

Welcome to the third edition of the Psychology Board of Australia's (the Board) Connections newsletter. All editions of Psychology Connections are available on the Board's website.

## From the Chair



### The licence to practise psychology

The 30th of November is a historic date in the history of psychology in Australia as it marks the first time that psychologists with general registration renew their registration on the same date in the new national scheme.

The scheme represents the significant work of many dedicated people, including the members of the Psychology Board of Australia supported by its Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency team, guided by the input from many professional associations, members of the public and interested persons who have taken time to assist the process of determining the national scheme.

Ministers of Health in every State and Territory have established the legislation and approved the standards for psychology. The scheme begins with the premise that becoming a psychologist is a six year journey – beginning

with four foundational years in the science of psychology, followed by two years of applied practice. The Board provides a provisional licence after 4 years to allow provisional psychologists to practise on the public under close supervision. It is a privilege to practise psychology and the Board entrusts its supervisors within these two years with the very important role of nurturing and preparing the next generation of psychologists. Achieving the six years of education represents the culmination of the scientist-practitioner model, and achieving general registration is a significant event worth celebrating.

General registration as a psychologist is an unrestricted licence to practise psychology across Australia. The Board's role in guiding the profession is to ensure that this journey meets the highest international ethical, professional and academic standards, and that those registered to practise are safe to the public.

Together we can all ensure that the public's trust and confidence in psychologists is maintained.

**Professor Brin Grenyer,  
Chair, Psychology Board  
of Australia.**

Missed Edition 2?  
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## Registration renewal reminder

- 30 November for all (even those who renewed on 30 June)
- Renew online and on time
- See [page 6](#) for more details

## Meet the Regional Board

The Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) has established Regional Boards to ensure timely local responses to health practitioners in all jurisdictions. The Regional Boards review, assess and make decisions in relation to notifications and registrations in accordance with the delegations. They provide advice to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) staff dealing with a Health Complaints Entity, and advise the Immediate Action Committee when urgent action may be required. The Regional Boards raise emerging trends and issues with the National Board and provide them with assistance and advice.

Regional Board Chairs and members are appointed by the responsible Minister. The current PsyBA Regional Boards are as follows:

### NSW Board of the Psychology Board of Australia

Appointment process underway.

### QLD Board of the Psychology Board of Australia

A/Prof Robert Schweitzer (Chair and practitioner member)

Professor Kevin Ronan (practitioner member)  
Kingsley Bedwell (community member)

Barry Sheehan (practitioner member)

Dr Haydn Til (practitioner member)

Mrs Jeanette Jifkins (community member)

### NT/SA/WA Board of the Psychology Board of Australia

Appointment process underway.

### ACT/TAS/VIC Board of the Psychology Board of Australia

Prof Barry Fallon (Chair and practitioner member)

Dr Cristian Torres (Deputy Chair and practitioner member)

Dr Jenn Scott (Deputy Chair and practitioner member)

Mr Robin Brown (community member)

A/Prof Sabine Hammond (practitioner member)

Mr Simon Kinsella (practitioner member)

Dr Kathryn von Treuer (practitioner member)

Dr Patricia Mehegan (community member)

Ms Anne Horner (community member)

Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the Psychology Chair (email: [psychologychair@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:psychologychair@ahpra.gov.au)) to invite Regional Board representatives to attend speaking engagements.

### Psychology Board of Australia Events

The Board recently held forums in Darwin and Canberra where registrants were briefed on the transition to the National Scheme and had the opportunity to address questions directly to the Chair and National Board members. Details of upcoming events will be published on the [Psychology Board of Australia website](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au).

### DOHA – Changes to Medicare Fact Sheets

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) will be releasing new fact sheets regarding the changes to Medicare on 1 November 2011. Visit the [DoHA website](http://www.doha.gov.au) for further information.

## Legal-ethical matters

The **Australian Health Practitioner Law Library** is now available to psychologists. This searchable repository of **Tribunal Decisions** contains panel and hearing outcomes and tribunal decisions associated with Health Boards prior to July 1, 2010 and decisions made since AHPRA was established (excluding NSW Tribunal decisions). The repository is hosted by AustLII; the Australasian Legal Information Institute: [www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/healthprac](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/healthprac)

### Recent cases of importance

One of the responsibilities of the Psychology Board of Australia is to investigate concerns about the professional conduct, health or performance of registered psychologists. The Board refers allegations of the most serious unprofessional conduct to state and territory administrative tribunals for hearing.

The Board publishes this list of recent tribunal decisions in relation to registered psychologists in the public interest. The Board believes that there are lessons to be learned by all practitioners from the issues raised in serious disciplinary cases. Tribunal hearings are open to the public and decisions made by panels are published online.

