

15

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT FOR PSYCHOLOGY

The APS has brought a sustained and energetic focus to its advocacy efforts for both the discipline and profession of psychology during a particularly challenging year in the external operating environment for psychology.

ADVOCACY WITH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ENTITIES

Australian health reforms

In 2010 the Australian Government announced the most extensive reforms to the Australian health system since the introduction of Medicare. Under the reforms, a new primary health care system will be established involving a network of organisations throughout Australia, Medicare Locals, as well as greater Federal funding of more integrated hospital networks. Implementation of the reforms is likely to affect psychologists in a number of ways. Over the last year the APS has advocated for the role of psychologists in the reforms through discussions with Government, participation in stakeholder groups, and development of a number of submissions. The APS has participated in the reform process through the powerful Allied Health Professions Australia organisation as well as the National Primary Health Care Partnership, whose membership represents over 100,000 frontline health professionals working in the primary health care sector. With 19 other national peak health organisations, the APS has advocated for coordinated, evidence-based, high quality and safe primary health care delivered by multidisciplinary health care teams and accessible by all Australians.

As part of the general practice and Primary Health Care of reforms, the new Medicare Locals will provide coordinated medical, nursing and allied health services spanning all health professions. The APS has worked to ensure that psychologists are well placed to contribute to the planning,

establishment and implementation of Medicare Locals. Advocacy in this area has been assisted by the APS Strategic Leadership Group, which was established in 2010 to facilitate input of psychologists in the clinicians groups involved with the Medicare Locals.

Mental health advocacy

The APS has advocated best practice mental health care through participation in a number of forums that influence and inform policy development. The APS has advised the Government on mental health policy and service through regular meetings with the Minister for Mental Health Ageing, his advisors and senior Government bureaucrats, and through representation on a number of important Government advisory groups and committees.

Over the last year, the APS has continued to advocate strongly with the Government for the maintenance of the Better Access initiative. The APS has used the extremely favourable results of the long awaited evaluation of the Better Access initiative to strengthen its lobbying efforts. The evaluation showed that the initiative provides effective, cost-efficient and accessible psychological services for Australians with common mental disorders. Eighty per cent of Better Access consumers reported high or very high levels of psychological distress, mostly associated with depression and/or anxiety, which were reduced to normal or mild levels at the end of treatment.

Following the 2011 Federal Budget announcement of a reduction in the annual maximum allowance of sessions of psychological treatment under Better Access, the APS mounted a rigorous campaign against the cuts. The APS membership provided valuable input into this process through their participation in a large audit survey of Better Access consumers seen by psychologists in 2010, which was designed to demonstrate the potential impact of the Budget cuts. Data was provided by 1,182 psychologists on 9,900 Better Access clients who received more than 10 sessions. The survey indicated that it is overwhelmingly consumers with severe depression or anxiety disorders, frequently with comorbid complexities, who will be denied the additional sessions of psychological care under the Budget cuts. Using the survey results, the APS put out a number of media releases outlining concerns, met with Ministerial advisors and senior health bureaucrats, and communicated with influential parliamentarians. The APS has also established a partnership with the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum to urge the Government to reverse the cutbacks.

The APS has also continued to advocate psychologists' role in the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Program. The APS provides training and support to clinicians delivering services under the program through a number of projects. It has also provided input into the development of the Flexible Care Packages initiative.

Advocacy through strategic partnerships

The ability of the APS to promote the contribution of psychology to people's health and wellbeing within a broader workforce, social and political context has been supported by strong strategic partnerships. The APS has significantly participated in a number of influential entities within the primary health care and mental health sectors including Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA), the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA), the Mental Health Professions Association (MHPA), the Mental Health Professionals Network (MHPN) and the National Primary Health Care Partnership. As a member of the MHPA and MHPN, the APS has contributed to the delivery of workshops and establishment of multidisciplinary networks across Australia.

Enhancing the psychology workforce

The APS recognises that there is a growing shortage of psychologists in Australia to meet demand for services, and continues to advocate across government for increased funding and initiatives to address the shortage.

