



1st June 2018

The School of Psychology and Counselling at QUT thanks the Board for the opportunity to respond to the “Public Consultation paper on the proposal to retire the 4+2 internship pathway to general registration”.

Overall, the School understands and appreciates the Board’s position, and is supportive of the proposal to retire the 4+2 pathway. However, we would like to make a number of comments related to the consultation document. We discussed the document with our professional and community partners and also wish to raise some concerns that arose through these discussions.

1. While the two cases of 4+2 interns reported in the document highlight the financial hardship encountered by some people, the 4+2 has also provided an affordable model for individuals who are financially unable to cease paid employment for 1 or 2 years to complete a Master degree. The 5+1 models that currently operate vary in the degree to which students are supported in the +1, and such differences may impact variably on the training quality in the +1 component.
2. We are concerned about the number of psychologists who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or First Nation, or come from low SES backgrounds, and encourage the Board to consider how a year or two out of paid employment to complete university internships may impact people who may have traditionally taken up 4+2 roles in paid employment through the government, private companies, and NGOs (78% of the 4+2 employers according to Attachment C, p.47). We are concerned that if this change is not managed well, social inequities within our profession will persist and many people who could make significant contributions to psychology will be turned away because of barriers within our training models. As most universities and other training providers are committed to the AIPEP frameworks, we encourage the Board to consider how this change will impact the composition of our profession and how we may be able to mitigate its effect;
3. While the consultation document indicated that “employers increasingly prefer psychologists trained through 5+1 or other higher degree pathways” (Attachment B, p.45), our own community partners see the 5+1 as further entrenching a two-tier system, rather than addressing the inequity;
4. Depending on the future of government funding for the 5th year, and tertiary providers’ appetite for the model, there could be significant further growth in 5+1 programs. As the board has highlighted that there is now ‘no shortage’ (Attachment B, p.45), we wonder professional numbers will be best managed across the multiple possible providers in this space.

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