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From the Chair

Growing the psychology workforce

One of the objects of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the [National Scheme](#)) is to ensure Australia has enough health practitioners to meet the future needs of the Australian community. Over 30,000 psychologists hold some form of registration, making ours the third largest health profession after nursing and midwifery, and medicine. Of these psychologists, more than 4,000 are in training as provisional registrants and over 6,000 are approved supervisors.

Even allowing for retirements, the psychology workforce is growing. Growth is currently between 3 to 6 per cent a year, an increase of 700-1,000 psychologists entering the

workforce each year. This is in contrast to the growth of the Australian population, which is 1.6 per cent.

Australia is able to 'home grow' its psychology workforce, unlike some other health professions that rely on overseas-trained practitioners to supplement numbers. At present there are over 500 accredited programs of psychology study at close to 40 universities. A significant development is the increasing access to 5+1 programs (postgraduate qualifications in professional psychology), introducing another, more structured pathway to general registration.

Despite the strong growth in psychology, there are still regional variations in the availability of psychologists in the community. Over 7,000 psychologists hold an area of practice endorsement, and most endorsements are in clinical psychology. As a consequence, clinical psychology practitioners are well represented in all states and territories, including regional and rural communities. However, there are considerable variations and gaps in some of the other areas of practice.

The Psychology Board of Australia has provided flexibility in relation to growing the psychology workforce, with allowances for remote supervision by Skype, telephone or videoconference, and flexible self-directed CPD provisions. We recognise that supervision is an essential part of a psychologist's training, and are providing additional support to make sure all supervisors have access to quality training.

Similarly, for the past 25 years there have been plans to provide a single national psychology examination on entry to the profession. Beginning soon, this examination will ensure a minimum standard for all who have the privilege to practise psychology independently.

These developments and improvements will continue to give confidence in the quality and international benchmarking of Australian psychologists serving the community.

Professor Brin Grenyer

Chair, Psychology Board of Australia



Regional Board Chair profile

Jennifer Thornton (BSc (Hons), Dip Ed, MPsych, PhD) is a registered psychologist with endorsements in counselling psychology and clinical psychology. She is an associate professor in the School of Psychology and Speech Pathology at Curtin University, where she is Program Director of the MPsych (Counselling) course. She is also a director on the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC). Her therapeutic and research interests are in the areas of chronic pain, anxiety disorders, and psychotherapy processes and ruptures.

Jennifer was previously Chair of the Psychologists Board of Western Australia and she is the current Chair of the Northern Territory/South Australia /Western Australia Regional Board.



Feature – Key areas of work

Update on supervisor training

The development of the *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers* and the introduction of new supervisor training programs is a priority project for the Board in 2013.

We are committed to protecting the public by making sure that only practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered. The Board establishes the standard of psychological competencies required for registration as a psychologist and for area of practice endorsement. Supervisors play a key role in teaching and assessing these competencies.

We aim to support high quality training for supervisors. Additional staff have joined the Board support team in AHPRA's national office to progress this work. The AHPRA supervisor project team works alongside the Supervisor Training Working Party of the Psychology Board of Australia.

Supervision guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training programs

The Board has approved new *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers*.

We held two public consultations on earlier versions of the guidelines, and took feedback from the consultations into account when approving the final document.

You can access the guidelines under the [Codes, policies and guidelines](#) tab on the Board's website.

Transition provisions for Board-approved supervisors

The transition period for supervisors ends on 30 June 2013.

All psychologists who are already approved supervisors on that date begin their five-year training cycle on 1 July 2013.

The Board will require supervisors to give evidence of completing a Board-approved supervisor training program before the end of the five-year cycle on 30 July 2018.

There is a transition provision for Board-approved supervisors until 1 July 2013. This gives supervisors time to adjust to the National Scheme before the full requirements to maintain Board-approved supervisor status must be met.

Higher degree placement supervisors

If you have general registration and are planning to become a higher degree placement supervisor for semester 2, 2013, we encourage you to apply for supervisor approval before **30 June 2013** using the *ABAS-76* application form. You can find this under the [Registration>Supervision](#) tab on the Board's website.

Psychologists who provide supervision for higher degree placements only (not internship programs and/or registrar programs), and who did not transition to the interim list of approved supervisors, can continue to provide that supervision without the Board's approval until the end of the transition period on 30 June 2013.

