



PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWSLETTER JULY 2008

BOARD MEMBERS

Ms Cindy Wall	Chair, Psychologist
Ms Cherrie Hardy	Psychologist
Ms Shirley Grace	Psychologist
Ms Judith Dikstein	Public Member
Ms Beth Walker	Public Member (until 24/7/2008)

BOARD SUPPORT

Ms Jill Huck	Registrar
Ms Colette Pethick	Policy/Research
Ms Sharon Krause	A/Complaints Mgr
Ms Julie Burrows	Registrations Mgr

BOARD ADVISERS

Mr Ted Milliken, Ms Christine Martins and Ms Jeannette Stott.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the first Newsletter for 2008, my first as Chair of the Board.

Another exciting and challenging year is anticipated by the Board with ongoing work associated with supervised practice and progression towards the national registration and accreditation.

We have experienced big changes to the Board membership over the last 12 months and I would like to thank Jeannette Stott, Margaret Johnson, Vidula Garde (psychologists), Margaret Seccafien (public member) and Beth Walker (public member, whose term expires 24/7/2008) for their significant contributions to the Board during their periods of appointment. Jeannette served on the Board for four years and was the Board Chair for that period. Whilst Vidula served on the Board for three years of which she was the Board Chair for over six months

A big welcome to Cherrie Hardy (psychologists) and Ms Judith Dikstein (public member) who were appointed to the Board by the Minister in 2007. I was also appointed in 2007 and am a self-employed Clinical Psychologist who has practised psychology for over 12 years of which 7 have been in the Northern Territory. I have a Masters in Psychology (Clinical and Health) and I am close to completing a PhD through Monash University.

Cherrie and has over 7 years experience as a psychologist, in both NSW and the NT. She has also worked privately in remote NSW communities, in the forensic arena at Darwin Correctional Centre and is now employed in the private sector.

Dr Shirley Grace holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Bachelor of Social Science and Bachelor of Social Welfare. She is employed by the Department of Justice and has broad practice experience in the clinical, academic and research areas

Ms Judith Dikstein is qualified as a Social Worker, Mediator, and Legal Practitioner and has recently retired from full time work and is a part time student in Visual Arts at Charles Darwin University.

Mr Bruce Toohill was recently appointed by the Minister as a Public Member of the Board as of 25/7/2008), he has holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Science. He is self-employed and provides consultancy services to the food and agricultural business industries. Bruce has extensive experience on Boards and has a strong interest in contributing to society through Board membership.

The Board has continued to work towards providing guidance to the profession in the interest of ensuring maintenance of quality health care in the Northern Territory.

I strongly encourage all psychologists to develop an understanding of the *Health Practitioners Act* and familiarise themselves with the Board's policies and guidelines.

I hope this Newsletter provides assistance and guidance in your day-to-day practice as well as an understanding of the current and potential changes in regulation of psychologists in Australia. In addition and in the interest of the profession I strongly encourage you to participate in the survey referred to later in this Newsletter. Please contact the Board if you have items of interest you would like the Board to address in Newsletters.

Best Wishes

Cindy Wall (Chair)

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING DATES

Please note documents and other information that is to be considered at a Board meeting, must be received no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date. The Board cannot guarantee that documents received after this date will be addressed at the next scheduled meeting. Late documents will be assessed for the level of urgency. Should your matter be urgent please contact the Board as soon as possible.

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Remaining meeting dates scheduled for 2008:
21 July 20 October 15 December

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following policies have been changed, re-endorsed or developed in the last 12 months:

- *Statement on Sexual Relationships Between Health Practitioners and Their Patients*
- *Identification Validation Requirements*
- *Psychological services via telecommunications*
- *Psychological services via telecommunications, addendum to the Supervised Practice Policy*
- *Entitlement to Registration Policy and Application for Registration Form Review*
- *Short Term Supervision Policy*

NATIONAL REGISTRATION & ACCREDITATION MODEL

As previously advised the new arrangements will achieve national regulation and accreditation of nine professional groups listed: *Medical Practitioners; Chiropractors; Dental (Dentists, Dental Specialists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Therapists, Prosthetists); Nurses & Midwives; Optometrists; Osteopaths; Pharmacists; Physiotherapists, and Psychologists.*

At this point in time it is projected that *Occupational Therapists, Aboriginal Health Workers and Radiographers* will continue to be regulated under current Northern Territory legislation.

