

## 1. CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Since the last newsletter, the Board has been extremely busy 'moving house' and setting up an independent secretariat after a long association with the Registration Boards Secretariat ('RBS'). It is a mark of the dedication of our staff that this shift was completed so smoothly and with only minor disruptions to Board business during the week of the move.

This newsletter includes some very important updates about staff changes, recent appointees to the Board, and other pressures that the Board is grappling with. It is hoped that by providing an update on a large number of areas that this will help the profession keep abreast of impacting issues. Representatives of the Board also look forward to meeting practitioners at the upcoming conferences.

**Lois Surgenor**  
Chairperson  
New Zealand Psychologists Board

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## 2. PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD NEWS IN BRIEF

### Update on Board Appointments

The Ministry of Health has recently announced the appointment of Board members for the next three year term. Many existing Board members have been reappointed, which will greatly assist with continuity and retaining the expertise built up over past years and especially since the enactment of the HPCA Act. With the resignation of Steve Osborne (arising from his appointment as Chief Executive/Registrar), and the requirement for a third layperson to be appointed, several changes have occurred. Joining Siau Alefaio, who was appointed in April 2006, the Board now welcomes Karen Ramsay (Dunedin) who commenced Board membership on 12 August 2006. Catherine Love has been reappointed as a layperson, and Ron Chambers has been reappointed for one further year (completing his maximum 9 year term of continuous appointment). Accordingly, it is expected that the Ministry will call for nominations to replace Ron in mid 2007. In April this year, the Board elected Dr Lois Surgenor as Chairperson and Dr Catherine Love as Deputy Chairperson.

### Board Moving to Governance

In December 2005 the Board determined that it would move to a policy-governance model of operation. This is in keeping with how many other regulatory boards have evolved and with a need to refocus on policy, rather than Board members being required to do much of the day-to-day work. A secretariat has been established (see below) and over the coming months the Board will develop clear policy which will specify the outcomes the Board expects the secretariat to achieve. Accordingly, the number of within-Board working committees (currently 10) is likely to reduce. While initially challenging in the set up, we believe that this will enhance overall Board functioning, including protecting the public and fulfilling our obligations to the profession.

### Board Secretariat/Office

As foreshadowed in our last newsletter (December 2005), the Board has set up an independent secretariat to meet the demands of the HPCA Act and to take us into the future. After an extensive search we have leased offices in St John House, 114 The Terrace, Wellington, close to several other health regulation authorities, our legal contacts, and the Ministry of Health offices. The lease and refurbishment costs have been kept very reasonable, in part by sharing the space and some costs with the Social Workers Registration Board. Their CEO, Sean McKinley, will be well known to many of you from his days with the New Zealand Psychological Society.

The most expensive part of the move has been the development of a comprehensive database that will allow us to better manage the "New Zealand Register of Psychologists" and the thousands of application, renewal, competence, complaints, and financial transactions we complete each year. Eventually, portions of the database will be made interactive so that registered psychologists can update their own records and complete most routine transactions online. Our goal is to provide the public with accurate information, and to make it as simple as possible for psychologists to keep their information current. (See Item 4 - Meet the Staff) Please note our new website address and contact details under 'Contact the Board' (see left).

### Psychotherapy Update

The Ministry of Health has completed their consultation on the form of regulation for the Psychotherapists, but no final position has yet been announced. Following their receipt of submissions, Ministry officials requested a meeting with representatives of the NZ Psychologists Board and the NZ Psychotherapists Association. This confirmed our belief that if the Psychotherapists were joined to an existing Board, it would likely be ours. The positions taken in the Board's submission (available on [www.psychologistsboard.org.nz](http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz)) were strongly reiterated, and the Psychotherapists were equally as passionate in their rejection of a merger.

Regretfully, the Psychotherapists have taken umbrage with some of our submission but we stand by it and will continue to make our case assertively. The Board is clear that 'blending' the Board with any other regulatory authority would be seriously detrimental to our work and would risk confusing the public.

### Psychology Profession Advisory Forum

With the implementation of the HPCA Act no longer a dominant focus, the former "PHWP" (Psychologists HPCAA Working Party) is being transformed into an Advisory Forum where representatives of the profession (including the NZ Psychological Society and NZ College of Clinical Psychologists) and representatives of the tertiary education organisations can meet regularly with Board members to discuss matters of mutual concern. Recent agenda items included a proposal for the Forum to absorb "PWAG" (the Psychologists Workforce Advisory Group); an update on accreditation processes, discussion around the possible merger with the Psychotherapists Board, and discussion on the work being done to improve Family Court related complaints procedures. (See also Item 5 – Complaints and Discipline Update)

### Vocational Scope Application Delays

The backlog of applications for vocational scopes is being cleared, with less than 100 now in process. The Board appreciates the patience shown by those still in the queue. To date approximately 1080 applications have been processed, with more than 900 Clinical and 130 Educational scopes granted. Enhanced processes, made possible by the addition of new staff, should ensure more efficient handling of future applications.

### Continued Competence Programme

The Board continues to build its framework and develop options for a Continued Competence Programme. Any proposed model will be sent out for full consultation to members of the profession and key stakeholders. This is expected to take place in 2007. In the meantime, it is important that all psychologists remember it is their ethical and legal responsibility to maintain competence in their area(s) of practice.

The "Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand" document (adopted by the Board in April 2006) is available to download from the Board's website.

### Board Presentations at NZCCP and NZPSS Conferences

The Board will once again be providing information (and 'question and answer') sessions at the NZ Psychological Society and NZ College of Clinical Psychologists 2006 Annual Conferences. We encourage registrants to come to these sessions for the latest news, information and advice.

- NZCCP – Saturday 9 September @ 10:30am–12:30pm;
- NZPSS – Tuesday 26 September @ 10:00am–12:00pm.

Please check the Society and College conference brochures for venue details.

### Annual Practising Certificates for 2007-2008 Reminder

A significant number of registered psychologists who held Annual Practising Certificates in the last APC year (01/04/2005-31/03/2006) have not yet applied to renew their APCs for the current (01/04/2006-31/03/2007) year. A late application fee applies, and if found to have been practising without a current APC these psychologists, their employers, and even their colleagues may be subject to penalties defined in Section 7 of the HPCA Act:

*"Every person commits an offence punishable on summary conviction by a fine not exceeding \$10,000 who contravenes this section."*

The Board will be following these cases up in the coming weeks, and is exploring options from publication of names to cancellation of entries from the NZ Register of Psychologists to enforce the requirements of the Act. (See also enclosed list and Item 7 – Registration Matters)

### Key dates for 2007/2008 APC applications:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>31/01/07</b> | APC Renewal Notices sent to last known address   |
| <b>06/02/07</b> | <i>Waitangi Day</i>  |
| <b>23/02/07</b> | Target date for psychologists to return Renewal Notices, APC applications and APC fee to the Board |
| <b>28/02/07</b> | APC mail out (first batch) 16/03/07 APC mail out (second batch)                                    |
| <b>30/03/07</b> | APC mail out (third batch)   |

To ensure you have your 2007/2008 APC in time to practise legally on 01/04/07, please send in your completed Renewal Notice and APC fee by the end of February 2007. There is no guarantee that APCs will be issued by 30/03/07 if you are late sending in your Renewal Notice or APC Application form.

(Note: APC Application forms are available on the Board's website).

Practising certificates for Trainee and Intern Psychologists will be managed separately from the bulk APC mail out for Registered Psychologists noted above.

### Website and Online Register

You can always find the latest news and information on the Board's website at [www.psychologistsboard.org.nz](http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz). The site also has an online version of the NZ Register of Psychologists where members of the public can check to see if a person is registered and holds a current APC. With our recent switch to a new database, all practitioners should check their own listing for accuracy, and should inform the Board immediately if any errors are found.

## 3. IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION – SCOPES OF PRACTICE

The Board has been hearing from psychologists and employers that vocational scopes are being used in ways that were never intended. Some employers and funders are insisting that psychologists hold a given scope as a condition of employment. While that is certainly any employer's prerogative, it is important that all parties understand the following:

***A vocational scope of practice does not "fence off" any exclusive territory (other than title use). Any psychologist can perform any activity, as long as they are demonstrably competent to do so, or are doing so under appropriate supervision (for example when training in a new area of practice). A vocational scope simply provides the practitioner with the right to use the scope's title, and thereby clearly and simply signal to the public (or an employer) their competence in that scope.***

In short, practice is not restricted by scope, but by competence. Only title use is restricted by scope. All psychologists are ethically and legally bound to practise only within the bounds of their competence.

Some employers and funders seem to be assuming that psychologists must have a specific vocational scope in order to competently provide the required service. Given the above clarification this can be seen to be untrue. For example, many highly competent and experienced practitioners working in the Family Court do not qualify for the Clinical Psychologist scope, but it would be a huge loss to the Court and to the families involved if these experts were denied work on that basis (as we are told may be starting to occur). The Board has brought this particular example to the attention of Judge Boshier, Principal Family Court Judge, to ensure that the public and the Family Court continue to have good access to a range of experienced and competent psychologists.

#### 4. MEET THE PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD STAFF

In December 2005 the Psychologists Board received advice based on an independent, external review of our administrative support services. The consultant said:

**“To achieve what is needed for the future and to minimise the risks the NZP Board needs to make fundamental changes to the way it operates. The Board needs to move to a governance/policy model. The role for Board members is governance. A shift needs to occur. The review has examined the best option to achieve the most effective and suitable structure to serve the future work of the NZP Board. The preferred option is to terminate the relationship with RBS and set up independently.”**

*New Zealand Psychologists Board administrative support services review: Consultant's report to the NZ Psychologists Board on the preferred options for administrative support services. Joan Baas, D Phil., 1 December 2005.*

On 3 July 2006, the Board opened its new offices in St John House, 114 The Terrace, Wellington. We have grown from two dedicated staff, employed by the Registration Board Secretariat (RBS) to service the Board, to six staff employed directly by the Psychologists Board. We introduce each of them and their roles to you now.

Our **CHIEF EXECUTIVE/REGISTRAR** is responsible for the overall management of the Board's administrative office, ensuring the effective implementation of the statutory functions of the HPCA Act (2003) and meeting of the Board's strategic objectives. **Steve Osborne** was previously Board Chair, and has been involved in the regulation of Psychology since 1995, when he was elected Chair of the College of Alberta Psychologists. He is a member of the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (in North America) and the Council of Psychology Registration Boards (Australasia). A Psychologist for 20 years, he is enjoying the many new challenges involved in the CE/Registrar role.

The **DEPUTY REGISTRAR (COMPETENCE AND COMPLAINTS)** administers or helps to administer those sections of the HPCA Act that deal with competence, fitness to practice, complaints, and discipline. **Karen Crosby** is also the Board's nominated Executive Officer to the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, a member of the Council of Australasian Tribunals and former member of the Council of Psychology Registration Boards (Australasia). As **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT** she provides support to the Chief Executive and the Board Chair. Karen has worked with the Psychologists Board for several years now, after previously working for the Royal Australasian College of Physicians for four years as a member of the College's Continuing Education Unit promoting continuing professional development. She brings a proactive attitude and great sense of humour while thriving on the unique and ever-changing demands of her roles.

The **DEPUTY REGISTRAR (REGISTRATION)** administers or helps to administer those sections of the HPCA Act that deal with all aspects of registration, including initial registrations, applications for scopes of practice, and APCs. **Bill King** has served the Board (via RBS) since 2004, and continues to function as the reliable engine room that keeps this part of the Board's core business in motion. Bill's unflappable nature and his quiet good humour are proving to be key ingredients in our new office culture.

The **OFFICE MANAGER** is responsible for payroll, basic bookkeeping, administration of accounts and contracts, facilities and asset management, occupational health and safety issues, and the maintenance of records, computer files, databases, and the Board's website. **Anne Culver** brings a wealth of experience to the role including IT project work and a stint as the Psychologists Board's Secretary back in the 1980's. Her devotion to doing the job well is exceeded only by her devotion to Placido Domingo!

Our young **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** supports the team through completion of tasks such as processing correspondence, word processing, database maintenance, file management, banking, event coordination and reception work. **Kirsty Hayes** previously worked for

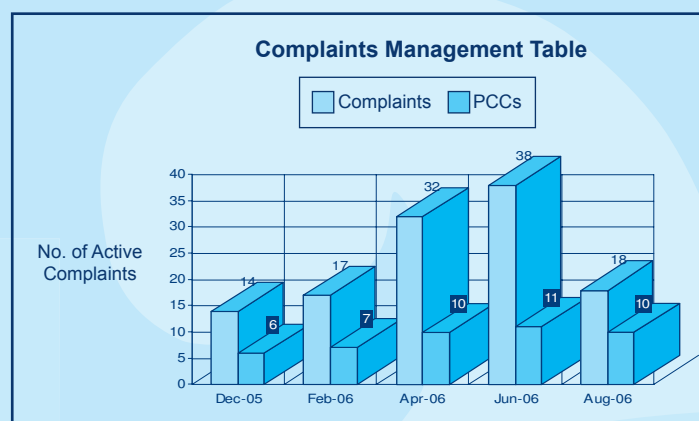
a Wellington accountancy firm, and joined us on 3 July 2006. She will be most people's first point of contact with the Board, and brings a good balance of personal warmth and professionalism to the role.

The **PSYCHOLOGY ADVISOR** screens complaints, works closely with the Complaints and Discipline Committee, recruits and helps train Professional Conduct Committee and Competence Review Panel members, manages referrals to conciliation, and takes a central role in setting up individual Competence Programmes. The Advisor will also be assisting in the Board's Accreditation processes, and will be providing policy advice. **This role is currently vacant, and we are keen to talk to interested parties!**

Contact details for staff members are listed on the front cover of this Newsletter and on the Board's website.

#### 5. COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE UPDATE

The table below shows the number of formal complaints being actively managed by the Board since our last newsletter and the number of Professional Conduct Committees (PCC) that have been appointed by the Board to investigate complaints against registered psychologists:



The number of complaints tends to fluctuate throughout the year, with an all-time high of 38 complaints being monitored in June 2006. Many of those complaints have been resolved by referral to the Family Court (primarily as a result of the new Practice Note for Specialist Report Writers – noted below), by PCC or Board determinations of 'no further action', or by withdrawal of the complaint.

##### Professional Conduct Committees

Since the commencement of the HPCA Act the Board has appointed 20 PCCs. Unfortunately, due to the relatively specialised nature of this work, and the sometimes time-consuming processes involved, the progression of some complaints can be delayed. The Board always strives to streamline the process and minimise delays, but on occasions delays are beyond our control. The Board wishes to convey its appreciation to those psychologists and laypeople who serve on PCCs. Serving on PCCs helps the Board protect the public, and feedback from PCC members is that it almost always proves to be a valuable professional experience. It is also a contribution highly valued by the Board and one that is financially reimbursed.

In order to further support practitioners who serve on PCCs, the Board has run (and will continue to run) training workshops covering procedures, legalities, expectations, and outcomes. Two training workshops have been organised in September and October 2006 for experienced CAC/PCC members to train as PCC chairs. It is hoped that this will encourage more people to lead PCCs.

Experienced psychologists with a current APC, and who are in good standing, are invited to express their interest in serving on PCCs. Please contact **Karen Crosby**, Deputy Registrar (Competence & Complaints) to discuss what is involved in serving on a PCC and to register your interest.

## New “Practice Note” for Family Court Specialist Report Writers

Board representatives attended a series of meetings with Principal Family Court Judge Peter Boshier earlier this year, resulting in a new “Practice Note – Specialist Report Writers” which came into effect on 1 June 2006. The Practice Note features a revised section on procedures for handling complaints against Family Court appointed psychologists where proceedings are pending, in progress or have been concluded. The Board has welcomed the new provisions, and details of the procedures can be found in the Board’s complaints processing information sheet which is available in the Complaints & Discipline section on our website.