*Issue: Distribution of information via email transmission – need to be respectful*

- South Australian Psychological Board – Disciplinary Decision 13 [2010] SAPSB 1 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/sa/SAPSB/2010/1.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/sa/SAPSB/2010/1.html)

*Issue: Maintenance of personal boundaries*

- Re: Schirmer [2010] VPSRB 1 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VPSRB/2010/1.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VPSRB/2010/1.html)

*Issue: Note keeping*

- Re: Marta Balan [2010] PRBD (Vic) 2 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VPSRB/2010/2.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VPSRB/2010/2.html)
- Re: Schirmer [2010] VPSRB 1 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VPSRB/2010/1.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VPSRB/2010/1.html)
- South Australian Psychological Board – Disciplinary Decision 13 [2010] SAPSB 1 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/sa/SAPSB/2010/1.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/sa/SAPSB/2010/1.html)

*Issue: Reporting of suspected child sexual abuse and neglect*

- HCCC v Dene and Donnelly (no:2) [2010] NSWST 4 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWST/2010/4.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWST/2010/4.html)

*Issue: Responsibilities of supervisors*

- HCCC v Dene and Donnelly (no:2) [2010] NSWST 4 [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWST/2010/4.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWST/2010/4.html)

### Important coroners' findings

*Issue: Communicating with other professionals treating the client*

- Summary of the findings and recommendations handed down by the New South Wales' Deputy Coroner in the matter of Charmaine Margaret Dragun on 15 October 2010. [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Coroners\\_Court/ll\\_coroners.nsf/vwFiles/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf/\\$file/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Coroners_Court/ll_coroners.nsf/vwFiles/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf/$file/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf)
- Coronial findings and recommendations in the matter of Melissa Jay Tatchell. (2010). Coroners Court of South Australia. Decision handed down on 22/06/2011. [www.courts.sa.gov.au/courts/coroner/findings/findings\\_2011/Tatchell\\_Melissa\\_Jay.pdf](http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/courts/coroner/findings/findings_2011/Tatchell_Melissa_Jay.pdf)

*Issue: Management plan when working with clients who have suicidal thoughts*

- Summary of the findings and recommendations handed down by the New South Wales' Deputy Coroner in the matter of Charmaine Margaret Dragun on 15 October 2010. [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Coroners\\_Court/ll\\_coroners.nsf/vwFiles/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf/\\$file/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Coroners_Court/ll_coroners.nsf/vwFiles/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf/$file/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf)

*Issue: Monitoring client for signs of problems with medication, e.g., overmedication*

- Coronial findings and recommendations in the matter of Melissa Jay Tatchell. (2010). Coroners Court of South Australia. Decision handed down on 22/06/2011. [www.courts.sa.gov.au/courts/coroner/findings/findings\\_2011/Tatchell\\_Melissa\\_Jay.pdf](http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/courts/coroner/findings/findings_2011/Tatchell_Melissa_Jay.pdf)

*Issue: Practising within field of expertise (Competency)*

- Summary of the findings and recommendations handed down by the New South Wales' Deputy Coroner in the matter of Charmaine Margaret Dragun on 15 October 2010. [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Coroners\\_Court/ll\\_coroners.nsf/vwFiles/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf/\\$file/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Coroners_Court/ll_coroners.nsf/vwFiles/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf/$file/DragunCharmaine072000Summary.pdf)

## National Psychology Examination

The Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) is currently consulting on the Exposure Draft of the National Psychology Examination Curriculum.

The Board has determined that from 1 July 2013 a national psychology examination will apply to provisional psychologists who are in the supervised practice pathway to general registration (4+2 and 5+1) to be sat in their sixth and final year of training, prior to being granted general registration. It is intended that the exam will also apply to overseas applicants and practitioners returning to practice after lengthy periods without practising, or where there are concerns about practice. Various exemptions will apply for sitting the examination, such as completing Masters or Doctorate level education which includes examinations in the sixth year.

Persons applying for general registration before 1 July 2013 will not be required to sit the examination.

The three hour multiple-choice examination will test candidates' knowledge of the application of psychology to general registered practice. It will not test foundational information from the undergraduate curriculum, but will focus instead on areas of applied practice consolidated in the final two years of study. A series of case studies illustrating various typical scenarios likely to be encountered within psychology practice will be

presented, and candidates will be asked to identify the best option to solve them. The scenarios will cover areas important to the skills of a psychologist with general registration beginning their practice.

Candidates will need to demonstrate their understanding of:

- common ethical dilemmas and professional issues
- psychological tests and assessments
- various common psychological interventions involved in service delivery, and
- methods and forms of communication in the psychology profession that take into consideration socio-cultural and other factors.

