

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2015

**Response to Consultation paper 25: Consultation on ending the higher degree exemption from sitting the National Psychology Exam (NPE)**

As a part-time MPsych (Clinical) candidate, I am firm advocate of 'option one – status quo', which would "continue with the existing higher degree exemption from sitting the national psychology exam for [at the very least] another three years."

I have read and fully endorse the response from Heads of Department and Schools of Psychology Association (HODSPA) to this consultation paper. I particularly support the points raised in defense of the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and the quality of the postgraduate courses it regulates. I concur that the NPE is an affront to the integrity of the APAC process.

I made the decision to return to complete the MPsych (Clinical) program two years after completing my PhD in psychology, as I saw the unique benefit of the 'higher degree pathway' over the Supervised Practice route to general registration (e.g., being trained in an area of Practice Endorsement, intensive coursework, multiple clinical/research mentors with a range of expertise). I feel the Board's decision to force all psychology registrants to sit the NPE downplays the unique facets of these *accredited* higher degree programs, and discredits the extensive assessment already completed by higher degree candidates.

I also found the Board's position on equity (i.e., "it is particularly inequitable to have some Australian-trained provisional psychologists required to demonstrate competence through sitting the exam and others who do not") a little confusing on two fronts. First, enforcing the NPE on higher degree candidates effectively ensures that these registrants are being assessed on competence more so than registrants from other pathways; the superfluous NPE assessment on higher degree candidates is therefore discriminatory in its very nature. Second, how can the Board justify its position on 'inequity' on this issue, yet enforce *part-time* MPsych (Clinical) and Clinical Psychology PhD candidates to register (at full cost) as provisional psychologists *two or more years before* commencing their first placement?

Kind regards,

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