

BOARD MEMBERS

Ms Cindy Wall	Chair
Ms Cherrie Hardy	Practitioner Member
Dr Shirley Grace	Practitioner Member
Ms Judith Dikstein	Public Member
Mr Bruce Toohill	Public Member

BOARD SUPPORT

Ms Jill Huck	Registrar
Ms Colette Pethick	Assistant Registrar
Ms Donna Murdock	Policy and Research
Ms Louise Bennett	Complaints
Ms Julie Burrows	Registrations

BOARD ADVISERS

Mr Ted Milliken
Ms Christine Martins
Ms Jeannette Stott

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As we all return for the start of another year in the Territory I hope that everyone had a safe and happy Christmas and is looking forward to a rewarding New Year. The Board anticipates an exciting and challenging year in 2009, with ongoing work associated with supervised practice, and progression towards national registration and accreditation. I would like to thank our outgoing members, Vidula Garde and Beth Walker, for their valuable contributions to the Board. Subsequently, it is with much pleasure that I am able to advise of the appointment of Dr Shirley Grace and Mr Bruce Toohill to the Board.

Shirley Grace is new to the Territory and is enjoying her second wet season in Darwin. Shirley has over 20 years experience across various practice settings in New South Wales and New Zealand including mental health, university education and correctional services. She has specialised in working with survivors of violence and also violent offenders. Her research interests have a particular focus on youth violence.

In taking up her new post with NT Correctional Services, Shirley has found the Territory has many unique aspects making it an exciting place to work and live. Her commitment to quality psychological services for the public has led her to becoming a Board member.

The Board would also like to welcome Public Member Mr Bruce Toohill. Bruce moved from Mildura to Darwin in late 1976 with CSIRO Horticultural Research to develop their tropical

tree fruits program. He then spent over 12 years in the Kimberley with the WA government, after which he managed the NT's largest mango farm at Katherine for over a decade. Bruce moved back to Darwin in early 2006 and now works as a consultant.

Bruce has first hand experience with Bipolar Disorder, having a close family member who has suffered with the disorder for 17 years. Bruce has worked with people from all over the Territory and has a strong interest in community service. I would like to welcome Bruce to the Board and I look forward to his contribution as a public member of the Board.

In 2009, the Board will continue to work towards providing guidance to the profession in the interest of ensuring professional practice standards and the maintenance of quality psychological services 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. The Act, in addition to a working knowledge of the Australian Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines, is essential to our professions integrity and ensures the public receives quality psychological services.

The Board anticipates increased collaborative activity in 2009, including providing various competency-based workshops and supervision information sessions. If you have items of interest you would like the Board to address in Newsletters or ideas related to supporting the practice of psychology in the NT, please contact the Board.

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.

Best Wishes

Cindy Wall (Chair)

BOARD POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Board policy documents, procedural guidelines and forms, along with links to professional peak bodies are all available on the Board's web site, with the following policies currently being considered by the Board for endorsement or review:

PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2009

- *Supervised Practice Policy and Related Forms*
- *Recency of Practice and Currency of Qualifications Policy*
- *Board Approved Short Term Supervision*

Should you wish to learn more about any of the Board's policies please visit our website at www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards or contact the Psychologists Board of the Northern Territory directly on (08) 8999 4157.

BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF THE TERM "INTERN PSYCHOLOGIST"

The Board wishes to announce that conditionally registered psychologists are now permitted to use the title "Intern Psychologist". It is envisaged that this will promote a relevant and professional identity for those proceeding through the supervised practice program. In addition, the use of this title may enhance consumer, employer, and other non-psychology professionals understanding of our professional process and training requirements. The need to provide appropriate information and consent regarding "intern" status remains, and is outlined in the following section.

SUPERVISED PRACTICE

The Board reminds Intern Psychologists undertaking supervised practice that in accordance with the Supervised Practice Policy (1.2) they are required to hold current conditional registration with the NT Board 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, intern psychologists are expected to inform their clients that they are conditionally registered and under supervision. This should occur verbally, and in addition to being reflected in any written consents, reports, file notes, and documentation. It is important that adequate time and effort be devoted to clarifying the professional responsibilities of being an intern psychologist and responding to client questions.

