

**2007-08 | THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

# APS Strategic Plan guiding the work of the Society in 2007-08

The APS Strategic Plan is developed by the Board of Directors every three years. It provides a broad frame of reference to guide the development of the long-term objectives and goals of the Society, and the policies and plans to achieve them. The 2005-2008 Strategic Plan sets out eleven key objectives that fit within a strategic framework. This framework has guided the work of the Society in 2007-08.

Strategic framework	Strategic Plan objectives
<p><b>1. Strengthening the Society for the benefit of its members</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve member satisfaction with the Society</li> <li>• Become a stronger and more cohesive Society</li> <li>• Develop and maintain effective, 'best practice' governance</li> <li>• Manage the Society's resources efficiently and effectively</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Supporting the discipline and profession of psychology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and support the achievement of high standards for psychology</li> <li>• Improve support for the scientific discipline of psychology</li> <li>• Improve support for the profession of psychology</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Applying psychological knowledge for community wellbeing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase advocacy for psychology and community wellbeing</li> <li>• Enhance the profile of APS psychologists and psychology and increase public access to, and utilisation, of psychological services</li> <li>• Increase the Society's impact on a range of Government policies</li> <li>• Strengthen APS relationships and profile with key external bodies to further develop and promote psychology</li> </ul>

# 1. Strengthening the Society for the benefit of its members

## > Growth in APS membership

The APS has continued to increase its membership this year, reaching an all-time high figure of 16,501 members, which represents an increase of five per cent from last year.

This year the grade of Member had the largest increase (477 members), followed by the grade of Associate Member (366). The other membership grades remained reasonably static. With regard to Student Subscribers of the APS, each of the 37 universities offering an APAC-accredited course was represented by new students joining the Society.

### MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS (as at 31 May 2008)

#### Membership by State/Territory and grade

GRADE	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	O/S	TOTAL
Hon Fellow	0	5	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	<b>11</b>
Fellow	5	44	2	33	16	5	67	14	6	<b>192</b>
Member	284	3,356	78	1,428	605	195	3,530	825	255	<b>10,556</b>
Associate Member	101	1,431	39	802	108	40	876	275	79	<b>3,751</b>
Affiliate	7	100	48	0	12	7	65	6	15	<b>260</b>
Student Subscriber	50	427	17	411	109	11	500	117	25	<b>1,667</b>
Foreign, teacher and professional Affiliate	5	16	0	2	3	0	18	1	19	<b>64</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>5,379</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>2,677</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>5,061</b>	<b>1,238</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>16,501</b>

#### Membership by gender

GRADE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Hon Fellow	1	10	<b>11</b>
Fellow	72	120	<b>192</b>
Member	7,589	2,967	<b>10,556</b>
Associate Member	3,096	655	<b>3,751</b>
Affiliate	206	54	<b>260</b>
Student Subscriber	1,424	243	<b>1,667</b>
Foreign, Teacher and Professional Affiliate	35	29	<b>64</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,423</b>	<b>4,078</b>	<b>16,501</b>

Independent practice	5,026	31%
Public sector	3,950	24%
Private sector and NGO	2,333	14%
Tertiary education	1,628	10%
School sector	1,220	7%
Other	975	6%
Student	1,369	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,501</b>	<b>100%</b>

Under 30 years	1,825	11%
30 - 39 years	4,294	26%
40 - 49 years	4,084	25%
50 - 59 years	4,049	24%
60 years and over	2,249	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,501</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Strengthening the Society for the benefit of its members *(cont.)*

### > Member support and benefits

#### Improved online services from the APS website

The launch of the new APS website in mid-2007 enabled a significant project to be realised: the facility for members to easily and efficiently log their Professional Development (PD) online. This major simplification of the PD monitoring system enables members to receive instant feedback on whether their PD requirements have been met and requires no paper work to be submitted (unless a member is selected for a random audit). There are many more new online services planned for 2008-09, including an improved facility to search for psychologists who are Medicare providers, a revamp of the online recruitment service PsychXchange, and the introduction of online voting for APS elections.

#### Communications with members

The bimonthly bulletin, *InPsych*, remains the primary means of communication between the Society and its members. As the voice of the APS, *InPsych* has continued to improve in the quality of its editorial content and design over the last year. Members have continued to enthusiastically respond to invitations to contribute to each edition's cover feature on a pertinent psychological topic and have engaged in debate on important issues through the letters to the editor pages.

The APS State Newsletters, also produced bimonthly, have this year undergone a change of name and a new cover design to bring some uniformity across each State and Territory. Now all Newsletters are presented under the name *Psych News* and have a consistent look in keeping with the APS branding.

*APS Matters* continues to be distributed on a fortnightly basis via email to all members, providing news of current APS activities, a guide to new material on the APS website, and an insight into key issues for the Executive Director through her regular column.

#### PsychXchange

During the past financial year, the online recruitment website for psychology-related jobs, PsychXchange, has maintained an average of 128 jobs advertised per month. PsychXchange is clearly established as the major search mechanism for both recruiters and job searchers, and generates steady revenue for the APS.