This requires not only funding for university places but consideration of the structure of the workforce, which the APS has participated in through its representation on the National Mental Health Workforce Advisory Group. During the last year the APS met regularly with government, advisors and senior bureaucrats to advocate the need for an urgent increase in the level of funding for postgraduate professional psychology training. The APS also participated on the Health Workforce Australia (HWA) Advisory Committee for Health Professions and provided high level advice, input and feedback on Health Workforce Australia's programs and initiatives.

Federal election and Budget strategies

In the lead up to the 2010 Federal election, the APS developed a suite of position statements and recommendations on key issues to highlight the relevance of psychology's contribution, such as in health reform, chronic disease, mental health and aged care. The APS statements were used to develop media releases and relevant politicians were lobbied.

Ahead of the 2011 Federal Budget, the APS prepared a submission to the Government advocating a range of strategies to highlight the contribution of psychological expertise across a diversity of areas and to ensure resource allocation reflective of the needs of the Australian community. The APS advocated for increased funding and improved initiatives in a number of areas including: the Better Access initiative; children's mental health; older Australians; rural and remote communities; the psychological workforce; chronic disease management; climate change; and disaster response.

Advocacy with the Psychology Board of Australia

The introduction of the Psychology Board of Australia's extensive new requirements under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme represents one of the most far-reaching changes for psychology in a long time, encompassing the entire Australian psychology profession and the education and training of psychology practitioners throughout the nation. During the transition to the new scheme, the APS has done its utmost to represent the profession and its practitioners in striving for high standards, effective and realistic

processes, and conditions to ensure a viable workforce of psychologists.

Two weeks before the implementation of the new scheme on 1 July, the Psychology Board released its finalised guidelines on area of practice endorsements which contained much stricter transition arrangements than had been previously proposed. Following intensive advocacy from the APS, the Psychology Board subsequently announced a series of limited grace periods for the lodgement of applications for APS College membership and supervision agreements, to enable the relevant applicants to be eligible for area of practice endorsement under previously recognised arrangements (i.e., APS College membership). Processes were also adjusted so that the transition arrangements would apply to all existing postgraduate students.

Following intensive lobbying from the APS and its Health and Community Colleges, the initial decision to exclude health psychology and community psychology from the list of approved areas of practice for endorsement was overturned. All nine areas of specialist psychology practice, corresponding to the nine Colleges of the APS, have now been recognised for endorsement under national registration.

The APS has continued throughout the year to advocate for fair arrangements for practitioners on a range of matters. These have included successful advocacy in relation to the registration renewal debacle, when many practitioners found themselves deregistered as a result of administrative error, and for changes to the complex CPD requirements such as the prescribed reflective journal length, which has now been altered to an unspecified length.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

FACILITATION OF HIGH STANDARDS FOR THE PROFESSION AND DISCIPLINE

Enhanced member access to scientific literature

This year the APS introduced a number of new membership benefits to increase members' access to psychology journals and texts, with the aim of facilitating evidence-based practice and supporting members' continuing professional development. This aligns with a key aspect of the APS mission as a learned society, which is to advocate for high standards of psychology education and practice, and to promote the scientific nature of the psychology discipline. The APS has established an arrangement to provide APS members with free online access to one of the world's largest psychology literature databases, the Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, offering full-text access to more than 550 international psychology and behavioural science journals. Access to the database is being offered to members on a trial basis for one year, and, if it is taken up and valued by members, this could continue and expand in the future. Discounted subscriptions to the full suite of British Psychological Society journals have also been arranged for APS members, as well as a 25 per cent discount on thousands of titles from the extensive psychology list of one of the foremost research and scholarly publishers, Wiley.

Revamped APS journals

The APS has engaged a new publisher, Wiley-Blackwell, for its flagship journals, *Australian Psychologist* and the *Australian Journal of Psychology*, and has established a new editorial team. The new design of the journals has increased their appeal and accessibility, with a clearer page layout and a new front cover which lists the contents of each edition. The revamped journals also bring

an increased focus on the practical implications of published articles, offering summarised information at the top of each article on what is already known on the topic and what the article adds. All APS members receive a hard copy of either journal as part of their membership, and free online access to both is available for members.

