

- 7 DEC 2009

GENERAL MANAGER, ACCESS AND EQUITY



Chair, Psychology Board of Australia  
C/- National Registration and Accreditation  
Implementation Project  
PO Box 2089  
WODEN ACT 2606

DOC09/137107

Dear Associate Professor Brin Grenyer

I write to offer the Psychology Board of Australia support and seek direction in relation to school counsellors/psychologists working in the state school systems across Australia. As you are aware, there are extensive psychological services across Australia to schools providing pastoral care, support and enhancing the wellbeing of students. Nationally, there are a number of different models for providing psychological services to schools.

The NSW Department of Education and Training has committed significant resources to supporting its school counsellors in the processes involved in becoming registered psychologists in NSW. There are over 680 registered psychologists working in the department and over another 80 engaged in intern programs with the NSW Psychologists Registration Board.

As school principals are more and more in a position to engage the services of suitably qualified staff to work with school aged students who may be at risk of educational failure or disengagement arising from mental health problems, the competencies, skills and knowledge of these personnel need to be clearly articulated.

I note there is no school psychology specialist in the proposed list of titles in the recent *consultation paper on registration standards and related matters*. The titles listed appear to be based on the current colleges in the Australian Psychological Society. These reflect historical areas of practice that need to be updated to reflect current and emerging practice.

The discipline of school psychology reflects the integration of school teaching pedagogy with psychology to produce unique insight into the developmental, mental health and disability needs of students. The understandings and skills provided by this integration are such that specialist registration is warranted. The defining of the competencies behind such a specialised title such as 'specialist school psychologist' will mean the principal and the school community are better informed in making choices and decisions regarding the engagement of staff.

**NSW Department of Education and Training**

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If the Board wishes to promote discussion on this issue the NSW Department of Education and Training is prepared to write to the other states in order to progress thinking regarding the competencies of specialist school psychologists.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deonne M. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'S'.

Deonne Smith  
**GENERAL MANAGER**  
**ACCESSAND EQUITY**

26 November 2009