#### APS Find a Psychologist service

For the past financial year the number of members listed on the Find a Psychologist referral service reached an all-time high of 2,359, surpassing the previous highest figure of 2,070. Recent analysis of the online search data revealed that there are over 750 online searches per day of the APS Find a Psychologist service by the public, GPs, other psychologists and agencies.

#### Malpractice insurance for members

As the broker for the malpractice insurance facility, Aon followed through on its commitment to educate members about malpractice insurance by conducting several risk management seminars for APS Branches across Australia. Aon also launched its email news bulletin, *Risk Diagnostics*, which is a useful resource for members seeking clarity on malpractice insurance issues or information on ways to reduce their risk. The email bulletin is sent to insured members three times per year.

### Targeted member survey

In order to monitor how well the APS is meeting the needs of members working in the public, non-government organisation and not-for-profit sectors, the Society conducted an online survey of its 5,000 members in these sectors in October 2007. Survey respondents came from a wide range of settings including education, community mental health, general and psychiatric hospital, community health, disability, justice/corrective, drug and alcohol, and defence. More than 80 per cent of APS members surveyed said they were satisfied with the Society from both a personal and professional perspective, which was broadly consistent across the three sectors. The main identified ways in which the APS met the needs of members were through: services connected with professional education and training; provision of information and setting of standards; ethical guidance; and advocating for the inclusion of psychology under the Medicare Benefits Schedule. One identified area for improvement was to provide more accessible professional development, especially for members in rural and regional areas. The APS Public Sector Reference Group has used the results of the survey to identify areas for close attention in the coming year.

### Membership certificates

This year the Society introduced the issuing of commemorative membership certificates to those members who have held APS membership for cumulative periods of 10, 20 or 30 years. The criterion for recognition of length of membership has recently changed from 'continuous' to 'cumulative' membership, which is deemed a more equitable way of recognising the commitment of members. During this first year of the new scheme, the Society issued approximately 800 30-year certificates for those who had held cumulative membership for at least 30 years, approximately 1,600 20-year certificates for cumulative membership of at least 20 and less than 30 years, and approximately 5,000 10-year certificates for cumulative membership of at least 10 and less than 20 years. In future years, certificates will be issued to those members who in each year respectively reach 10, 20, or 30 years of cumulative membership of the APS.

### Good Thinking Program business marketing

There has been an increased uptake in member participation in the Good Thinking Program since it became available free of charge to members last year. The Program aims to assist members to promote themselves as APS psychologists in the marketplace by encouraging recognition of the APS brand and the value of seeing an APS psychologist. Subscription to the Good Thinking Program entitles members to use the 'APS Psychologists: Good Thinking' logo on stationery and brochures, and provides access to a range of products and resources to assist psychologists to market their practices.

### APS Advantage package

Members have continued to gain personal benefit from the extensive range of preferential rates and services offered by companies under the APS Advantage package. These include a Gold Credit Card from American Express, an AMP Affinity home loan offer, Qantas Club membership, Hertz discounted rental rates, ING Professionals Life and Living Benefit Plan and Professionals Income Protection Plan, and Affinsure Motor and Home Insurance.

## > Active member groups within the APS

APS members belong to a large number of active Units within the Society comprising Branches, Colleges and Interest Groups. Many members contribute an enormous amount of time and energy on a voluntary basis as office bearers and Committee members of these Units. Most APS Units now have a presence on the APS website.

### APS State and Regional Branches

There are 40 Branches of the APS spread across Australia, with members automatically allocated to an APS Branch according to their location. The function of Branches is to provide PD and other activities such as career days and National Psychology Week events for members, and to coordinate communication at the local level. This year, three APS Branches were renamed – the Albany Branch was renamed the WA Great Southern Branch, the Kalgoorlie Branch was renamed the Goldfields Esperance Branch, and the Tasmania Branch was renamed the Hobart Branch. The Branches of the APS are detailed below.

#### Australian Capital Territory

Australian Capital Territory

#### New South Wales

Illawarra  
New England  
Newcastle  
NSW Central Coast  
NSW Far-South Coast  
NSW Mid-North Coast  
NSW North Coast  
NSW Western Region  
Riverina  
Shoalhaven  
South-West Sydney  
Sydney

#### Northern Territory

Northern Territory

#### Queensland

Brisbane Area  
Central Queensland  
Far-North Queensland  
Gold Coast  
Mackay  
North Queensland  
Sunshine Coast  
Toowoomba  
Wide Bay Burnett

#### South Australia

South Australia

#### Tasmania

North-West Tasmania  
Northern Tasmania  
Hobart

#### Victoria

Albury/Wodonga  
Ballarat  
Barwon  
Bendigo  
Gippsland  
Melbourne  
Mornington Peninsula  
South-West Victoria

#### Western Australia

WA Great Southern  
Goldfields Esperance  
Mid-West WA  
Perth  
South-West WA

### APS State Committees

The Chairs from each Branch of the APS make up the State Committee for each State and Territory. The appointment of an APS Board of Director to each State provides lines of communication between the Board and the States. The State Chairs Forum, comprising the Chair of each State Committee, plays a vital role in interfacing between the work of the Board, the National Office and the work at the 'grass-roots' level. The reports on this year's activities from each State Committee Chair can be found on page 37.

