the Health Profession Agreement that outlines the services that AHPRA will provide to the Board in 2012/13. Under the National Law, the Board and AHPRA work in partnership to implement the National Scheme, each with specific roles, powers and responsibilities set down in the National Law.

The regulation of the psychology profession is funded entirely by registration fees of psychologists and under the National Law there is no cross-subsidisation between the professions. AHPRA and the Board are responsible for using practitioner's registration fees wisely in regulating the profession in the public interest.

The Health Professions Agreement is available for review on the Board's website at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/About/Health-Practitioner-Agreements.aspx.

Service Charter

THE AHPRA *Service charter* was launched on 6 August 2012. The Charter sets out the values that guide AHPRA, the standards of service the public can expect and the steps that can be taken if these standards are not met.

Hard copies of the *Service charter* will be available from all AHPRA state and territory offices and the report can be found on the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Service-Charter.aspx.

Psychology Board of Australia website

The Board continues to publish important information on its website. Psychologists are encouraged to access the website regularly to keep up to date with guidelines, policies, frequently asked questions (FAQs), fact sheets and registration standards at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

The Board has recently published the June 2012 registration statistics at www.psychologyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx.

Accreditation matters

Under section 49 of the National Law, the National Board requires accreditation reports from the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) before it can approve the accredited programs of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration.

At this meeting the Board approved the APAC accreditation of courses from Flinders University, Monash University, the University of New South Wales, the University of Queensland, and the University of Tasmania.

The updated list of Board-approved courses will be published on the Board's website shortly.

Newsletter

Issue five of the Psychology Board of Australia newsletter – *Connections* - has recently been circulated to all registrants for whom the Board has email addresses. The newsletter is also available on its website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au/News/Newsletters.aspx.

Issue five includes important updates on the Board's key areas of focus for 2012 – supervisor training, the 4+2 and 5+1 internship programs, and the National Psychology Examination. The Board encourages all registrants to read this newsletter, and familiarise themselves with the work of the Board.

Joint meeting with the New Zealand Psychologists Board

On 23 August 2012 the Psychology Board of Australia and the New Zealand Psychologists Board held a joint meeting in Melbourne to exchange ideas, consider joint projects, and discuss matters of mutual interest.

At this meeting the two boards signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which acknowledges and formalises the relationship between the two countries as underpinned by the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement.

The purpose of the MOU is to:

- facilitate mutual recognition of the regulatory environment of Australia and New Zealand
- promote communication and information exchange about psychology regulation standards and structure in Australia and New Zealand
- develop, where possible, a common process and understanding of the psychology standards in Australia and New Zealand with a view to establishing a common set of standards, and
- facilitate and progress the movement of psychologists between Australia and New Zealand.

Stakeholder meetings

Members of the National Board continue to be very active in meeting with local registrants and stakeholders and presenting at public meetings and universities.

The Board and representatives of the Board have recently had ongoing conversations with various universities and students, health and education departments, and at psychology professional society meetings.

Upcoming event:

The New South Wales Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia will be holding a forum at The Rydges Hotel in Albury on 11 September 2012 from 5.30 - 7.00 pm. Psychologists, students, stakeholders and interested parties from both sides of the NSW/Victoria border are invited to attend. The forum will be presented by the NSW Board Chair – Associate Professor Caroline Hunt.

Topics to be covered may include:

- supervision and supervisor recognition
- national psychology examination
- specialist recognition
- provisional registration including 4+2 and 5+1 pathways
- mandatory reporting and notifications
- end of Transition arrangements on 30 June 2013

RSVPs for this event close on 31 August, but late registrations will be taken until COB Monday 3 September 2012. To attend this event please RSVP to psychologyforum@ahpra.gov.au

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
31 August 2012