

## Media release

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30 November 2016

### ‘No excuse’ says Board as court fines social worker for claiming to be a psychologist

AHPRA, on behalf of the Psychology Board of Australia, has successfully prosecuted a social worker for claiming to be a psychologist.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), on behalf of the Psychology Board of Australia (the Board), prosecuted Ms Sermin Baycan, a qualified social worker, who at the time of the allegations was based in Victoria.

Ms Baycan pleaded guilty in the Melbourne Magistrates’ Court after AHPRA brought charges against her for using the title ‘psychologist’ and holding out as being a registered health practitioner under sections 113 and 116 of the National Law<sup>1</sup>.

Ms Baycan has never held registration as a psychologist, however, it was alleged that she purported to use the title ‘psychologist’ at two medical clinics in Victoria between May 2015 and June 2015 by accepting referrals under mental health plans.

Ms Baycan pleaded guilty to 14 charges and was ordered to pay a fine of \$12,000 and costs of \$20,200 to AHPRA, with no conviction recorded.

Psychology Board of Australia Chair, Professor Brin Grenyer welcomed the Court’s decision.

‘This judgement is a case in point. It is unacceptable for anyone who does not hold registration as a psychologist to claim to be a psychologist and worse still see patients when they are not qualified to do so. If you are not an appropriately qualified psychologist and registered with the Board, then you cannot present yourself to be a psychologist. No matter what other qualifications you hold, there is no excuse.’

The National Law protects the public by making sure anyone who uses the title ‘psychologist’ is registered, qualified and trained to do so.

‘When the public access psychological services they are often vulnerable and rely on their registered practitioner to provide them with the best care possible. The actions of Ms Baycan were not only against the law, but did an injustice to the patients, who believed they were seeing a qualified psychologist,’ said Prof. Grenyer.

AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher added, ‘Community members can be confident they are receiving care from a registered psychologist by checking the national register of practitioners, from anywhere at any time.’

All registered health practitioners appear on the online [Register of Practitioners](#), which is a searchable list that is accessible on the AHPRA website. If a person does not appear on the register, they are not registered to practise in a regulated health profession in Australia

Title protection is an important way the National Law helps to protect the public. Only registered health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified are able to use [protected titles](#). Psychologists and other practitioners from other regulated health professions have to register annually with their National Board and declare that they meet current national standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law).

*For more information*

- Lodge an [online enquiry form](#).
- For registration or notifications enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers).
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200.