### APS Colleges

The APS Colleges represent nine specialty areas of psychology. College Chairs meet several times a year as a Forum via face-to-face and audio conferences to discuss matters that relate to Colleges. A major achievement this year was the consensus agreement on 'dual professional' Doctorates that would cover two College specialties. The reports on this year's activities from each College Chair can be found on page 39 and the member numbers in each College are detailed in the accompanying table.

APS College	Member numbers
College of Clinical Neuropsychologists	306
College of Clinical Psychologists	2,356
College of Community Psychologists	86
College of Counselling Psychologists	662
College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists	323
College of Forensic Psychologists	296
College of Health Psychologists	289
College of Organisational Psychologists	474
College of Sport Psychologists	88

## APS Interest Groups

The number of APS Interest Groups continues to grow, with a total of 27 Interest Groups now operating within the Society. Three new Interest Groups were established this year – the APS Interest Groups on Evolutionary Psychology, on Rehabilitation Psychology, and on Teaching, Learning and Psychology. The diversity of Interest Groups demonstrates the wide range of interests of the APS membership. Interest Groups are active Units within the Society that regularly offer PD activities to members, and some also have regular newsletters. The Interest Groups of the APS and member numbers are detailed below.

APS Interest Group	Member numbers
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Psychology	232
Buddhism and Psychology	366
Child, Adolescent and Family Psychology	1017
Christianity and Psychology	341
Coaching Psychology	678
Evolutionary Psychology	2
Gay and Lesbian Issues in Psychology	113
Narrative Theory and Practice in Psychology	172
Personal Construct Psychology	68
Psychoanalytically-Oriented Psychology	490
Psychologists for the Promotion of Animal Welfare	73
Psychologists for Peace	160
Psychology and Complementary and Alternative Medicine	201
Psychology and Ageing	310
Psychology and Cultures	98
Psychology and the Environment	18
Psychology from an Islamic Perspective	40
Psychology of Men and Masculinities	67
Psychology and Substance Use	189
Psychology of Relationships	329
Rehabilitation Psychology	41
Rural and Remote Psychology	199
Sufism and Psychology	39
Teaching, Learning and Psychology	16
Telephone and Internet-Based Counselling and Psychology	173
Transpersonal Psychology	107
Women and Psychology	161

## 2. Supporting the discipline and profession of psychology

### > Maintenance of high standards for psychology

#### New APS Code of Ethics

At the Society's AGM in September 2007, the members adopted the proposed new *Code of Ethics*, which is now presented through the framework of general principles rather than according to various domains within psychology. The new Code was developed through a process of ongoing reflection within the Society about the ethical responsibilities of psychologists, and a formal review of the 1997 *Code of Ethics* with reference to comparable national and international codes of ethics. The new Code is built on three general ethical principles: (A) Respect for the rights and dignity of people and peoples; (B) Propriety; and (C) Integrity. Each of the general principles incorporates an explanatory statement before listing the standards of conduct by which members are accountable.

A flow-on effect of adopting the new *Code of Ethics* has been the need to modify the complementary *Ethical Guidelines*. The series of 22 Ethical Guidelines, which clarify and amplify the application of the principles established in the Code, have subsequently been modified to reflect the new *Code of Ethics*. In addition to the modification of all of the Guidelines, two of the Guidelines have been fully revised this year by the Ethical Guidelines Committee as part of the regular cycle of review – the *Guidelines on confidentiality* and *Guidelines on managing professional boundaries and multiple relationships*.

#### Ethics Committee report

The Ethics Committee has been chaired throughout the last financial year by Professor Alfred Allan. The APS Executive Director is an ex-officio member of the Ethics Committee and acts as a conduit to the Board of Directors.

Between 1 June 2007 and 31 May 2008, 35 notifications were received by the National Office addressed to the Ethics Committee. Of the 35 notifications received, 11 were forwarded to a Psychologist Registration Board in the first instance, and a further four did not meet the jurisdictional criteria of the Ethics Committee. The remaining 20 were considered by the Ethics Committee; two were subsequently withdrawn, nine cases were completed and nine matters are currently under investigation. Of the nine completed cases the outcomes comprised one suspension, five resignations, one found not to have violated the Code of Ethics, one where membership was reinstated, and one where application for membership was granted.

#### National Psychology Education and Training Reference Group

In response to a range of developments bringing pressure to bear on the system of training for psychologists in Australia, in early 2008 the APS formed the National Psychology Education and Training Reference Group. The Reference Group includes practitioners, academics, registration board members and other experienced senior psychologists in the discipline and profession from across Australia. The Reference Group has commenced an analysis of future training needs and is canvassing a wide range of possible training structures to meet the future needs of the psychology profession and discipline. The Reference Group has been established to ensure that any revisions to the model of Australian psychology education and training are based on psychology as a scientific discipline and achieve the highest standards of practice and research.