Consultation Paper nine outlines the Board's development of the examination, and Consultation Paper 13 is an exposure draft of the curriculum. In setting the examination, the Board has set the material at a level appropriate for a beginning newly registered psychologist and the common general knowledge expected of all psychologists entering the profession. Further consultation in 2012 will include information on the test centres and dates of the examinations, as well as information on re-sitting the examination if the previous attempt was failed. For additional information or to provide a submission concerning Consultation Paper 13 please visit the Board's website.

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## Advertising

The National Law includes new obligations in relation to advertising by registered health practitioners. The Board, along with the other nine National Boards, has developed advertising guidelines that clarify its expectations of practitioners in this area. The guidelines are published on the Board's website.

The Board expects practitioners to ensure that any advertising they undertake complies with the guidelines.

This being the first year of the National Scheme, the Board has taken a largely educative approach to help practitioners understand the law and the new requirements set down in its advertising guidelines.

The coming year will see a more structured approach to addressing concerns about advertising. This will include an escalating series of warnings to practitioners, initially reminding them of their obligations about advertising and ultimately, possible prosecution for non-compliance with the

Board's standards. If a National Board deems that a practitioner's failure to comply with a Board's request warrants it, matters related to advertising can also be progressed through the conduct, health and performance pathways.

AHPRA will also be working with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to ensure the most appropriate investigation and prosecution of false and misleading advertising.

The role of the National Board is to protect the public. Anyone with concerns about their health practitioner, or advertising by health practitioners that does not appear to be in the public interest, should contact AHPRA. The Board relies on the public and members of the profession to bring their concerns to its attention, as advertising, particularly through web-based media, is growing and can be difficult to monitor.

It is important to note that neither Boards nor AHPRA review or vet specific advertising proposed by practitioners for compliance with advertising guidelines.

## Review of 4+2 guidelines – your opinions are important

The national registration standards and guidelines of the Board came into effect on 1 July 2010 and, in accordance with AHPRA policy, are reviewed within three years. On the advice of the Board's Registration Committee the Board is preparing to review the *Guidelines for 4+2 internship program: provisional psychologists and supervisors* for June 2013. The Board will develop a Consultation Paper in 2012 with proposed changes to the *Guidelines for 4+2 internship program* however, before this Consultation Paper is developed, the Board is interested in hearing from interns, supervisors, new registrants, employers and other interested persons on any aspect of the national 4+2 program, either positive or negative, including comment on issues such as:

- availability of internship places and the amount, range and suitability of client activities provided within the workplace
- the experience and learning gained from case studies and case examples
- supervisor issues (including the experience of providing supervision and secondary supervision, support of supervision by workplaces, and reporting)

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## 4+2 Internship Program – the secret to success

The Psychology Board of Australia's 4+2 internship program is one of the two current pathways to general registration. To assist both supervisees and supervisors in understanding the requirements of the program the Board has published *Guidelines for the 4+2 internship program: provisional psychologists and supervisors* which are available at: [www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/4-2-Internship-Program/Codes-Guidelines-Policies.aspx](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/4-2-Internship-Program/Codes-Guidelines-Policies.aspx). More recently and in response to specific enquiries, the Board has also released the following policies:

- [Policy for changing states for pre 1 July 2010 4+2 registrants](#)
- [Policy for 4+2 internship program limited work role, and](#)
- [Policy for unsatisfactory progress in the 4+2 internship program.](#)

FAQs on the 4+2 internship program have also been recently published at [www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/4-2-Internship-Program/FAQ.aspx](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au/Registration/Provisional/4-2-Internship-Program/FAQ.aspx).

- the availability of full-time internships and effects on intern program duration, and
- the capacity of workplaces to adapt to overcome limited placement rulings and ensure lifespan competence.

In providing advice to the Board, specific examples and details would be most helpful, and potential solutions welcomed. As this is a preliminary consultation and responses will be treated in confidence and will not be published on the Board's website. The Board will analyse responses to assist in this review and to shape the direction of formal public consultation in late 2012. Please note that previous correspondence to the Board on these issues will be included in this analysis.

Please forward responses marked "4plus2review" to [psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au) by 20 December 2011.

*Due to the anticipated high number of submissions personalised responses will not be sent, however we would like to thank you in advance for your contribution.*

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## Considerations in securing a placement for the 4+2 program.

Central to the internship program is the securing of a primary and secondary supervisor with the skills and interests to assist the applicant attain the eight capabilities of the internship program. An appropriate work role/s must also be secured and careful consideration given by both the applicant and the proposed supervisors as to whether the work role/s will enable the applicant to achieve the capabilities. Thought must also be given to the likelihood of the need for an alternate/additional work role during the internship program and to prepare for this well in advance. Applicants and their proposed supervisors must consult the Guidelines for the internship program and all relevant policies (including the limited work role policy) when considering work roles and completing the supervision plan.

