



Communiqué

27 March 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 61st meeting of the Board on 27 March 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 reaches out to international regulators

The Board has been working to strengthen ties with international regulators.

Members of the Psychology Board of Australia recently attended the 5th ASEAN Regional Union of Psychological Societies (ARUPS) Congress. Board Chair, Professor Brin Grenyer, was one of the conference speakers, and the Board also hosted a roundtable discussion with the ARUPS' council and the New Zealand Psychologists Board.

International outreaches like this help the Board learn from leading practice around the world, share learning from its own experience and promote continued collaboration.

Consultation update

The Board has published submissions that were received in response to the recent public consultation on proposals to update the *Provisional registration standard* and the guidelines for the 4+2 internship program. The submissions are available under [Past consultations on the Board's website](#). The Board wishes to thank all stakeholders who took the time to provide feedback and ideas.

New approach to international criminal history checks

A new procedure for checking international criminal history that provides greater public protection took effect on 4 February 2015.

This new approach requires [certain applicants and practitioners](#) to apply for an international criminal history check from a supplier approved by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The supplier will provide the international criminal history check report to the applicant and directly to AHPRA.

The new process for checking international criminal history aims to strike a balance between public safety and regulatory burden for practitioners. More information is in the [media release](#) on the Board's website.

National drug screening protocol strengthened

Mandatory hair testing for all registered health practitioners with substance-related impairment will now be routine in a move by AHPRA and the National Boards to strengthen the national drug screening protocol.

Under the protocol, all health practitioners who have restrictions on their registration linked to past substance abuse will have routine hair testing in addition to urine testing. Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time – of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner’s drug taking history).

Boards will continue to make decisions about individual practitioners with impairment case by case, based on testing standards set out in the protocol. The drug screening protocol is part of a wider, national strategy to effectively manage compliance and monitoring across the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The strategy has been progressively implemented from July 2014. More information is in the [media release](#) on the Board’s website.

Security tip – keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards are making changes to our websites to ensure your information is kept safe.

From early April 2015, anyone using Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view the Board’s website is likely to experience difficulty accessing web pages and online services.

To avoid an interruption to service, we recommend you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our website please contact us to report your experience.

Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

Approved programs of study

Under section 49 of the National Law, the 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 Charles Sturt University. The Board also approved the discontinuation of a number of courses across the country in accordance with section 1(2) of the National Law, including courses at Edith Cowan University, Queensland University of Technology, Charles Sturt University, Federation University and University of Western Australia. An updated list of Board-approved qualifications will soon be published under *Accreditation* on the [Board’s website](#).

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia

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