#### University psychology training program development and accreditation

The Program Development and Accreditation Committee (PDAC) completed a very full year of work conducting accreditation and approval assessments of 11 university Schools of Psychology and their courses on behalf of the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) and the APS Board. This is the highest number of assessments ever completed in a single year. This year PDAC also undertook a significant review of standards and guidelines and published the first APAC Accreditation Assessment Handbook. In partnership with APAC, PDAC held accreditation and approval assessor training sessions, which were attended by a large number of people including APAC and College course approval assessors, registration board assessors, APAC directors, and APS directors and staff. The APAC website this year underwent a revamp to include the ability to search for Australasian APAC-accredited courses.

#### Private Practice Management Standards

Over the last few years, the APS has received funding from the Australian Government to develop a set of management standards for private psychological practices. Funds were also provided to establish an online self-assessment instrument and to develop a set of resources to enable psychologists to improve their practice management capabilities. The large project was completed during this financial year and the private practice management standard online resources were launched at the APS Annual Conference in Brisbane in 2007. Following this, a series of private practice management workshops were conducted in national capital cities and some regional centres.

## Assessment of eligibility to provide clinical psychology services under Medicare

Since the introduction of the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative in November 2006, a total of 2,402 psychologists have been assessed by the APS Medicare Assessment Team as eligible for membership of the APS Clinical College and therefore to provide clinical psychology Medicare items. Over 1,400 of these psychologists were new applications for assessment of eligibility for membership of the APS Clinical College, as opposed to 'confirmation' of eligibility applications from 999 current members of the APS Clinical College. More than 650 applications have been received from psychologists for assessment via the non-standard pathway to eligibility for membership of the APS Clinical College. Those 'non-standard' applicants who do not fully meet the eligibility criteria but are assessed as very close are provided with an Individual Bridging Plan (IBP) of further training and/or supervised experience in order to meet the criteria. Two hundred and fifty-seven of these applicants are currently undertaking further training via an IBP. Across the time period of this financial year, and in response to the large number of IBP applicants seeking single subject unit study from within clinical psychology Masters degree programs, there has been an increasing number of universities offering enrolment in single subject units. Some of these universities have developed more flexible and/or intensive single units of study from their courses.

## Assessments of overseas psychology qualifications

The APS is contracted as the national assessing authority in Australia for assessment of overseas academic qualifications in psychology for the purpose of migration. The APS determines the level at which an applicant's qualifications are comparable to an Australian program of study that has been accredited by APAC. This service is for people who are seeking to: (1) migrate to Australia under the General Skilled Migration Categories; (2) register or work as a psychologist in Australia; or (3) enter an accredited psychology course in an Australian university.

Over the past financial year there was a 31 per cent increase in the number of applications for the assessment of psychology qualifications compared to the previous year. A total of 511 assessments were undertaken, made up of 179 migration applications (up by 50%), 117 registration assessments (up by 18%), 34 employment assessments (up by 278%), and 81 course entry assessments (up by 12%). Of the migration applications, 118 met the minimum requirements – a success rate of 66 per cent compared with 71 per cent for the previous financial year. As indicated in the table below, applications are received from all over the world.

Region	Number of qualifications assessed
Asia	48
Africa	207
Australasia	150
Central America	3
Europe	66
Middle East	36
North America	103
South America	68
Subcontinent	93
UK	104

### > Promotion of the scientific discipline of psychology

#### Encouraging excellence through the APS Awards Program

The APS offers a range of Awards each year that encourage and recognise excellence in psychology. Recipients of APS Awards this year were as follows:

##### **APS President's Award for Distinguished Contribution to Psychology in Australia**

Awarded to Professor Kim Halford, Griffith University and Professor Matt Sanders, University of Queensland

##### **Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award**

Awarded to Professor George Paxinos, University of New South Wales

##### **Distinguished Contribution to Education Award**

Awarded to Dr John Reece, RMIT University

##### **Pearson Education and APS Early Career Teaching Award**

Awarded to Dr David Neumann, Griffith University

##### **Early Career Research Award**

Awarded to Dr Jason Connor, University of Queensland and to Dr Lisa Phillips, University of Melbourne

##### **Award for Excellent PhD Thesis in Psychology**

Awarded to Dr Wayne Warburton, Macquarie University and Dr Simon Wilksch, Flinders University

##### **APS Prize**

Awarded to the student with the best results in fourth year psychology courses at 37 universities across Australia which have APAC-accredited programs of study

#### Measurement of research quality in psychology

As part of the development of the Australian Government's Research Quality Framework (RQF), learned academies and a range of discipline peak bodies were asked by the Department of Education, Science and Training to advise on the development of a range of indicators which would support the evaluation of research excellence. The APS took a lead role in assisting the discipline of psychology to develop a key indicator for research quality and conducted nationwide consultation with universities to develop a set of tiered rankings. The ranking system derived is being further developed for incorporation into the Government's new Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative, which has replaced the RQF. The rankings tool is likely to become an important metric for measuring the quality of future research output from Australian Universities.