Progress on the development and approval of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Registration and Accreditation model was been delayed due to the November 2007 election. However, recent progress confirms a commitment to progressing this issue. Dr Louise Morauta, formerly of the Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canberra, has been appointed to lead the National Registration and Accreditation Implementation Project, to prepare for the scheme to be operational from 1 July 2010.

MANDATORY REPORTING

The role and scope of child protection activity is primarily prescribed by the principal child protection Acts in each Australian jurisdiction.

The ***Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*** was passed in the November 2007 Northern Territory Parliamentary sitting. The new Act provides a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Measures to prevent harm and exploitation of children;
- Strengthening of provisions to support families to care for their children;
- Extending the support for young person's leaving the Department of Health and Community Services, Chief Executive Officer's care;
- Provisions to move a child to a safe place;
- The introduction of screening for child related employment;
- The establishment of a Children's Commissioner, broadening the scope of regulated children services; and
- The establishment of Review Teams and a Child Death Review and Prevention Committee.

A planned staged implementation process is underway for the commencement of the different parts of the new Act, with the Children's Commissioner position recently recruited to.

For further information please refer to: www.nt.gov.au/lant/hansard/hansard.shtml

PSYCHOLOGISTS WORKFORCE SURVEY

The Council of Psychology Registration Boards (CPRB) has commissioned a survey to gather information about the current state of the Australian psychology workforce, so that future planning is based on accurate data gathered by the profession itself. The Council recognised that there is a need to ensure that Governments, State and Federal, be provided with relevant, current, accurate and unbiased data on the availability, range and quality of psychological services to make sound funding and policy decisions.

In order to best achieve this, it was agreed that a properly resourced study be conducted by the Boards in association with the Australian Psychological Society (APS). All Registration Boards and the APS support the survey and are depending on a high response rate from psychologists. CPRB is grateful to the New South Wales Psychologist Registration Board for funding the survey.

The gathering of this data will help to assure continued access by the public to quality psychology services. We ask that all psychologists complete the confidential survey in the knowledge that they are contributing to developing a clear picture of the state of the psychology workforce and psychology service provision in Australia. Future planning and

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developments of benefit to the community and psychologists will depend on this.

The survey is available on the following website:
<http://www.psychologist-workforce-profile.com>

If you do not have access to the Internet, please request a hardcopy version of the Survey from the Board.

SUPERVISED PRACTICE

The Board reminds conditionally registered psychologists undertaking supervised practice that in accordance with the Supervised Practice Policy (1.2) they are required to hold current Conditional Registration and display their Annual Practising Certificate in a public and secure place within their area of practice. In addition pursuant to 2.8 of the policy and in the interests of informed consent, Conditional Registrants are expected to inform their clients that they are conditionally registered.

The Board thanks all those psychologists who have continued to provide an essential service to the profession through supervision of conditional registered psychologists undertaking the Board's Supervised Practice program.

As you are aware the Board is obligated to ensure full registration is founded on solid evidence that a conditional registrant is competent to practice as a psychologist. Your assessment of conditional registrants is paramount to providing this evidence.

A number of supervisors have commenced group supervision sessions. Supervision records most often provide evidence of a structured approach to identifying and addressing learning needs of the group. However, some supervisors have approved group supervision, when it is identifiable that the group session is more of the nature of a multidisciplinary team meeting or the content is of a generic rather than professional practice specific nature. If you would like clarification in relation to what will be approved by the Board, please make a written submission to the Board for its consideration.

The Board takes this opportunity to highlight some of the requirement of the Supervised Practice Policy, (available on the Board's website or through this office).

Supervisees must:

- notify the Board of changes to employment and/or supervision arrangements within 28 days;

- notify the Board cessation of supervision, whether temporary or permanent within 28 days.; and
- forward supervision reports to the Board within 28 days of completion of the period of supervision.

Despite modifications last year the reporting forms have continued to cause concern to a number of conditional registrants and supervisors. The major issue appears to be incorrect statistical calculations. It is recommended that supervisees maintain statistics correctly and in an ongoing manner and check calculations carefully.

Conditional registrants not adhering to the Supervised Practice Policy may be in breach of the conditions of their registration. In such instances the Board may review their registration pursuant to section 30 of the *Health Practitioners Act*.

