



Communiqué

27 February 2015

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 60th meeting of the Board on 27 February 2015.

At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

Psychology Board of Australia statement on specialist registration

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council) has recently issued guidance to National Boards in relation to the criteria for the approval of specialties for the purposes of specialist registration in a health profession under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). This guidance provides clarity as to Ministerial Council's expectations of a National Board when it makes a recommendation to the Ministerial Council under section 13(2) of the National Law. The guidance has been published on [AHPRA's website](#).

Currently, there is no specialist registration for psychology in Australia. Instead, all psychologists are registered on a single register and advanced qualifications and supervised practice are reflected on the register of practitioners through area of practice endorsement. Increasingly, area of practice endorsement has been used by governments, Medicare and other employers as the mechanism to identify psychologists possessing additional relevant qualifications and supervised practice.

Since area of practice endorsement arrangements under the National Law protect title (e.g. forensic psychologist), employers, the public and others can have confidence that those advertising themselves using these protected titles have met Board requirements for Board-approved appropriate qualifications and supervised practice. Unlawful use of protected titles can lead to heavy fines and/or disciplinary action.

In considering the guidance from Ministerial Council, the Board has formed the view that the 'case for action' has yet to be made for submitting the psychology profession and the public to the increased regulatory burden associated with specialist recognition under the National Law. At present, endorsement has provided a legal mechanism within the National Scheme to regulate psychologists with specialist training in a proportionate way without unduly restricting scope of practice.

The guidance makes it clear that approval for specialist registration is a 'regulatory instrument' within the meaning of the [Council of Australian Governments Best Practice Regulation](#). It requires a robust regulatory assessment process be carried out prior to Ministerial Council decision with oversight by the [Office of Best Practice Regulation](#). It is important to note that within this process the burden of proof is on the Board through consultation with the public and profession to establish that (1) current risks in the profession are not being managed by the current arrangements, and that (2) specialist registration is the appropriate remedy (rather than some other mechanism or process) to control those risks.

It is clear that further debate is required within the profession and the community about the need for specialist registration for psychology. In recognition of the robust assessment process, the profession should progress the debate by focusing on how it might respond to the wide-ranging requirements outlined in Appendix 2 of the guidance.

Call for applications – South Australian board member vacancies

Applications are now sought from practitioners from South Australia for appointment to the **NT/SA/WA Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia**.

Appointments are made by the South Australian Minister for Health under the National Law. Appointments are for up to three years, with eligibility for reappointment.

Applications will be assessed by a selection advisory panel for appointable positions.

More information about the role and the application process is included in the application form and guide which can be downloaded from www.ahpra.gov.au/National-Boards/Board-member-recruitment.aspx.

For general enquiries, email boardappoint@ahpra.gov.au.

Applications close at **5.00pm AEDT** (4.30pm ACDT) on **Friday, 13 March 2015**.

National Psychology Exam Committee

The Board has recently undertaken a re-appointment process for the third term of the National Psychology Exam Committee (NPE Committee). Committee appointments are made by the Board under the National Law. The Board has appointed the following nine members to the NPE Committee for a period of two years:

Christopher Boyle
Gerard Fogarty
Brin Grenyer (Chair, National Board member)
Haydn Till
Rachel Phillips
Robert Schweitzer
Alison Soutter
Janet Stephenson
Radek Stratil (National Board member).

The Board has implemented a national psychology exam to support applications for general registration, as outlined in the Board's *General registration standard*. The role of the NPE Committee is to provide advice to the Psychology Board of Australia on the development of the national examination for the measurement of a minimum level of applied professional knowledge of psychology to obtain general registration and to ensure a consistent professional standard of psychologists nationally via the various pathways to general registration.

The functions of the NPE Committee are to develop the national psychology examination multiple-choice questions and to contribute to policy and curriculum frameworks and the development of resources (such as the reading list).

The NPE Committee consists of nine senior members of the psychology profession and includes members of the Psychology Board of Australia and members appointed through the expression of interest process held in September-December 2014. NPE Committee members are senior members of the psychology profession who have experience and knowledge in the core competencies required for general registration in the profession, including experience in training, teaching, and assessment of professional competencies. The Board thanks retiring members Professor Justin Kenardy and Mr Colby Pearce for their excellent contribution to the Committee over the past several years.

The NPE Committee meets in Melbourne between four to six times per year over two business days. The first meeting of the third term of the NPE Committee will be held on Thursday and Friday, 12 and 13 March 2015.

Approved programs of study

Under section 49 of the National Law, the National Board requires accreditation reports from the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) before approving the accredited programs of study as providing a qualification that will lead to registration.

At this meeting the Board approved APAC-accredited courses at the University of Technology Sydney, University of Western Sydney, and University of Tasmania.

An updated list of Board-approved qualifications will soon be published under Accreditation on the Board's website.

Keep in touch with the Board

Visit the Board's website at www.psychologyboard.gov.au for information on the National Scheme and for the mandatory registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia

06 March 2015