#### APS journals

The three flagship journals of the APS, *Australian Psychologist*, *Australian Journal of Psychology* and *Clinical Psychologist* have all been retro-digitised by the publishing house, Taylor and Francis. The digitisation project has included material extending all the way back to Volume 1, Issue 1, in each journal, providing subscribers with electronic versions of older volumes previously only available in hard copy, and substantially increasing access to a valuable archive of Australian psychology research.

Thomson ISI Impact Factors for 2007 showed that the *Australian Journal of Psychology* increased its Impact Factor to 0.947 (up from 0.610 in 2006), and is now ranked 37th of 102 (up from 58 of 99) journals in its category. *Australian Psychologist* also recorded an increase in Impact Factor to 0.640 (up from 0.500 on 2006), and is now ranked 54th of 102 journals, up from 66th of 99 in 2006. The journals continue to show strong growth as influential scientific publications internationally.

## Submissions to government on higher education

The APS has continued to develop submissions that respond to developments in higher education concerning the discipline of psychology. Submissions have focused on all specialisations within psychology and have included recommendations on the expansion of scholarship and postgraduate placement schemes for psychology students. The full list of submissions that have been tendered by the APS on behalf the discipline of psychology can be found on page 35.

## Postgraduate placements in alcohol and other drug services

The APS this year undertook a Federal Government project which provides funding for clinical supervision of students in postgraduate professional psychology programs on placement in non-government alcohol and other drug (AOD) services. The project aims to build clinical expertise among postgraduate psychology students in the detection and treatment of co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders and increase the number of psychologists seeking subsequent employment in the AOD sector. The APS undertook the recruitment of participating AOD services, clinical supervisors, universities and postgraduate psychology students for placements to commence in 2008, and developed information manuals for the project.

## Mental Health Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme for clinical psychology

The Mental Health Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme (MHPSS): clinical psychology is an initiative funded by the Australian Government to address the current shortage of mental health professionals. The MHPSS offers up to \$10,000 per year (FTE) for students who undertake postgraduate study in clinical psychology. The APS administers the scheme to advise on appropriate criteria and guidelines for the selection of students to be awarded funding under the scheme, and also manages the selection process. The selection of MHPSS scholarship recipients for 2008 was limited to students in three specific categories – those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, those with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) heritage, and residents from rural and remote Australia (RRA) – or to students who could demonstrate a commitment to working with these populations or in these locations. The selection process for 2008 resulted in the awarding of 44 scholarships to study clinical psychology – 10 for CALD students, three for ATSI students and 31 for RRA students.

## APS Bendi Lango Foundation Bursary

The second Bendi Lango Art Exhibition, which raises funds for bursaries for postgraduate Indigenous psychology students, was held in Brisbane in conjunction with the 2007 APS Annual Conference. In addition to funds raised through the Art Exhibition, the Bendi Lango Foundation – established with deductible gift recipient status in 2007 – attracted a philanthropic donation of \$30,000. The recipient of the 2008 Bendi Lango Foundation Bursary was Graham Gee, a descendent of the Garawa nation (Gulf of Carpentaria, Northern Territory), who completed his Bachelor of Physical Education in 1992, upon which he took up a position as a lecturer at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in Ngukarr, southeast Arnhem Land. During his postgraduate psychology studies, Graham was employed with Native Title Services Victoria and was involved in developing a Victorian Indigenous land management strategy. He completed his Graduate Diploma of Psychology (University of Melbourne) in 2006 and his Postgraduate Diploma of Psychology (University of Melbourne) in 2007. Graham commenced his Master of Psychology degree at the University of Melbourne in 2008.

### > Advocacy and support for psychology practitioners

#### National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

The members of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) signed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) this year for the creation of a single national registration and accreditation system under a Health Act for nine professions, including psychology. COAG believes the new arrangement will increase these professionals' mobility across Australia, reduce red tape, provide greater safeguards for the public and promote a more flexible, responsive and sustainable health workforce. The IGA finalised the details of the new national registration and accreditation scheme which will be established by 1 July 2010. The APS is working closely with the COAG working group to ensure that the interests of the psychology profession are met in the new scheme and the legislation that underpins it.

#### National psychology workforce profile

The APS is involved in a collaborative project with the Council of Psychologist Registration Boards (CPRB) to develop and disseminate a comprehensive survey of the national psychology workforce. There is currently a lack of accurate workforce data for psychologists, so the survey aims to provide vital information for future workforce planning in addition to definitions of the workforce settings in which psychologists are employed. The survey will be distributed to all registered psychologists by each State and Territory Psychologist Registration Board during the coming year.

#### Submissions on workforce policy and practice

The APS has continued to develop submissions that both proactively initiate and respond to developments at the national and State government level on legislative, regulatory and policy issues concerning psychology practitioners. Submissions have ranged from a focus on clinical matters to broad organisational issues affecting psychologists and the psychology workforce. The full list of submissions that have been tendered by the APS on behalf of its members can be found on page 35.

