



Communiqué

31 July 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 65th meeting of the Board on 31 July 2015.

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

14th European Congress of Psychology

The 14th European Congress of Psychology was recently held in Milan, Italy. Several members of the Psychology Board presented on regulation in Australia, including an overview of the national exam development and the first analyses of candidates sitting in confidential test centres across Australia. The context for this presentation included the experience of the 64 psychology boards across Canada and the USA where a single national psychology examination has been in place since 1965, and other registered professions in Australia that routinely run national examinations (e.g. Pharmacy).

Board representatives also participated in a number of discussions on the development of international standards. This included consideration of the draft *Declaration of core competencies in professional psychology* that was successfully presented at the congress and now moves to the next stage in preparation. Sign-off will be at the 31st International Congress of Psychology next year in Yokohama, Japan.

Other professional meetings with psychology regulators from across the world were also attended by Board representatives.

Consultation paper released: Ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Examination

The Board has published consultation paper 25: Consultation on ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Examination.

Since 2010 the Board has applied an exemption from sitting the examination to graduates via the higher degree training pathway - those who have completed an accredited six-year or above professional Masters, Doctorate, or combined Masters/PhD qualification that leads to area of practice endorsement. This exemption is due to end on 30 June 2016.

The Board is seeking feedback on the proposal to not extend the exemption for higher degree students beyond the 30 June 2016 date, and to revise the *Guidelines for the National Psychology Exam* accordingly. The Board has recommended various options for transition for higher degree students should the proposal to end the exemption be approved.

The Board is of the view that all applicants for general registration in psychology should be required to pass the National Psychology Examination. The Board has carefully and systematically reviewed the national and international regulatory and professional context in forming this view. Its rationale for ending the higher exemption includes the following considerations:

- the importance of ensuring the minimum standard is demonstrated by all psychologists with general registration in Australia

- strengthening public protection by ensuring that only practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered
- understanding that the diversity of outcomes from the higher degree pathway is a growing regulatory risk
- understanding that accreditation, along with multiple measures of competence are important quality assurance mechanisms in both training and regulation
- facilitating the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioners
- understanding the complexity, scale and size of the psychology profession, the diversity of training pathways and the various contexts where psychologists work, and
- enabling the continuous development of a flexible, responsive and sustainable psychology workforce that meets the needs of the Australian public.

The Board is inviting comments on ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Exam from all stakeholders. The consultation paper is available on the Board's website under [Current consultations](#). Submissions will be accepted until **Friday 2 October 2015**.

Darwin forum

The Board hosted a public forum in Darwin on Thursday 30 July that was attended by local psychologists. This was the second forum to be held in Darwin. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation given by the Board about national regulation will be available on the Board's [website](#) soon. Whilst in Darwin Board representatives had a variety of meetings with government, health regulators and senior psychologists.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia

10 August 2015