Higher degree supervisors who apply and are granted Board-approved supervisor status before 1 July 2013 will begin the five-year training cycle on 1 July 2013, and can elect to complete an approved supervisor training program at any time between 1 July 2013 and 1 July 2018, according to self-assessment of their learning needs.

All psychologists applying to become Board-approved supervisors after 1 July 2013 will need to meet the new supervisor training requirements. These require new applicants to show they have completed Board-approved supervisor training before approval is granted.

How to apply to become a Board-approved supervisor trainer

The Supervisor Training Working Party of the Psychology Board of Australia is developing an application process for supervisor training program providers interested in providing training after 1 July 2013.

Information on the Board's requirements for training providers is available in the *Guidelines for supervisors and supervisor training providers*.

More information about the application process, including an application form for interested training providers, will shortly be available on the Board's website.

Extension of interim approval for Board-approved supervisor training providers

From the beginning of the National Scheme, the Board agreed to give interim approval for existing supervisor training programs originating in Queensland, NSW and Tasmania that had board approval before national regulation.

The following are programs with interim approval:

- Supervisor Training and Accreditation Program (STAP) – originating in Queensland, and
- NSW Psychologists Registration Board's supervision workshops – originating in NSW and also offered in Tasmania.

These programs may also be offered in any state or territory.

In order to allow continuity of Board-approved supervisor training for psychologists wishing to apply to become a Board-approved supervisor, we have extended the interim approval of these programs until 31 December 2013.

The Board is keen to avoid a time lag between the end of the application process for new training providers (publication of the application, submissions, evaluation of submissions and approval of providers) and the development and availability of the new supervisor training provider programs.

Any psychologist who participates in the NSW Psychologists Registration Board's supervision workshops (originating in NSW and also offered in Tasmania) after 1 July and before 31 December is required to complete the competency-based assessment and evaluation component equivalent to the Supervisor Training and Accreditation Program (STAP) (originating in Queensland). This is consistent with the requirements of supervisor training programs outlined in the Board's new guidelines.

We encourage general psychologists interested in becoming Board-approved supervisors to participate in the training described above.

For more information

For more information on supervision and supervisor training providers, transition provisions, or to access the ABAS-76 form, please go to [Registration>Supervision](#) on the Board's website.

Update on the National Psychology Exam

The examination website has been updated recently in preparation for 1 July 2013, and can be viewed here: www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/National-Psychology-Exam.

National Psychology Exam Committee

The inaugural members of the National Psychology Exam Committee completed their terms of appointment in November 2012. As the work to implement a national exam continues, a new committee has been appointed. The appointments include some continuing and new members, resulting in a desired balance of experience and renewal on the committee. The following nine members were appointed for a period of two years, beginning in February 2013:

Gerard Fogarty
 Brin Grenyer (Chair)
 Justin Kenardy
 Colby Pearce
 Rachel Phillips
 Robert Schweitzer
 Alison Soutter
 Janet Stephenson
 Radek Stratil

The National Psychology Exam Committee will meet regularly in 2013 to discuss:

- the curriculum and format for the exam
- required readings for the exam
- development of exam questions, and
- working with AHPRA on the implementation plan and set-up for the exam.

Testing, delivery and administration

The Board and AHPRA have also been finalising the contractual arrangements with the provider of the computer-based testing platform announced in December 2012. To ensure that the exam is of the highest quality, over the past months there has been considerable effort to:

- develop efficient and appropriate processes and procedures to support all aspects of the delivery and administration of the national exam. Our top priority has been to make certain that candidates can be confident of a positive experience when undertaking the exam
- update the Board's website with information that will be released closer to the exam date, providing concise details to candidates covering the exam regulations, support and how to register and sit the exam, and
- develop exam questions and a 'practice exam' that allows candidates to understand the structure of the exam and get a 'look and feel' for the exam. The Board aims to demonstrate the standards expected from candidates and, at the same time, reduce exam anxiety.

The exam is in multiple-choice format, with 150 questions to be taken over 3.5 hours. The Board will allow candidates who fail the exam to re-sit at least three times. The cost to sit the exam is expected to be under \$500, which is far lower than many professional examinations and has been set low to assist those from regional areas who need to travel to sit the exam.

Confidential testing centres will be available in all states and territories and exams will be run at least twice, and up to four times, a year.

Over the coming weeks, the Board and AHPRA will be working to configure the computer-based testing platform so that practice exams can be sat from July 2013. News on progress will be included in Board communiqués and other information sent to registrants.