#### Resources and support for psychology Medicare providers

The APS has developed extensive information on the website regarding the Medicare items for psychologists, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions and answers. In addition, the APS developed a handbook for allied health providers delivering services under the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative on behalf of the Federal Government. A manual for APS members on how to optimise service provision under the Better Access initiative has also been developed by the APS Private Practice Advisory Group.

The APS continues to support its members through an allied health consultant who provides a focal point for telephone and email information, and interdisciplinary liaison with regard to the Better Access initiative. The consultant role aims to encourage high quality service provision and collaborative mental health care between participating health professionals. Regular meetings are held between the professional groups who are eligible to deliver Medicare items under the Better Access initiative and identified issues are represented to the Australian Government via reports and presentations.

The APS represented the concerns of psychology Medicare providers in an extensive submission to the Federal Government's post-implementation review of the Better Access initiative, where a number of identified issues associated with service provision were elaborated. In addition, the APS has conducted two surveys of members providing Medicare-funded services and one survey of clients who have received services from psychologists under the Better Access initiative. These surveys have provided valuable information to inform APS representations to Government regarding the initiative.

## Professional Advisory Service

The APS Professional Advisory Service provides members with the opportunity to ring or email the Society with specific questions regarding issues encountered in professional practice. This service is available five days per week during normal office hours. During the last 12 months, the service has responded to over 4,500 telephone calls and emails. The major topics of enquiry from members were file management and access to records, assessment and treatment issues, practice procedures and ethical questions.

## Peer Consultation Networks

The APS has supported members' involvement in Peer Consultation Networks (PCNs), which operate in local areas and provide opportunities for professional support, sharing of information, and discussion of clinical issues, cases, ethical dilemmas and experiences of professional practice. Resources have been developed including Peer Consultation Network Guidelines and listings of PCNs.

## Psychological health of psychologists initiative

Resources to encourage the maintenance of psychologists' own health and wellbeing are currently under development by the Health Issues in the Workplace Taskforce of the APS Professional Practice Advisory Group. This will result in a set of web-based resources to assist practitioners to attend to their own psychological health.

## Improving collaborative mental health care

The APS is a founding member of the Mental Health Professionals Association (MHPA), a group established in 2006 comprising the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the APS, and the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. The MHPA was established to provide a coordinated and collaborative forum for issues affecting these four key mental health professional groups, particularly in the context of the Better Access initiative. This year the Federal Government announced the allocation of \$15million to fund MHPA to roll out at local level a multidisciplinary education and training package via 600 workshops per year over two years across Australia. MHPA is in the process of establishing a company limited by guarantee that will hold the contract with the Department of Health and Ageing and will have its offices at the APS National Office.

## Coordinated and collaborative health care

The APS provides the day-to-day management and chairs the Management Committee of Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) via an executive officer and secretariat based at the APS National Office. AHPA is the national peak body for the major health professions and their representative bodies other than medical practitioners, nurses and unions. Membership of AHPA enables the APS to be part of a powerful and united workforce which provides joint advocacy and an increased profile for the allied health professions. This year AHPA has engaged in advocacy regarding the important role of allied health in the health workforce, the National Primary Health Care Strategy, and Australian health care reform in both the public and private sectors. In addition, AHPA this year has been awarded two major contracts which will increase access to, and recognition of, allied health. The two projects involve shared care in chronic disease management and the establishment of an Indigenous Allied Health Network.

### > Enhanced Professional Development program

#### Online PD logging

Online logging of members' Professional Development (PD) activities was established during the last financial year, which has greatly simplified the process of both logging and monitoring PD and should result in greater compliance with this requirement of APS membership. A revised PD Information Guide to complement the availability of online logging was also developed.

#### APS PD Taskforces

Three new Taskforces of the APS Professional Development Advisory Group have been established to work on ways to enhance the APS PD program. The Private Practice Management Taskforce is investigating training and mentoring for psychologists to develop skills for working in private practice, with the possibility of developing a certificate course in managing private practice. The Points Allocation and Endorsement Taskforce has investigated different levels of PD and is developing a two-tiered system for points allocation based on the degree of active learning involved in the PD activity. The Structure and System for APS PD Taskforce is in the process of producing a personal development guide to assist psychologists in compiling their PD program for each cycle.

#### APS PD workshop program

Over the last year, the APS has organised 58 PD workshops, including 11 in regional centres and one successful trial of a video-conferenced seminar. The workshops have been attended by a total of 1,560 participants. A particular effort has been made to increase the workshops presented in regional and rural areas. In addition to workshops presented by the APS National Office, 232 endorsements for other PD workshops were processed, an increase of 44 per cent on the number processed last year.