Clinical Psychologist, one of the APS journals published under the auspices of the Colleges and Interest Groups of the Society, was this year accepted for inclusion in Thomson ISI's Sciences Citation Index. *Clinical Psychologist* now joins the APS journals *Australian Journal of Psychology* and *Australian Psychologist* in having an ISI ranking.

Course development and accreditation

Accreditation services ranging from the provision of expert assessors to course design advice were provided by the APS Program Development and Accreditation Committee (PDAC) to the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC). PDAC experts served on 17 APAC assessment teams including three offshore assessments, and participated in APAC assessments of 71 undergraduate and 38 postgraduate courses. The APS sent College Course Approval assessors on 30 specialised postgraduate course assessments during the year. Members of PDAC provided advice to APAC regarding its revision of the *APAC Rules for Accreditation and Accreditation Standards for Psychology Courses, Version 10*, which came into force late in June 2010.

Review of College Course Approval Guidelines

The APS undertook a major review of the APS College Course Approval Guidelines, which drew on extensive

expert input from each of the nine APS Colleges. The review consisted of auditing the guidelines against current specialist postgraduate education practices, consolidation of common components, and improvements to the consistency, clarity and usability of the peer review system. The new *College Course Approval Guidelines for Postgraduate Specialist Courses December 2010* were published late in 2010 with implementation scheduled for the 2012 round of course approval assessments.

Promoting high ethical standards

The APS was pleased to observe at the commencement of the new national registration scheme that the Psychology Board of Australia had adopted the *APS Code of Ethics* as the official code of conduct under which the psychology profession will be regulated. This was an important recognition of the APS stewardship of the profession in Australia over more than 60 years and its role in setting high ethical standards for practising psychologists over this time.

The APS Ethical Guidelines Committee has continued to review existing Ethical Guidelines and to generate new ones to assist members with ethical matters associated with particular client groups or with specific workplace situations. This year the Committee produced revised versions of *Guidelines on reporting abuse and neglect, and criminal activity*; *Guidelines for providing psychological services and products using the internet and other telecommunication technologies*; and *Guidelines on record keeping*.

The APS Ethics Committee was chaired by Associate Professor Bill Warren until 31 December 2010, and then by Professor Anthony Love.

For this reporting period, 26 ethics matters related to the conduct of members were considered by the Ethics Committee. Of these matters, 14 were forwarded to the Psychology Board of Australia for investigation in the first instance. The remaining 12 matters were investigated by the Ethics Committee, with five matters completed, two awaiting supervisor's reports, four currently under consideration and one on hold. The outcomes of the five completed matters comprised two where the complaint was not sustained, one where application for membership was denied, one educative letter, and one acknowledgement of completion of the requirements resulting from the Psychology Board of Australia's investigation and ruling.

Private Practice Management Standards

The APS developed the first version of the Private Practice Management

Standards (PPMS) in 2006 and over the last year the professional practice team has been engaged in a major review and revision of the standards. The review was undertaken largely in response to changing circumstances in government initiatives and community developments but also as the result of feedback from APS members and organisations. The review has been guided by the PPMS Reference Group and the results of a survey of APS members who are using the standards. The revisions to the standards will be pilot tested with APS members and the revised version of the standards will be released in early 2012.

Assessment 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 migrate to Australia under the General Skilled Migration Categories, to register or work as a psychologist in Australia, or enter an accredited psychology course in an Australian university.

Over the past financial year 509 assessments were undertaken, including 98 migration, 146 registration, 27 employment, and 238 course entry assessments. Of the migration applications, 72 met the minimum requirements – a success rate of 73 per cent compared with 66 per cent for the previous financial year.

Encouraging excellence in psychology

Each year the APS offers a range of Awards that encourage excellence in psychology. Recipients of APS Awards in 2010 are detailed below.

