

The meeting was attended by all nine APS Board members, Barry Whitmore manager of APS, other APS employees including the Manager Barry Whitmore, Lynne Casey, Neil Woodger and Rebecca Mathews and past APS Board members and individuals representing Colleges. The estimated number of attendees was 150.

Bob Montgomery made a brief introduction, which was followed by a power point presentation by Lyn Littlefield, CEO of APS. The reason given for this meeting was that misinformation had been disseminated regarding the APS position and the intention was to "set the record straight".

Selected highlights from Professor Littlefield's presentation:

**1 "We all aspire to 6 year Masters", but**

- (a) there are not enough university places - these would have to be doubled.
- (b) the Government (*not specified further*) refused 6 years as the standard.
- (c) APS initiative 5 (1 yr professional training) +1 as "bridge" between 4+2 & 6 yrs, in response to pressure from Gov't & Universities for more psychologists at less cost
- (d) PBA proposal of Doctorate/MPsych+PhD as standard for Specialist Reg- too costly

**2 "APS has always supported specialist registration" but it did not support the PBA proposal for specialist registration because**

- (a) APS is concerned about the effect this would have on smaller colleges. In some specialties it is hard to get supervision. APS is committed to diversity in Psychology and is concerned about what will happen to our smaller colleges.
- (b) Colleges set standards for specialties. College interlocked with (i) APAC accreditation of standards, (ii) College approval of courses

**3. At the meeting in WA, APS agreed that it would now support specialist registration for WA (and possibly other states?)**

**4. Endorsement Qualifications required by PBA**

Masters + 2 years/ Doctorate

**5. Recent Meeting with College Chairs**

- (a) APS has agreed it will close 4+2 pathway to colleges from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010, and that anyone with these qualifications wanting to enter Colleges must take the opportunity to do so before then.
- (b) Lyn reported College Chairs unanimously agreed that a letter would be written, but when asked, would not say when it would be written or what would be in the letter. It was not clear who would write the letter or where it would be sent. (c) Examinations will be provided for alternate pathways into the Colleges. The Clinical College has "led the way" in this and put out a tender for an examination which was won by a University of Queensland as part of a consortium.

**6. PD requirements for endorsement:**

30 hours CPD, minimum 10 hours peer consultation. Lyn said the APS Board would discuss CPD requirements because CPD "can be achieved through the PD program of a professional society".

**7. Mandatory professional indemnity requirements**

Lyn said professional indemnity must include civil liability, run off, and retroactive insurance. Some will need cover if employers insurance does not meet all requirements. Lyn announced that Judy Hyde's group (Australian Clinical Psychologists) says you can get cheaper insurance through another company, but there is a problem with this

company (which Lyn can not name for legal reasons) because this company uses pooled insurance so if money runs out you are not covered so you must have individual cover.

## Discussion

The first speaker said he had been involved with the Clinical College for a long time and provided an anecdote about going to meet with politician with another College member in the 1980s and the politician, who was subsequently made famous for his dishonesty, didn't know anything about psychology. The speaker added that he has just come back from UK where governments have taken over and it's a mess and standards were unclear. *The implication appeared to be that professional standards should be controlled by the profession (APS) and it would be dangerous for government / (PBA) to control standards because politicians don't know anything and they can be dishonest.*

The speaker was challenged and the meeting was told that it was not true that the UK was in a mess and that UK has had specialist registration for a range of specialist titles based on doctorates since June 2009. The standards and requirements for specialist titles are very clear and specific and were on the UK doh (and BPS) websites.

*My note:* [http://www.bps.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/releases\\$/statements-and-policy-documents\\$/statutory-regulation-of-practitioner-psychologists.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/releases$/statements-and-policy-documents$/statutory-regulation-of-practitioner-psychologists.cfm)

Someone from the College of Organisational Psychologists said "what about us"?

At Lyn Littlefield's request, Emeritus Professor Gina Geffen from the University of Queensland, a current APS Board member and member of the Psychology Board of Australia (PBA) explained the difference between specialist registration and endorsement. It was clarified that with specialist endorsement someone could call themselves a clinical psychologist with out fear of legal reprisals, but could be subject to legal action if they misrepresented themselves as being "endorsed" as a clinical psychologist.

A question was raised about conditions under which the Board could prosecute someone. Lyn's response was that the conditions under which prosecution can take place were still to be worked out by the PBA (but from earlier discussions it was clear that prosecution would have to be based on a complaint by a client.

The example of a sports psychologist offering services to people with serious mental illnesses was raised and how endorsement would prevent this.

Lyn said Endorsement would not prevent this nor would Specialist Registration. The speaker then made the point that at least Specialist Registration would involve protected titles and so would be easier for the public/community to identify who had specialist skills when seeing private psychologists.

Erika Leonard, acting National Chair of the Clinical College in the absence of Dr Deb Wilmoth, said the term "Endorsement" would be confusing to the public.

Liz Clarkson (Registered Clinical Psychologist WA recently moved to Melbourne asked whether those present support WA as a model for other states (or not) for specialist title and registration. Very few answered, but it seemed that those who did said WA should be a model for the other states.

Lyn Littlefield said she was at meeting in WA two days ago and that the APS will now lobby for specialist registration, but when asked would not provide any more details or a time frame. Lyn Littlefield was also asked if she was willing to send this information to all APS members but did not answer the question.

## APS MEETING WITH COLLEGES 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Westin Hotel Melbourne

Ten minutes before the meeting was due to close, Professor Paul Martin (former APS President) began to reflect at some length about why AHMAC may not support PBA's proposal for specialist registration.

Paul was interrupted and told that we are not here to talk about why AHMAC made their decision, but about why APS did not support PBA's proposal. Lyn Littlefield said "I have already told you the reasons why" and that APS supports specialist registration, but not specialist registration as set out by the PBA. Lyn was told that many people were unhappy about the APS submission.

Lyn's re responded by saying that Judy Hyde's group said there would be mass resignations on Monday and that 70 resigned/were about to, but APS only received 19 resignations and some have since asked if they can come back. There were a few chuckles from the audience.

Lyn Littlefield stressed the importance of having a single voice to government, and asked those present to disseminate what had been said in the meeting to as many others as possible.

### *Impressions and comments:*

*As has been observed previously in APS meetings, most of the time was taken up with APS views, with planned questions comments and invited explanations from current and past Board members to emphasise the points being made by Lyn. This highly structured setting seemed to provide little opportunity, support for (or tolerance of) the expression of needs and concerns of those who do not agree with the APS position on National Registration. Throughout the meeting the predominant message was that a single voice must be heard and this must be the voice of the APS. Although dismissive of the views of a few disaffected individuals, the level of concern about other voices and opinions expressed via the Australian Clinical Psychologists is reflected by the high costs and human resources invested in the recent meetings in Sydney WA and Victoria.*

*Lyn's request to those present to disseminate information from the meeting to as many people as possible is puzzling since under Lyn's direction as APS CEO, National and State Chairs of the Clinical College have not been able to communicate with their members through the APS Bulk email since early January. In addition, APS has not sent State and National Chairs email addresses of their members since August 2008 and the only member details supplied are the members name and a telephone number.*

The Australian Clinical Psychologists group is currently the only way that Clinical Psychologists in Australian can freely communicate with each other. The overwhelming response to this opportunity indicates that it serves a very important function

I am very happy to share my summary of the meeting with you all.

*Julie Barrington*

*Member National and Victorian Committees APS College of Clinical Psychologists  
Past Chair Victorian Section College of Clinical Psychologists, Aug 2004-Nov 2009*