#### 42nd APS Annual Conference

The highly successful 42nd APS Annual Conference was held at the Convention Centre in Brisbane from 25 to 29 September 2007, and had the theme *Psychology Making an Impact*. The presentations of the three keynote speakers (Professor Gerald Koocher, Professor Earl Hunt, and Professor Mary Sheehan) were well received, as was the address by the President's Award winner, Professor Matt Sanders. In addition to the five streams of papers, poster sessions, symposia and forums, a Public Forum was held on *Lessons from Guantanamo Bay: Ethical Issues for Psychologists Working in the Military, Intelligence and Detention Facilities*. The Forum was well attended and built around the experiences of one of the keynote speakers, Professor Gerald Koocher.

#### International PD program

In early 2008, 34 people joined the international PD tour to Vietnam and Cambodia. The international PD tours have proved very popular in providing opportunities to understand psychology in other cultures in a stimulating and collaborative study environment. In addition to the relevant visits to local universities and institutes, participants are encouraged to provide a PD activity to the tour group. Upcoming tours are planned for Italy, South America and Vietnam.

#### APS Strategic Leadership Program

A new program initiated by the APS President to develop a stronger leadership pool of psychologists both within the APS and the broader society was launched in April this year. The first group of 10 participants in the Strategic Leadership Program attended an initial weekend workshop where they formed syndicate groups to collaboratively develop and lead projects. The Program provides web-based seminars and workshops to develop participants' leadership skills and assist them to lead and execute their projects effectively. The aim of the Program is to develop the strategic leadership skills of psychologists to enhance their ability to contribute to the APS, the discipline of psychology and the wider community.

## 3. Applying psychological knowledge for community wellbeing

### > Development roles in funded programs involving psychologists

#### headspace – the National Youth Mental Health Foundation

headspace aims to change the way that mental health services are delivered to young people across Australia with an emphasis on youth-friendly environments and improved accessibility. The APS, in conjunction with the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN), is responsible for the Service Provider Education and Training program to deliver training to a broad range of service providers working with youth at the headspace sites. A multifaceted education and training implementation strategy has been developed in partnership with the AGPN.

The first of the training packages, Screening and Engaging with Young People, has been developed, and training commenced in the first 10 Communities of Youth Services (CYSs). Six more training packages are due for delivery to headspace CYSs in 2008/09. The packages are: (1) brief interventions for young people with emerging difficulties in mental health and substance use; (2) assessment and management of challenging behaviours, aggression, self-harm and suicidality in young people at risk of, or experiencing, mental health and/or substance use problems; (3) effective interventions for young people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders; (4) assessment and management of symptoms among young people 'at risk' of psychosis; (5) a school-based youth mental health access program; and (6) engagement, practical and emotional support and psychoeducation for carers of young people with emergent mental health and/or substance use problems.

#### KidsMatter – the Australian primary schools mental health initiative

The APS is a major partner in KidsMatter, which uses a risk and protective framework to assist schools to systematically address four key components: (1) a positive school community; (2) social and emotional learning for students; (3) parenting support and education; and (4) early intervention for students experiencing mental health problems. Implementation of the national two year trial involving over 100 primary schools from all Australian States and Territories is well underway and extremely positive reports are being received from participating schools. The KidsMatter pilot program is due for completion at the end of 2008 and is being extensively evaluated before the anticipated national roll out in 2009.

In addition to facilitating the implementation of KidsMatter in pilot schools, the main focus of the APS project team's activities this year has been on the production of an extensive suite of mental health resources for parents and teachers. The school support resources correspond to the four components of KidsMatter and include parent information sheets on various issues associated with children's mental health together with more comprehensive resource packs providing detailed information, management tips and extensive resource lists. The resources are written in accessible language and presented in an engaging format and have been highly acclaimed by participating KidsMatter schools and other stakeholders.

#### beyondblue National Perinatal Mental Health Action Plan

A consortium of organisations, which includes the APS, has developed a National Action Plan (NAP) for the comprehensive assessment and pathways to appropriate care for women with mental health problems during the perinatal period. The APS is now represented on an expert working group which has been created to oversee the implementation of the NAP and to develop national guidelines for perinatal mental health.

#### Chronic conditions prevention and self-management training model

The APS has partnered with Flinders University to investigate the training needs of medical and allied health professionals in chronic conditions prevention and self-management support skills. Data was collected from health professionals through surveys, focus groups and interviews and it is expected that the resulting model of training will be adopted as the standard for training in this area.

#### CareSearch: palliative care knowledge network

The APS has had a significant role in the development of materials for CareSearch, a Federal Government-funded web-based resource providing evidence-based information to palliative care. CareSearch was launched in May 2008 and is designed to support health professionals involved in providing palliative care, people needing palliative care, and their families and friends.

#### Lifeline suicide bereavement support groups facilitator training

The APS has been a partner in the development and review of training materials for facilitators of the Lifeline suicide bereavement support groups. The training for facilitators was rolled out in May 2008.

### > Contribution to psychological awareness and knowledge in the community

#### Involvement in Indigenous issues

A particular public interest focus in the National office this year has been the engagement of the APS with Indigenous issues. Part of the impetus has come from the Indigenous aspects of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) mental health initiatives. Other factors include the increasing focus on 'closing the gap' in health outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and the Apology to the Stolen Generations.

