

Communiqué



18 November 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 91st meeting of the Board on 18 November 2017.

Joint meeting with the New Zealand Psychologists Board

This month the Board hosted a joint meeting with the New Zealand Psychologists Board (NZPB) who were in Melbourne to attend the International Congress on Professional and Occupational Regulation.

The Boards met on Saturday 18 November and discussed a variety of issues of mutual interest, including Area of Practice Endorsement, Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition, and health strategies for First Peoples. The NZPB also provided an update on their current consultation for inclusion of a new scope of practice for Health Psychology. Read more about the NZPB and regulation of psychology in New Zealand [here](#).

Annual Report

The [Annual Report](#) for AHPRA and the National Boards for the year to 30 June 2017 is now available to view online.

A snapshot of the psychology profession in 2016/17:

- Complaints received about psychologists: 360 notifications (complaints or concerns) were lodged with AHPRA about psychologists in 2016/17. This equates to 1.6% of the profession.
- 27 mandatory notifications were made about psychologists: 20 were about standards, four about impairment and three about sexual misconduct.
- Immediate action was taken 10 times during the year to suspend or cancel a psychologist's registration while a matter was investigated.
- Of the 344 matters closed about psychologists in 2016/17: 14% resulted in the Board accepting an undertaking or conditions being imposed on an psychologist's registration; 8.7% resulted in a caution or reprimand; 1.7% resulted in suspension or cancellation of registration, and 74.7% resulted in no further action being taken.
- Statutory offence complaints: There were 116 statutory offence complaints made about psychologists in 2016/17 (up from 83 in 2015/16). The majority (85) related to use of a protected title; 23 were about advertising breaches.
- Active monitoring cases as at 30 June 2017: 153 psychologists were monitored during the year for health, performance and/or conduct.
- Increased registration year on year: Psychologists comprise 5.2% of all health practitioners registered in Australia, and the registrant base continues to grow (up 3.2% from 2015/16 to 34,976 registrants).

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on the register: According to a workforce survey that practitioners can choose to fill out at the time of registration/renewal, 0.6% of psychologists are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (192 psychologists nationally).
- This year saw the largest online registration renewal rate ever achieved across all 14 registered health professions. Over 98.5% of all registered health practitioners renewed online and on time, with 98.7% of psychologists renewing online.

Renewal of registration - final reminder

Psychologists have until 30 November to renew their registration on time.

When completing renewal this year, psychologists will be asked to check that their qualification(s) are recorded correctly on the register. This extra step will help us to maintain the integrity of the national register, which helps to protect the public.

Renewal applications received in December will incur a late payment fee in addition to the annual renewal fee. This is outlined in the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory ([the National Law](#)). A [fees schedule](#) is published on the Board's website.

Psychologists, whose application for general registration is received on time or during the following one month late period, can continue practising while their application is processed. Practitioners who do not apply to renew their registration by 31 December 2017 will have lapsed registration. They will be removed from the [Register of Psychologists](#) and will not be able to practise their profession in Australia.

Newsletter

The Board has published Issue 21 of the Connections newsletter. All registered psychologist have been emailed a copy of the newsletter. It is also available on the [Newsletters section](#) on the Board's website.

National Scheme news

Update on the Independent Accreditation Systems Review

In October 2016 health ministers commissioned Professor Michael Woods, former Productivity Commissioner, to carry out the Independent Accreditation Systems Review (the Review). Following public consultations Professor Woods has prepared [draft recommendations](#) for ministers. Many of the reforms in his draft report that would, in their current form, require significant changes to our legislation and how we manage the accreditation of courses leading to registration as well as assessment of internationally qualified practitioners.

In response to the draft recommendations, AHPRA and National Boards have published a joint submission to the Review on the [AHPRA website](#). In summary we propose that a more effective and efficient approach would be to make changes to roles of AHPRA, National Boards and Accreditation Councils, rather than create new regulatory bodies with the likely cost and complexity this could create. We believe that this would deliver the changes required to support the professional health workforce required by Australia.

The joint submission includes additional responses from four participating National Boards - Chiropractic, Medical, Optometry and Psychology. The Pharmacy Board made a separate [submission](#) and has published this on their [website](#).

AHPRA and National Boards look forward to the Review's final report and health ministers' response in due course. A news item including a high level summary of key aspects of the joint submission has been published on the [AHPRA website](#).

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Further information

The Board publishes a range of information for psychologists on its website at <http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/>. For more information about registration, notifications or other matters relevant to the National Scheme also refer to information published on www.ahpra.gov.au or send an [online enquiry form](#) or contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495.

Professor Brin Grenyer
Chair
Psychology Board of Australia
29 November 2017