Details about the development of *Guidelines for the National Psychology Exam* are covered in the consultation section of the newsletter.

Transition provisions for the exam

The Board is proposing to apply a 12-month transition period for provisionally registered psychologists applying for general registration from 1 July 2013 who are:

- currently completing 4+2 or 5+1 pathways to registration, or
- returning to practice.

These groups are able to sit the exam from 1 July 2013. They are not required until 1 July 2014 to show evidence that they have passed the exam in order to obtain general registration. This grace period will allow an additional year before the exam becomes a requirement for registration. This will allow registrants a further year to prepare for the exam.

The Board expects all suitably prepared applicants for registration to be able to pass the exam. The exam

reinforces existing learning and will not require new material to be added to the curriculum, or add to the burden of training.

The registration standard that includes the option for the Board to require registrants to pass an examination for general registration has been in force since 1 July 2010, but a three-year transition period until 1 July 2013 has been applied. This transition is now extended for a further year, which means that registrants who are eligible to apply for general registration before 1 July 2014 are not required to sit the national exam.

Exam exemptions

There are two groups of applicants exempt from sitting the exam.

An exemption applies to graduates of accredited six-year professional Masters, Doctorate or combined Masters/ PhD programs leading to an area of practice endorsement who apply for general registration before 30 June 2016 (including those applying under provisions for Doctorate students included in the statement of assessment in form *PDEC-76*). This exemption is based on the Board's view that the internal examination and assessment processes within accredited degree programs currently meet its standards for general registration.

Psychologists from New Zealand applying under trans-Tasman mutual recognition are also exempt.

Update on transition provisions ending 30 June 2013

Area of practice endorsements

Area of practice endorsement is a new type of recognition of advanced training and practice in a specific area of psychological practice, allowed under section 98 of the National Law. Before the introduction of area of practice endorsement, recognition of advanced training and practice could only be achieved through:

- specialist registration in Western Australia
- approval as a provider of Medicare clinical psychology services, or
- membership of a College of the Australian Psychological Society (APS).

To make sure psychologists who had started a pathway to formal recognition in an area of practice before the National Scheme began are not disadvantaged, the Board approved a number of transition provisions for area of practice endorsement, the majority of which end on **30 June 2013**.

Psychologists who, at the start of the National Scheme, were undertaking a supervision program leading to recognition of advanced training in an area of practice

have until 30 June 2013 to complete the training and apply for endorsement. They are eligible to apply for a six-month extension if special circumstances apply. These provisions are for psychologists who:

- on 17 October 2010 were completing a specialist title registrar program in Western Australia, or
- completed an accredited Master of Psychology degree (or combined MPsych/PhD) since 30 June 2005 and are completing a one-year Psychology Board of Australia registrar program, or
- were assessed as eligible for membership of an APS College before 30 December 2010*, or
- are completing a supervision program or individual bridging plan (IBP) leading to eligibility for membership of an APS College that was registered with the Board before 30 December 2010*.

*9 September 2011 for the College of Community Psychologists and the College of Health Psychologists.

Psychologists who met the requirements to apply for endorsement under the transition arrangements from the start of the National Scheme have been allowed up to three years to submit the application by 30 June 2013; there will be no extensions. These provisions are for psychologists who, as at 30 June 2010:

- had completed an accredited Doctor of Psychology degree since 30 June 2005, or
- were approved to provide Medicare clinical psychology services, or
- were members of one of nine Australian Psychological Society Colleges that were approved from the beginning of the National Scheme (with the addition of Community and Health), or
- had completed an accredited higher degree, 80 hours of supervised practice and 12 months' fulltime equivalent (FTE) work experience.

The following further information is available on the Board website:

- *Policy on applications for an extension to complete the requirements for endorsement under transition provisions and Policy on applications for an extension to complete WA specialist title supervision* under the [Standards and guidelines](#)>[Codes, guidelines and policies](#) tab, and
- Fact sheet *Transition and grandparenting arrangements for area of practice endorsements* under the [Registration](#)>[Transition](#) tab.

4+2 provisional psychologists

Provisional psychologists who were undertaking a 4+2 program that was approved by a state or territory board before the National Scheme began have been permitted to

complete the program and apply for general registration by 30 June 2013.

Provisional psychologists who will not be able complete their 4+2 program by 30 June 2013 should contact their local office of AHPRA as soon as possible. If special circumstances apply, an extension to complete the program can be sought and will be considered by the relevant regional board.