APS President's Award for Distinguished Contribution to Psychology in Australia
Professor Alfred Allan, Edith Cowan University

Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award
Professor Barbara Gillam, University of Sydney

Distinguished Contribution to Psychology Education Award
Dr Stephen Provost, Southern Cross University

Early Career Research Award
Associate Professor Sue Cotton, University of Melbourne; Dr Damien Riggs, Flinders University

Early Career Teaching Award
Dr Judith Gullifer, University of Queensland; Dr Gery Karantzas, University of Western Australia

Award for Excellent PhD Thesis in Psychology
Dr Phoebe Bailey, University of New South Wales; Dr Elizabeth Newnham, University of Western Australia; Dr Kiley Seymour, University of Sydney; Dr Emma Thomas, Australian National University

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ENHANCEMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Reform of models of education and training

In the face of a variety of growing pressures for reform of postgraduate professional education and training pathways, background research, recruitment of suitable experts and consultations with stakeholders have been undertaken in preparation for a resumption of work by the National Psychology Education and Training Reference Group in 2011. A committee from the APS Colleges has contributed to this process through the development of a new pathways model.

Promoting dialogue on competency-based education

The APS has advocated for more dialogue concerning competency-based approaches to psychology education and training, consulting with the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council and the Head of Department and School of Psychology Association (HODSPA), and by publishing a number of articles and presentations canvassing the topic. In particular, the APS has highlighted the trend both in Australia and internationally for regulators to require a greater focus on competencies in the education of professionals, and the emerging literature on competency models in psychology.

Submissions concerning reform of the higher education sector

The APS has represented the psychology discipline in a number of reviews of the higher education sector this year. The APS made submissions to the second round of the Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) consultation process, and to the Federal Government's Review of Base Funding in Higher Education, highlighting the serious and growing shortfall between the costs incurred in providing

professional postgraduate courses and the funding allocated through Commonwealth-supported places. In addition, the APS conducted extensive and intense advocacy regarding the final phase of revisions to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), including consultations with the AQF Council and meeting with senior advisory staff of the Federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations. The APS has advocated strongly that the AQF needs to better recognise the nature of the education and training model which the profession uses in its professional coursework doctoral programs.

Enhanced professional development opportunities

Over the last year there has been a major focus on expanding the APS National Office provision of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for APS members. In addition, there has been a significant increase in support for APS member groups to host CPD events. During the reporting period, the National Office organised 69 CPD workshops across Australia that were attended by nearly 3,000 participants. The APS also offered support services for CPD events organised by 274 APS Branches and Interest Groups and handled over 9,000 registrations.

A range of new technologies have been explored to facilitate an expanded offering of CPD opportunities for members. An online presentation delivery system was piloted for events such as the Queensland Flood Disaster Recovery Briefing, which consisted of a synchronous dual view of PowerPoint slides with a video of the speaker. In May this year the APS procured a learning management system (LMS) and established an APS eLearning web portal to offer online CPD activities.

The acquisition of an LMS has allowed the APS to centralise and automate administration, assembly and delivery of learning content (including multi-media), as well as consolidate the numerous training package initiatives on a scalable web-based platform.

In early 2011 the APS was contracted by the Department of Health and Ageing – in collaboration with the Australian Association of Social Workers and Occupational Therapy Australia – to develop a short online CBT program (providing a minimum of 10 hours of education) to assist members of the three professions to meet the new CPD requirements for practitioners providing Focused Psychological Strategies (FPS) items under the Better Access initiative. By the end of this reporting period, a total of 1,121 participants had registered for the online CPD program (including 593 people from rural and remote locations), and evaluations have indicated that participants have highly rated the online learning experience. Further online CPD activities are under development.

Postgraduate placements in alcohol and other drug services

The APS is the contracted administrator for the Federal Government's Supervision of Postgraduate Psychology Trainees Undertaking Placements in Alcohol and Other Drug Services Project. The APS facilitated the creation of 41 funded placements for students of accredited postgraduate professional psychology courses as part of the project during the year. This brings the total number of psychology placements in alcohol and other drug services which have been funded across Australia since the start of the program to 122.

