



## Communiqué

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26 August 2017

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (National Law), as in force in each state and territory. At each meeting, the Board considers a wide range of issues, many of which are routine and are not included in this communiqué.

This communiqué highlights key issues from the 88th meeting of the Board on 26 August 2017.

### All Psychology Boards meeting 2017

The Board hosted an All Psychology Boards meeting on 24 and 25 August 2017 in Sydney. This was the second time the National Board and regional boards have met as a group since the Scheme commenced in 2010; the first All Psychology Board meeting was in 2014. All national and regional board members participated along with members of the Psychology Council of NSW and senior Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) staff.

The meeting focused on the work of the national and regional boards in regulating the psychology profession. The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on the Board's role, approach to regulation, and major strategic projects. The meeting also presented an opportunity to meet and discuss the challenges of the coming year.

### Proposed standards for accreditation of psychology programs

The Board is pleased to advise that the recent submission from the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) for new revised Standards for Accreditation of Psychology Programs has been approved by the Board. APAC is appointed as an external accreditation entity under the National Law and one of its functions is to develop accreditation standards and recommend them to the Board for approval.

The new accreditation standards will be used to assess whether a program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, provides graduates of the program with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise the profession.

The Board considered that the proposed new standards:

- take into account the objectives and guiding principles of section 3 of the National Law
- have been developed following a period of wide-ranging consultation and developed with stakeholder input
- take into account relevant Australian and international standards and benchmarks related to education and training, and
- take into account the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) principles for best practice regulation.

The new standards will be published on the Board's website soon. APAC will provide further advice on the transition arrangements to implement the new standards.

### Code of ethics review

In 2010 the Board endorsed the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Code of Ethics for the psychology profession. Registered psychologists are required to adhere to the principles and standards set out in the code. The APS is currently conducting a review of the code, which is expected to include changes to reflect recent legislative amendments and changes in societal

expectations. The Board has a representative on the review committee. It is expected that the review will be finalised in mid-2019.

### **Reminder of end of transition for 4+2 internship guidelines**

The new 4+2 internship guidelines came into effect on 1 June 2017. The Board allowed three months for those nearing the end of their internship to apply for provisional registration in accordance with the previous guideline requirements. In this transition period the Board also accepted progress reports and case studies in the previous format.

The Board's transition period ended on 1 September 2017. All general registration applications, progress reports and case reports submitted after this date will have to meet the requirements in the new guidelines.

### **National Boards approve policy for removing reprimands from the national register**

A policy to ensure consistent removal of reprimands from the national register of practitioners has been approved by all National Boards.

Reprimands on a practitioner's registration can be imposed under the National Law by a performance or professional standards panel, professional standards committee (New South Wales), and a relevant tribunal or court.

The policy will ensure that reprimands are removed from the [national register](#) in a consistent and effective way. It also allows for the removal of reprimands imposed under previous legislation to be considered on an individual basis, consistent with removal powers under that legislation.

A reprimand imposed under the National Law will be removed from the national register on the publication end date set by the relevant panel, committee, court or tribunal. Where a panel or tribunal has not set a publication end date, or where the reprimand was imposed under previous legislation, the reprimand will be removed no earlier than five years from the date of initial publication.

This is subject to:

- the practitioner making an application for removal of the reprimand
- no relevant event having occurred in the five-year period of publication of the reprimand, and
- legal advice confirming the power to remove a reprimand imposed under previous legislation.

A relevant event is any health, performance or conduct notification, action taken against the practitioner in relation to an adverse disclosure on renewal of registration, new information returned on a criminal history check or a confirmed breach of restrictions. It also includes when action has been taken against a practitioner regarding their conduct, health or performance. New notifications, irrespective of whether action was taken, will also be taken into account if an application for removal of a reprimand is received after the five-year period of publication.

The policy will take effect from 2 October 2017 and will be reviewed annually. An application form for removal of a reprimand from the national register will be published under [Common forms](#) on the AHPRA website.

### **Co-Chairs announced to help lead the way for the first ever National Scheme Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health strategy**

The National Scheme is pleased to announce the appointment of co-Chairs for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy group.

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips, CEO of ABSTARR Consulting and Dr Joanna Flynn AM, Chair of the Medical Board of Australia have been appointed as co-Chairs of the group.

The strategy group has been brought together to develop the National Scheme's first ever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy.

AHPRA, the 14 National Boards responsible for regulating the health professions, accreditation authorities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations have committed to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy with the vision of: Patient safety

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia's health system is the norm, as defined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips was nominated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders and organisations to be co-Chair. Gregory Phillips is from the Waanyi and Jaru peoples, and comes from Cloncurry and Mount Isa in north-west Queensland. Dr Joanna Flynn was nominated by leaders of the National Scheme to be co-Chair.

Associate Professor Gregory Phillips and Dr Flynn agree that partnerships are fundamental in this work.

'With more than 700,000 Australians registered by the National Boards and a commitment from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and the National Scheme to work collaboratively there is a unique opportunity for real change to the health outcomes of all Australians,' said Associate Professor Phillips.

'We are grateful for the strong relationships we have with our partners in this work, particularly the expert guidance we have received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector leaders. This work cannot be done with National Boards acting in isolation and I am looking forward to making this new strategy a reality through my role as co-Chair,' said Dr Flynn.

### **Further information**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy group publish communiqués of its work. These are available on the [Advisory group page](#) of the AHPRA website.

The next meeting of the strategy group will be held in November 2017.

Professor Brin Grenyer  
Chair  
Psychology Board of Australia  
08 September 2017