SUPERVISOR / CONDITIONAL REGISTRANT INFORMATION SESSIONS

Each year the Board provides information sessions on Supervised Practice, for supervisors, conditional registrants and other interested psychologists. The Board has received strong feedback on the value of these sessions. **Information Sessions 2007**

- **ALICE SPRINGS** – to be advised
- **DARWIN 21 July 2008 6pm to 8pm**

Please contact the Board to confirm your attendance by 15 July 2008.

KNOW YOUR ACT

Psychologists and 10 other health profession groups are regulated under the *Health Practitioners Act* in the Northern Territory. The purpose of the Act is to ensure public protection.

Annual Practising Certificates (APC) 40(2)

A practising certificate is evidence that until the due date, or the date determined by the Board the health practitioner is authorised to practice in the Territory. **Note most APC expire 30 September each year.**

Always keep your APC in a secure place and check it for the following:

- date on which your APC expires;
- accuracy of information on your APC; and
- conditions (if applicable) listed on the APC.

Please contact the Board immediately if the details on your APC are incorrect.

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Those practitioners with conditional registration must ensure they are compliant with the conditions. To do otherwise is a breach of the legislation and may lead to a review of registration pursuant to s30 of the *Health Practitioners Act*.

Practising Unlicensed

This past year has once again seen a number of psychologists practising unlicensed for various periods of time. No matter how long a period that some one practises unlicensed, it is a breach of Section 101 (1)(b) of the *Health Practitioners Act* and is: a risk to clients, employers and practitioners. In addition it may impact on your employment status; exclude your entitlement to Medicare rebates; and may alter indemnification arrangements.

Should you find yourself practising unlicensed, it is in the best interest of your patients, yourself and your employer to rectify the situation immediately.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you hold current registration. The Board notes that a number of those practising unlicensed have abused staff at the Board's office. This is not only inappropriate and unprofessional, but may lead to a complaint against the practitioner.

S46 Notice of change of name or address

A health practitioner must, within 30 days of changing his or her name, personal address or business address, give the relevant Board notice in writing of the change and the new name or address, as the case may be.

Failing to update the Board with changes of name / address details means that you will not receive any correspondence from the Board. In effect this means you will miss the opportunity to receive the application to renew your registration; keep up with changes to policy; and receive newsletters.

S111 Unconscionable conduct

A person must not, either directly or indirectly, attempt to influence, coerce or otherwise cause a health practitioner to conduct or provide a health service that does not comply with the standards contained in the code applying to the Psychologists.

S117 Employer Notice of Misconduct or Incompetence

If a person who employs a health practitioner terminates or suspends the practitioner's employment because of alleged or actual misconduct or incompetence to practise, the

person must provide a written report of the circumstances of the termination or suspension to the Board and to the practitioner.

S118 Protection from Liability

This section applies to a person who; makes a complaint; provides the Board with information; assists the Board with a preliminary investigation (including an assessment report or opinion); assists or provides information under Part 6; or assists or provides information to the Tribunal. This person is not civilly or criminally liable for an act done by the person in good faith in taking an action referred to above.

Annual Renewal of Registration

Renewal of Registration forms are posted to registrants in August annually. Please note non-receipt of a renewal notice is not an acceptable reason for practising unlicensed. It is important to note that non-receipt of a renewal notice is most often linked to the registrant's failure to notify the Board of a change of address.

Employers are reminded to ensure they have sound processes in place to ensure all psychologists and other regulated health profession employees hold current registration, at the time of commencing employment and by the renewal date each year.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT / IMPAIRMENT STATISTICS

As at 31 March 2008 there was one conduct matter before the Board.

REGISTRATION STATISTICS

As at **31 March 2008** there were **243** psychologists on the Register (11 more than at 31 March 2007), of whom: **211** were full registrations, and **32** were conditional registrations.

STOP PRESS!

Remember the renewal date for registration is 30 September. This year's renewal notices will be posted on or about Monday 8 August 2007.

CONTACT DETAILS

Psychologists Board of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 4221 DARWIN NT 0801
Telephone +61 8 8999 4157
Fax +61 8 8999 4196
Email healthprofessions.ths@nt.gov.au

Web Address:

www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards