



The Australian College of Specialist Psychologists

PO Box 447, South Fremantle WA 6162

Telephone: 08 9487 1859

www.acsp.net.au

2nd August 2011

Dear Members of the Ministerial Council,

The Australian College of Specialist Psychologists (ACSP) is a newly formed national College with membership open to specialist psychologists (university post graduate trained and supervised), from the 9 speciality areas in the profession of psychology. You may be aware that before the introduction of national registration for the health professions, WA had specialist registration for psychologists. This standard of registration was the only one which met international training standards. With the introduction of national registration, WA was stripped of its specialist registration and was flattened out to the lower generalist registration, which was all that existed in the other states. A significant opportunity for Australia to move towards international standards was lost.

Minister Hames (WA Health Minister) is aware of this situation and has been very supportive of recognising specialist registration for psychologists as indicated in his letter to the ACSP in 13th July 2010. In his letter he also noted there was concern from many professionals in most states about the lack of specialist registration. He indicated the matter was to be referred to the National Psychology Board for further advice, but we are unaware if this has happened, or if it has, what advice has been given. Minister Hames further wrote that the Ministers have not excluded the psychology profession from accessing specialist recognition but rather have delayed their decision pending the development of national criteria for assessing specialist registration. This was to be undertaken by the Health Workforce Principal Committee (HWPC) and was apparently referred to them in May 2010 and was meant to take about 12 months to complete. The ACSP contacted the HWPC in September 2010 for an update and was told there would be wide ranging consultation with National Boards and stakeholders in due course. Nothing further has been heard of this process. The ACSP rang the HWPC again in July 2011 and we were told that this issue had not progressed.

We would like to request information from the Ministers about what is happening with the establishment of the national criteria, especially in the light of WA specialist psychologists only having the right to maintain the use of their specialist titles until 2013.

We also ask that this matter also be given urgent attention in light of the current mental health reforms that are being discussed before the Senate Affairs Committee regarding 'Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services'.

The ACSP would also welcome a meeting with the Health Ministers to discuss specialist registration in the field of psychology as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jillian Horton

President of the Australian College of Specialist Psychologists