Supervision is both a challenging and rewarding endeavour, and the Board recognises and thanks all those psychologists who have continued to provide an essential service to the profession through supervision of intern

psychologists undertaking the Board's Supervised Practice program.

As you are aware the Board is obliged to ensure that a decision to grant full registration is founded on solid evidence that a conditional registrant is competent to practice as a psychologist. Supervisor assessment of intern psychologists is paramount to providing this evidence, and the Board aims to support supervisors in fulfilling this role.

A number of supervisors have commenced group supervision sessions. Supervision records usually provide evidence of a structured approach to identifying and addressing the 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 requirements 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 of 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 intern psychologists and supervisors. The major issue appears to be incorrect statistical calculations. It is recommended that interns maintain statistics correctly and in an ongoing manner and check calculations carefully.

Intern psychologists 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 2004*.

PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2009

SUPERVISION INFORMATION SESSIONS

Each year the Board provides information sessions on Supervised Practice, for supervisors, interns and other interested psychologists. These sessions provide an excellent opportunity to clarify any issues related to supervised practice, offer suggestions and feedback to the Board, and to connect with peers. In 2009, the Board plans to expand the supervised practice information session to include a half-day workshop on meeting the Psychological Assessment Competency. Please find your invitation below:

“Meeting the Psychological Assessment Competency” Workshop 1.00pm – 4.00pm
and
“Supervised Practice Information Session”
4.30pm – 5.30pm
to be held on
Tuesday 17 March 2009
at
Health Professions Licensing Authority
2nd Floor Harbour View Plaza
Cnr McMinn and Bennett Streets Darwin

To secure your place at the workshop, and to assist the Board in catering, please RSVP by **Monday 9 March 2009 to (08) 8999 5147 or via email to healthprofessions.ths@nt.gov.au**.

Dates for Alice Springs are to be confirmed.

NATIONAL REGISTRATION & ACCREDITATION SCHEME (NRAS)

As advised in previous newsletters, 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 has been progressing at a steady rate, with the release of a series of discussion papers on operational matters such as registration,

complaint handling, information sharing and accreditation. The Council of Psychologist Registration Boards (CPRB) has been pivotal in coordinating and collating the feedback from the various jurisdictions and CPRB submissions; along with copies of current consultation papers are available at www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp

The Board supports the introduction of a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme as it will confirm the present Board role of regulating the profession, setting professional standards and protecting the public. The next few months will be a time of consultation to finalise how the new scheme will look. The consultation is critical on how the new scheme will operate and how it will reflect the aims of the current Northern Territory Psychologists Board.

It is planned that the new scheme will have one registration fee to work anywhere in Australia. This means that there will be a consistency of standards and registration throughout the country, thereby removing some of the current policy and legislative differences between States and Territories. Under the agreement each of the health professions will have their own national board with each board being responsible for deciding on their specific operating structure and necessary local representation.

For the latest information on national registration and accreditation, visit the Health Workforce Australia at www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp

KNOW YOUR ACT

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

Annual Practising Certificates s40(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 Northern Territory. **Note most APC expire on 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.

PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2009

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 someone 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 clients, yourself and your employer to rectify the situation immediately. It is your responsibility to ensure that you hold current registration.

Employers are also 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.

Notice of change of name or address s46

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.

Unconscionable conduct s111

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.

Employer Notice of Misconduct or Incompetence s117

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.

Protection from Liability s118

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.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT STATISTICS

As at end January 2009 there was one conduct matter before the Board.

REGISTRATION STATISTICS

As at end January 2009 there were 253 psychologists on the Register and 35 conditional registrants undertaking supervised practice.

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING DATES

Please note that all 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.

Monday 23 February 2009

Monday 27 April 2009

Tuesday 30 June 2009

Monday 24 August 2009

Monday 26 October 2009

Monday 30 November 2009

CONTACT DETAILS

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