Provisional psychologists may be required to submit a new internship program plan in accordance with national guidelines, and may apply for recognition of the supervision completed under the old programs and a reduction in the requirements of the new internship.

For more detail visit the *4+2 Internship program* webpage under [Registration](#)>[Provisional registration](#) on the Board's website.

Specialist title (Western Australia)

Western Australian psychologists who held specialist title registration with the Psychologists Board of Western Australia before the advent of the National Scheme in Western Australia (8 October 2010) have been permitted to continue to use their specialist title for three years under the transitional provision in section 281 of the National Law.

This transition provision has allowed WA psychologists time to adjust to the new scheme and ensure advertising material is updated.

From 18 October 2013 the title 'specialist' must not be used by any psychologist as it is an offence under section 118 of the National Law (maximum penalty \$30,000 for an individual and \$60,000 for a body corporate). This includes business cards, stationery, signage and all advertising material.

The following further information is available on the Board website:

- Fact sheet *Specialist titles: transition provisions for Western Australia psychologists* under [Endorsement](#)>[Fact sheets](#), and
- *Guidelines for advertising* under [Standards and guidelines](#)>[Codes, guidelines and policies](#).

Consultations: have your say

One of the functions of the National Board under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory ([the National Law](#)) is to develop or approve standards, codes and guidelines for the profession. In accordance with section 40 of the National Law, the Board must consult widely about any standards, codes or guidelines it develops.

AHPRA and the 14 National Boards in the National Scheme have a consistent process for wide-ranging consultation on the development of standards, codes and guidelines. The consultation process has six steps:

1. development
2. preliminary consulting (testing)
3. review
4. public consultation
5. review and finalisation, and
6. publication and implementation.

Public consultation on common codes and guidelines

We invite you to give feedback on reviews of revised common guidelines and, where relevant, codes of conduct, released for public consultation. This is part of a joint consultation by the 14 National Boards regulating registered health professions in Australia.

The Psychology Board of Australia is consulting on the following proposed policy and guidelines common to all National Boards:

- revised *Guidelines for advertising*
- proposed *Social media policy*, and
- revised *Guidelines for mandatory notifications*.

The Board is also consulting on the continued use of the *Code of ethics* developed by the Australian Psychological Society, or to use the shared *Code of conduct* adopted by most National Boards.

These documents will become part of the regulatory framework for registered health practitioners in Australia.

Written feedback you provide on the consultation document will generally be published on the Board's website, unless you request otherwise, although the National Boards may choose not to publish submissions. Please let us know if you do not want your submission published, or want all or part of it treated as confidential.

You can find the proposed policy and guidelines under the [News>Current consultations](#) tab on the Board's website. Please email your feedback to guidelinesconsultation@ahpra.gov.au by close of business on **Thursday 30 May 2013**.

Guidelines for the 5+1 internship program and for the National Psychology Exam

The Board recently went to preliminary consultation on:

- draft *Guidelines for 5+1 internship programs*, and
- draft *Guidelines for the National Psychology Examination*.

Preliminary consultation allows us to 'road test' the proposed content ahead of a public consultation process,

by identifying the potential legal, workforce, and operational impacts of initial proposals and any other major issues or concerns. Preliminary consultation generally involves internal stakeholders including regional boards, key AHPRA staff, and partner agencies operating under the National Law, as well as other relevant government agencies and government advisors.

The Board is reviewing the preliminary feedback on the 5+1 guidelines and will proceed with public consultations shortly. The Board's current priority is the 5+1 guidelines but it intends to refocus on the review of the 4+2 guidelines in the second half of 2013. We expect that much of the feedback from the 5+1 consultation will be able to be taken into account for the 4+2 guidelines.

The Board is now consulting on the draft *Guidelines for the National Psychology Examination*. You can find the consultation paper under the [News>Current consultations](#) tab on the Board's website. Please email your feedback to psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au marked 'Attention: Chair, Exam consultation' by close of business on **Monday 27 May 2013**.

Review of registration standards

The Board will shortly begin reviewing a number of other registration standards and guidelines and intends to publicly consult on the following in 2013:

- *Continuing professional development registration standard*
- *Criminal history registration standard*
- *English language skills registration standard*
- *Recency of practice registration standard*
- *General registration standard*
- *Guidelines on continuing professional development, and*
- *Guidelines for 4+2 internship program: provisional psychologists and supervisors.*

The requirement for wide-ranging consultation in the development of standards, codes and guidelines is a major strength of the National Scheme. Feedback received from the profession and other stakeholders through public consultation is invaluable and we encourage stakeholder organisations, members of the public and members of the profession to read our consultation papers, and to get involved in shaping the standards and guidelines that regulate the profession by giving comments and suggestions.

