

AHPRA

Re: 'Consultation – Proposal to retire the 4+2 internship pathway'

I am writing to urge the board to consider continuing this pathway.

As someone who has lived and worked rurally for much of my life, I am acutely aware of the relative lack of psychologists in regional, rural, and remote areas. There are substantial unmet needs for mental health services in rural Australia. Rural psychologists play an important role in the mental health of rural communities. Video conferencing is not sufficient to meet the needs of rural communities.

Whilst I acknowledge a need to reduce the administrative burden on the psychology board, and change training to be consistent with international standards, the 4+2 pathway is a valid training method that produces competent and ethical psychologists.

Psychology training should be accessible to diverse groups, including those in rural and remote areas. It should also be accessible to people from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and to individuals with disabilities. Retiring the 4+2 pathway will negatively impact the diversity of the profession, which ultimately has a negative impact on the public.

Ability should be the most important factor in people being able to gain registration as psychologists – not proximity to university campuses and the financial means to survive for long enough to complete masters programs.

If all universities in Australia were to follow the example of the few universities offering the 5+1 program remotely and part-time, then perhaps retiring the 4+2 would become viable.

Until then, I urge the board to continue the 4+2 registration pathway.

Sincerely,

Ceara Rickard

Provisional Psychologist