



Communiqué

14 September 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 34th meeting of the Board on 14 September 2012. At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

Welcome to new members

This month the Board welcomed the four newly appointed members to their first meeting of the Psychology Board of Australia:

- Mary Brennan, community member
- Kathryn Crawley, practitioner member (Northern Territory)
- Trang Thomas, practitioner member (Victoria)
- Joanne Muller, community member

Annual conference

On 15 September 2011 the 14 National Boards and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) held their annual combined meeting.

Attendees of the conference included all National Boards, the Agency Management Committee, AHPRA leadership teams, representatives of state/regional boards, NSW Councils, accreditation authorities, Health Workforce Australia, and regulatory colleagues from New Zealand.

This was the fourth National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) conference, which aimed to take stock of what we have achieved in regulation and accreditation and provide an opportunity to discuss priorities for the work ahead.

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 Board has released a public consultation paper to seek feedback on the existing accreditation arrangements as part of this review. The Board's consultation paper and a report from the accreditation authority are published at: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/News/Current-Consultations.aspx. The consultation document is provided in writable PDF.

Interested persons are invited to provide feedback to the public consultation process by email to accreditationreview@ahpra.gov.au by close of business, **Friday 2 November 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 period has recently concluded and feedback received via this process is being considered. A public consultation paper will be released and published on the Board's website soon.

The 14 National Boards have agreed on a consistent process for conducting public and preliminary consultations. For information on the agreed process for consultation, please see the AHPRA website at www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/AHPRA-Publications.aspx.

Data access and research policy

The Board has considered a draft access and research policy for handling requests for information held on the National register including registration statistics and assistance with contacting registrants for education and research purposes. This policy is being developed by AHPRA on behalf of the National Boards and consultation on the proposed policy will commence in due course.

Guidelines for the 5+1 Internship program

The Board is continuing to work on developing the draft *Guidelines for the 5+1 Internship program*, with a public consultation scheduled for later in 2012.

The Board is also working on a transition plan for those provisional psychologists who wish to commence the 5+1 Internship program prior to the *Guidelines for the 5+1 Internship program* being finalised. Information on transition will be published on the Board's website after the October Board meeting.

First national data on the geographic location of psychologists who have an area of practice endorsement

The Psychology Board of Australia has published the first national data on the geographic location of psychologists who hold one or more area of practice endorsements.

The Board analyses its registration data and produces regular statistical breakdowns about registrants to share with the profession and community. The new registration data includes statistics that are additional to those already published in Board's quarterly registration statistics.

Specifically these data tables include new information about psychologists who hold more than one area of practice endorsement and the geographic location of psychologists with an endorsement. These additional statistics will be reported periodically.

For more information on psychology registration and area of practice endorsements, please see the Board's website: www.psychologyboard.gov.au.

Registration renewal due 30 November 2012 for all psychologists with general or non-practicing registration

The registration renewal cycle for psychologists in Australia with general, limited and non-practising registration is due each year by 30 November. Psychologists with provisional registration renew on the anniversary of their initial registration.

About 26,000 psychologists across Australia are due to renew their registration by 30 November 2012.

The registration renewal period for psychologists with a registration expiry date of 30 November 2012 is about to open. Visit the website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au/ to renew your registration online.

The Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) recognise the importance of a smooth renewal process. AHPRA will soon begin an intensive communication campaign to support the renewal process, including sending reminder emails and hard copy letters to practitioners who do not respond to the email prompts or for whom AHPRA does not hold an email address. Practitioners should watch for the reminders to renew.

While AHPRA will send registration renewal reminders to the address practitioners have nominated and by email, the responsibility to renew rests with the individual practitioner. There will be a late fee applied to psychologists who do not apply to renew by the due date, but who apply to renew within one calendar month of expiry (the 'late renewal period' permitted under the National Law). Those who do not apply to renew within one month of their registration expiry date must, under the National Law, be removed from the register and make a new application for registration if they wish to continue to practise.

Updating your contact details, including email address

The Board encourages practitioners to provide their current email address to AHPRA by updating your contact details online when renewing registration. This will enable the Board to send e-newsletters and other important information for the profession, and assist AHPRA to contact practitioners about important registration or renewal information in an efficient and cost effective way.

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.

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.

There were no programs before the Board for approval at this meeting of the Board. The list of Board-approved courses is published on the Board's website.

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.

The New South Wales Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia recently held a forum in Albury on 11 September 2012.

Community engagement forums to be held soon

As part of the community engagement strategy for all National Boards, a partnership has been established with the Consumer Health Forum of Australia (CHF) to engage with health consumers and the broader community. CHF is the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers.

A series of state-level community forums have been scheduled between October and December, providing an opportunity to brief members from the community (non practitioners) on how health practitioner regulation works and what it offers the community. More information about the forums will be published on the AHPRA website shortly.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
21 September 2012