The expectation is that at the conclusion of the internship program, a provisional psychologist has sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge, skills and experience to operate as an independent general psychologist.

Limiting psychological practice to a specific area of practice during the internship program will not prepare a provisional psychologist for this general psychologist role. While our *Code of Ethics* demands that we do not practise outside our area of knowledge, there are key competencies that all psychologists must have (regardless of whether you want to pursue a career in mental health, organisational psychology or school psychology etc) and the internship program is designed to ensure these training objectives are addressed.

### Case Examples

The regional Boards of the national Board have been processing progress reports submitted under the national internship program. The standard of the case examples submitted as part of these progress reports have varied. The Board encourages provisional psychologists to ensure that the case examples highlight their developing skills in general psychological assessment, and intervention planning and delivery. In order to present their work as succinctly as possible, the Board has developed a [fact sheet](#) on preparation of case examples which the provisional psychologists and their supervisors are encouraged to read. The focus of case examples is on quality rather than quantity of words, however provisional psychologists are able to exceed the recommended 400 word limit if this is essential to demonstrate skill. The ability to write comprehensive and concise reports is an important psychological skill. Different clients should be reported for the *assessment and measurement*, and *interventions* case examples to allow provisional psychologists to demonstrate breadth of practice and competence.

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### Renewal of Registration

All psychologists with General or Non-Practising registration are currently due to renew their registration by **30 November 2011**.

This renew period includes psychologists in NSW and WA who recently renewed their registration for five months (from 1 July to 30 November 2011) to bring their renewal date into line with the registration cycle for all psychologists in Australia.

If you have not already renewed, you should renew now.

The easiest way to renew your registration is via [online renewal](#) using your health practitioner login and password. All login details were posted to psychologists in 2010. They can also be obtained by [contacting AHPRA](#).

### Internship Program – changing states

There are a number of provisional psychologists who commenced their training prior to the transition date to national registration (1 July 2010 or 18 October 2010 for Western Australia) and who remain subject to the requirements of their state based program. It is important that these provisional psychologists continue to submit documentation and comply with the requirements of the training program they are undertaking.

If a provisional psychologist commenced their training prior to the transition date then, as long as they stay within the same State, they can continue under that program – even if the work role changes. However, if a provisional psychologist moves to a different State or Territory then they must transfer to the new national 4+2 internship program. Provided that the outgoing supervisor prepares a satisfactory progress report, credit may be granted towards the new program.

### Supervisors

Applications to act as a primary and secondary supervisor for the national internship program are strong. While the role of supervisor is a demanding one, it is also very rewarding. Supervisors are responsible to the provisional psychologist to assist in their professional training and development and to the Board to act as a gate keeper to the profession. The Board would like to thank all those supervisors who currently supervise trainee psychologists for their significant contribution in upholding the standards of the profession.

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If you have already sent in your renewal you can check if it has been received by AHPRA using the online [Renewal Received Confirmation](#).

If you miss the 30 November deadline for renew you will still be able to practise and renew during the late period from 1 December to 31 December 2011 but you will incur a late renewal fee. You can keep practising beyond 31 December as long as AHPRA has received your application by this date. If your name appears on the on-line register then you may continue practising.

If you do not renew before 31 December 2011 you will be removed from the register and will no longer be able to practise. If you wish to resume practice you will need to apply for registration again.

To assist psychologists who wish to keep practising, the Board offers a 'Fast Track' registration process for previously registered practitioners until 30 January 2012. Fast Track applications allow previously registered psychologists a quicker registration process. Users of Fast Track registration will incur a Fast Track application fee on top of the annual registration fee.

After 30 January 2012, the Fast Track registration process will end and registration may take up to 90 days to complete, depending on the complexity of your application. You may not practise during this time.

Practising unregistered can incur a fine of up to \$30,000 for individuals.

The Board and AHPRA have no discretion over these dates and there are no exceptions. The best way to keep practising is to make sure you renew by 30 November.

The annual renewal fee, late fee, and fast track application fees are set out in the [schedule of fees](#).

#### **A note on provisional psychologists**

Most provisional psychologists are not currently due to renew because the registration expiry date for psychologists with Provisional registration is not 30 November – instead it is determined case by case reflecting the date of initial application. You can check your registration expiry date by searching for yourself in the [Register of Practitioners](#).

Further information can be found on the Psychology Board of Australia's website [www.psychologyboard.gov.au](http://www.psychologyboard.gov.au).

#### **Psychology Board of Australia**

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