

23rd May 2018

### Submission to the 4+2 Consultation

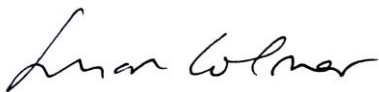
I am writing this submission as the Program Director of school counselling/school psychology training at The University of Sydney, having been in this role since 2004. Graduates with four years of Psychology enter my 21-month Master of Teaching (School Counselling) degree program (which is HECS liable) and complete a dual qualification in school counselling/school psychology and teaching. During the program students undertake approximately 100 days (about 700 hours) of professional experience, mostly in school settings. Virtually all students begin working successfully and full-time in the public school system (NSW DoE) in Term 4 of the second year of the program, with the majority completing their supervision and becoming fully registered within three years of completing their postgraduate Masters degree.

Under the proposed phasing out of the 4+2 option, we may lose this key pathway, which has resulted in 73 students graduating 2006 to 2011 (most as part of the former APAC accredited double degree BA or BSc/Psychology (Honours)), with 99 students graduating in 2011-2017 and 55 more anticipated for 2018-2020. As well as having a large negative impact on the numbers of well qualified, competent graduates able to work successfully in school contexts, a significant number of motivated excellent students completing their Psychology Honours or equivalent degree, will no longer have this tailored pathway open to them. Another issue is that typically, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> programs are full fee payment levels (\$ 24,000 per year) and very expensive; thus, beyond the scope of many Psychology 4-year program graduates. I note that many of my students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and include those from low SES and also rural locations. These students benefit from our HECS status and for some students, from scholarship support provided by NSW DoE.

The issue of how to create a 5<sup>th</sup> year program that is in a specific area, such as educational or school psychology, rather than being generic is also worthy of examination, particularly as there are no 5/6 Educational and Developmental programs in NSW. This is problematic for school

psychologists, and for all child and school focussed psychologists, who are a large and vital group of practising psychologists, particularly in their preventative and early intervention roles. Indeed my Masters program has become a partial proxy to meet this need. I am exploring establishing my 21-month program as a 5<sup>th</sup> year program having waited for the implementation in 2019 of the new accreditation standards; however, I am one psychologist within a School of Education and Social Work, not a School of Psychology, making this potentially a difficult process. I do note that in 2014 APAC acknowledged that the psychology content of my program was appropriate to meet their criteria. However, APAC's new standards imply a "clinical" model with students learning skills within an on-campus clinic, whereas much of what is critical in school psychology, particularly for children and adolescents, but also for their families and teachers, is that psychological services are delivered in the context in which the students experience their difficulties, which are their schools and homes.

I would like to recommend that consideration be given to staggering the transition phase, with particular attention to the 49% of all 4+2 provisional psychologists in Australia identified as working in NSW. I suspect that this high number may partly reflect my graduate cohort. Specifically, slowing the phasing out of the 4+2 program by approximately three years will ensure sufficient new well-trained psychologists continue to work in our schools. My graduates have a four-year psychology sequence and a Masters degree focussed on school counselling/psychology as a specialisation and with teacher training including disability and indigenous issues being given appropriate attention. I am recommending that such students continue to be trained whilst sufficient appropriate 5<sup>th</sup> and 5/6 year programs are developed in NSW Universities.



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