For more information

Read the *Consultation process* document: go to the [Legislation & Publications>AHPRA Publications](#) tab on the AHPRA website.

To read the Board's consultation papers and submissions go to [News>Current consultations](#) on the Board's website.

Registration renewal update

The support of key stakeholders during our renewal campaign has resulted in the highest number ever of psychologists renewing their registration on time and online.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your registration is renewed by 30 November each year.

AHPRA now gives health practitioners the option to go online and 'opt out' of renewing their registration. This online option provides the National Boards and AHPRA with better data about the number of practitioners who choose to opt out, to distinguish them from individuals who intend to renew, but do not do so on time.

For further information, or to provide your feedback on the renewal process, please contact communications@ahpra.gov.au.

Accountability and transparency: panel and tribunal hearing decisions published

AHPRA and the National Boards' commitment to transparency and accountability continues with an expansion of the information published about legal issues and hearing decisions. AHPRA has released a table of [panel hearing decisions](#) dating back to July 2010. Summaries are included where there is educational and clinical value. Practitioners' names are not published, consistent with the requirements of the National Law.

Some summaries of [tribunal decisions](#) are also provided, to help share information and guide practitioners.

AHPRA has also published a series of legal practice notes to support the consistent understanding and application of the National Law by National Boards and AHPRA staff. These are available on the AHPRA website for their wider value.

New national Community Reference Group

AHPRA and the National Boards are establishing a Community Reference Group. This group is designed to advise AHPRA and National Boards on ways in which community understanding and involvement in our work can be strengthened. This might include:

- strategies for promoting greater community response to consultations
- ways in which the national registers of practitioners can be more accessible and better understood, and
- strategies for building greater community understanding of how practitioner regulation works.

AHPRA and the National Boards will work with the Community Reference Group to agree on a set of priorities. This will build on the feedback received at the recent community forums held across Australia, in partnership with the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF). The forums provided an opportunity for AHPRA and members of national and state boards to meet members of the public to explain how health practitioner regulation works and what it offers the community, and to get feedback on issues of concern.

The Community Reference Group will complement the role of community members within the National Boards. The group will consist of members from the community who are not health practitioners or current/past members of a National Board or committee in the National Scheme.

List of approved persons for panel appointments – call for expressions of interest

The Board is calling for expressions of interest from experienced psychology practitioners and community members interested in being included in the approved persons list for panel appointments.

The National Law allows National Boards to convene health panels and performance and professional standards panels, when required, to hold hearings into specific health, performance or conduct matters for individual registered practitioners. Such panels consist of members chosen from a Board-approved persons list. Recruitment in accordance with section 183(2) of the National Law, to the extent possible, will exclude individuals whose residence or principal place of practice is in a co-regulatory jurisdiction (i.e. NSW).

Appointments to the approved persons list are for up to three years, with eligibility for reappointment, and are expected to begin in mid-2013.

For more information on the Psychology Board of Australia visit www.psychologyboard.gov.au. To download the candidate information pack, visit [Panel member recruitment](#) on AHPRA's website. Applications should be received by 5.00pm AEST on **Friday 17 May 2013**.

In brief

Forum – thank you Brisbane

The Board extends a huge thank you to all psychologists who attended our public forum in Brisbane on 21 March 2013. This was the second forum in Brisbane, with 400 people registering for the event. Professor Brin Grenyer, Chair, Psychology Board of Australia, gave a presentation

at the forum about national regulation and registration. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available under the *Standards and guidelines>Presentations* tab of our website.

The Board plans to continue holding public forums during 2013, with the next one planned for later in the year. Further information will be available on our website in due course.

Quick reminder: case studies submitted for 4+2 and 5+1 internship programs

The Board reminds provisional psychologists preparing case studies to meet the requirements of the 4+2 and 5+1 internships that these should be a maximum of 2,500 words in length. Where a client's case is complex, this word limit may exceed by up to 10 per cent – no more than 2,750 words. Case studies that are longer than 2,750 words will be returned for resubmission.

Case studies are one important way to demonstrate what you have learned through the course of the internship program.

Contact the Board

- Visit our website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the *Enquiries* link on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Prof. Brin Grenyer, Chair, Psychology Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.