## 6. COMPETENCE REVIEWS, PROGRAMMES AND COMPETENCE GUIDELINES

The Board has completed three competence reviews, is monitoring three competence programmes and has received five ‘fitness to practice’ notifications in the past 20 months. Competence reviews are seen as educational and rehabilitative rather than disciplinary in nature and provide a positive alternative to complaints procedures in dealing with competence shortfalls in practice. All psychologists should be aware that, should you have reason to believe that another registered psychologist may pose a risk of harm to the public by practising below the required standard of competence, then the Board has the ability to review that practitioner’s competence. A Competence Review can reduce further risk, provide remedial solutions, and support safe practice.

All psychologists are encouraged to read the Board’s “Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand”, which includes cultural competencies and which is available under the competence section on the Board’s website.

Another recently published Board document, “Guidelines for Cultural Safety”, comes complete with a feedback questionnaire and is aimed at overseas-trained, newly registered psychologists who are practising in New Zealand. If you fall in to this category please take the time to download a copy of the document from the Board’s website and send in a completed questionnaire to **Bill King**, Deputy Registrar (Registrations).

## 7. REGISTRATION MATTERS

### Accreditation of Programmes Leading to Registration

The Board’s Accreditation Committee met with Heads of Psychology Departments and representatives from 6 New Zealand Universities along with NZCCP and NZPsS representatives on 26 June 2006 to review the completed document - “Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Qualifications Leading to Registration as a Psychologist in New Zealand”. This document, including some comments and amendments arising from that meeting, was adopted by the Board at its 14 July 2006 meeting.

The Board had previously decided to provide accreditation status to all those programmes from which graduates had been accepted prior to implementation of the HPCA Act.

Accreditation for these programmes will be renewed within seven years through the procedures outlined in the above document. Specific plans are now being made for accreditation reviews of programmes that have been introduced since the HPCA Act (September 2004). A

timetable will be negotiated for all other programmes to complete a formal accreditation review over the next seven years.

The adoption of a system for formal accreditation of programmes brings us into line with similar jurisdictions overseas. As well as contributing to the goal of assurance that programmes meet national and international standards, accreditation will assist the Board in determining the eligibility of individuals who apply for registration.

The Board is grateful for the assistance of all those who contributed to the development of the accreditation standards and procedures. We look forward to working with academics and practitioners in the implementation of accreditation reviews.

### Supervision Schemes Leading to Registration in the “Psychologist” Scope of Practice

Earlier this year the NZ Psychological Society advised the Board of its decision to cease provision of a Supervision Scheme for people wanting to register in the “Psychologist” Scope of Practice. No additional people will be taken into the NZPsS Scheme, however it will continue until all Registrants currently in supervision have completed the process and had their final exam. It is envisaged that this process will be completed in September 2007. The Supervision Schemes operated by the New Zealand Defence Force and Child, Youth and Family for the specific needs of their staff will continue. In the future these Agencies will have their Schemes Accredited by the Psychologists Board, rather than being contracted by the Board to provide a Supervision Scheme. The Board believes Accredited Training Institutions are the appropriate location for professional training programmes leading to registration as a Psychologist.

### Your Personal Entry in the Register of Psychologists – Keep or Cancel?

The “New Zealand Register of Psychologists” is being reviewed following its transition into the new database in order to obtain a more accurate and current record of psychologists registered in New Zealand. This newsletter is being posted to everyone currently on the Register so that you have the opportunity to respond to the following question – **Do you want your entry in the Register cancelled?** If the answer is YES, please write or send an email to **Bill King**, Deputy Registrar (Registrations) to request your entry be cancelled.

**Note: The HPCA Act provides that when mail is returned undelivered, the Board Registrar may send a notice to a psychologist at their last known address stating that their entry in the register may be cancelled if no response is received within 10 working days after the date of the notice. Registered psychologists should be aware that you can apply in writing to the Board for your entry in the Register to be cancelled or restored at any time. (Some conditions apply).**

## 8. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST

Enclosed with this newsletter is the newly published booklet “Your Responsibilities as a Psychologist”. This has been produced by the Board to ensure that every registered psychologist has access to important information that should govern their practice. This information is drawn from the HPCA Act 2003, the New Zealand Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand and from the NZ Psychologists Board.

You are encouraged to read through the booklet and to keep a copy handy for future reference.