The APS is undertaking an Australian Government-funded project aimed at identifying services which are using innovative approaches to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to raise mental health awareness and deliver positive messages about help-seeking. This led to the proposed formation of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association under the auspices of the APS. Thirty Indigenous psychologists have been located and have formed the group. An additional APS initiative is the involvement of prominent Aboriginal psychologist Pat Dudgeon as the APS representative on an expert reference group formed to provide clinical and cultural advice to the Australian Government's Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH). The group will influence the Indigenous-specific components of the COAG Mental Health Action Plan 2006–2011. A further project managed by a team from the University of South Australia in partnership with Victoria University and the APS is funded by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, and involves disseminating strategies for incorporating Australian Indigenous content into psychology undergraduate programs throughout Australia.

#### Contribution to addressing climate change

The APS aims to foster a greater involvement by psychology and psychologists across the spectrum of environmental issues and challenges facing Australians and the global community. APS National Office staff and members of relevant Reference and Interest Groups have worked this year to fulfil Australian psychology's commitment to an effective response to the challenge of climate change.

An APS Position Statement *Psychology and the natural environment* was prepared, printed, and distributed to relevant government agencies and NGOs and has stimulated international interest that has led to the preparation of similar documents by other psychological societies. Two APS Tip Sheets on climate change have been prepared and have received quite a lot of media coverage. The APS made a submission to the Federal Government's Strategic Review of Climate Change Programs 2008 which emphasised the importance of climate change programs using multidisciplinary teams (including psychologists and other social scientists) to draw on years of evidence-based research into how to get humans individually and collectively to change the behaviours that are putting their local and global environments at such great risk.

#### Disaster preparedness

Over the last year, the APS Disaster Preparedness and Response Taskforce has investigated ways of taking a more proactive role in the development of community education and training in the area of disaster and emergency management. One of their tasks is to progress a Memorandum of Understanding with the Red Cross regarding the possible benefits of the two organisations working more closely together to facilitate reciprocal awareness-raising and training.

#### Involvement in the Science Meets Parliament Forum

Every year, representatives of the APS are invited to attend the *Science meets Parliament* forum, an annual event where scientists meet federal parliamentarians to discuss current issues and advances in science. This year, the APS sent two representatives to discuss with parliamentarians the important role that psychology can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation. An important part of the APS message was that psychology and social sciences have a critically important contribution to make in: promoting sustainable behaviour; understanding how the public makes sense of climate change problems, impacts and solutions; facilitating disaster preparedness and response; ensuring social justice and equity in climate change solutions; and facilitating dispute resolution.

## Position Statements and Review Papers

The development of Position Statements and Review Papers assists the APS to speak authoritatively on matters of public concern in ways that can be readily understood by decision-makers, the media, and the general public. This year the following Position Statements were developed with expert input from APS members:

- Substance use
- Parenting after separation
- Psychology and the natural environment.

The following Review Papers were also developed this year:

- Parenting after separation
- Gay and lesbian parenting
- Psychological sense of community and its relevance to wellbeing and every day life in Australia
- Psychology and the natural environment.

## Tip Sheets

APS Tip Sheets are developed to inform the public about a range of psychological issues and how psychologists can help. They are a valuable resource for distribution by a wide variety of psychologists. This year, the following Tip Sheets were developed with expert input from APS members:

- Climate change – what you can do
- Talking with children about the environment
- Helping girls develop a positive self image
- Ageing positively
- Parent guide to helping children manage conflict, aggression and bullying
- Understanding and managing eating disorders (updated).

## National Psychology Week

Now in its fifth year, National Psychology Week (NPW) again enabled the APS to engage with important stakeholders, including members and the general public. The theme for NPW 2007 was healthy ageing, and the week included presentation of the results of a community survey on attitudes towards ageing. The launch of NPW at the Carlton Baths with guest speaker Tom Hafey, AFL legend and motivational speaker, was highly successful. The media relations strategy aimed to raise awareness of psychology and psychological issues and communicate key messages about positive/healthy ageing, and generated high quality media coverage in key news and niche media. Media coverage peaked at 116 events including nine television, 37 radio (syndicated to 39 additional stations), 57 print and 13 online. APS members in local areas were also well represented in media reports. Members conducted a record number of over 500 activities, ranging from workplace displays, shopping centre stalls, presentations and awareness campaigns during NPW itself, and also made numerous contributions to the media at a national, State and local level.

## APS media releases and media referral service

The APS connects journalists every day with APS psychologists who are experienced in media relations. The media referral service features more than 200 APS psychologists from universities, public and non-government agencies, consulting firms, and private practices. These psychologists add psychological insight into popular culture and trends, and provide psychological expertise in human behaviour and relationships, as gained from evidence-based research and people's experiences. This year the service received an average of over 50 enquiries per month. In addition, the APS provided 33 media releases over the year, including four on substance use, six on Indigenous issues, two on climate change, and one each on refugees and the sexualisation of children.