SUPPORT FOR PSYCHOLOGY PRACTITIONERS

Support in workplace contexts

Providing support and resources to the psychology workforce in the variety of roles in which it is found is an ongoing commitment of the APS. The agenda for the APS National office is assisted by representative committees, such as the Professional Practice Advisory Group and the three Reference Groups that provide advice to it: Psychologists in Schools, Public Sector and Non-Government Organisations, and Private Practice. Over the last year these groups have developed policy advice and resources on: standards and guidelines for psychologists in various workplace settings; recruitment and management of probationary psychologists; recruitment and retention policies for psychologists in all settings and jurisdictions; provision of student placements in private practice; models of private practice management; and guidelines for working with children of separated parents, assessment of intellectual disability and management of violent behaviour.

The APS also advocates and negotiates on behalf of psychologists on a range of professional matters in areas including the Family Court, bodies such as Standards Australia, various government departments and third party funders. As part of these negotiations, APS representatives have met with a number of third party providers including Medicare Australia, WorkSafe and the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) about issues arising from audits of members' work. These discussions allow the opportunity to raise matters that are specific to psychology which may not have been considered by these organisations. A positive outcome of recent discussions has been the further protection of client record privacy during audits

through a change in procedures negotiated with Victorian WorkSafe and TAC. In addition, the APS has been able to source feedback from these groups for members to ensure accurate knowledge and understanding about practice requirements under these programs.

Accurate information on national registration

The host of significant changes associated with the introduction of the new national registration scheme in July 2010 required the dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information by the APS as the peak body supporting Australian psychologists. During the tumultuous early months of the national registration scheme, thousands of psychologists turned to the APS to access accurate information and advice, literally jamming the APS National Office telephone system on a number of occasions. The APS also produced a series of mail-outs and web-based information to ensure its members understood the new requirements for practitioners under national registration – including mandatory continuing professional development (CPD), professional indemnity insurance cover, recency of practice, and mandatory reporting obligations – which carry serious penalties for non-compliance.

New initiatives in the disability sector

The APS has been represented on advisory committees related to initiatives in the disability sector. The Better Start for Children with Disability package, released in July this year, extends the Helping Children with Autism package to provide assessment and treatment services to children with

vision or hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and Fragile X syndrome. The APS also provided representation on the Government review of the Tables for the Assessment of Work-Related Impairment for the Disability Support Pension.

e-health developments

In the next 5 to 10 years, Australia faces one of the most significant reforms in health care management with the introduction of the personally controlled electronic health record (PCEHR). This will have a major impact on the way that healthcare services are provided and reported and the APS has been a significant player representing the psychology profession on the various committees and forums established by the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) and the Department of Health and Ageing. The APS has been particularly concerned to represent the interests of psychology practitioners in relation to the plans to protect client privacy, confidentiality and record security. In addition, the APS has been significantly involved in the development of an online short course in e-health to be launched later in 2011.

Development of practitioner resources

A number of new web-based resources have been developed over the last year to support psychology practitioners. These include information on new funded initiatives under Medicare and the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program, information about the complaints processes under the new national registration scheme, updates of the *Peer Consultation Network Guidelines*, the member guide on *Software for Psychologists in Private Practice* and information about the *Working with Children Check*.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

SUPPORT FOR PSYCHOLOGY PRACTITIONERS [CONT.]

Provision of advice on professional matters

The APS conducts and manages a phone and email service during standard work hours that provides immediate and considered advice to its members regarding a range of professional issues. The Professional Advisory Service has had an exceptionally busy year due to the extensive changes for practising psychologists that have been introduced by the Psychology Board of Australia under the new National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The Professional Advisory Service responded to over 7,200 telephone or email queries throughout the year, which is over 1,000 higher than last

year. Apart from queries associated with new requirements under national registration, the majority of enquiries were related to ethical issues such as confidentiality, access to psychologists' records, boundary issues, legal requirements such as compliance with court requests, and other legislation and practice issues including employment arrangements and contracting.

Submissions on policy and practice

The APS continues to have input into government policies that impact on professional practice through the provision of submissions. A number of submissions over the

last year have focused on child and adolescent mental health, including the consultation process for the National School Chaplaincy Program, the Review of the Helping Children with Autism package, and the Inquiry into Early Intervention Aimed at Preventing Youth Suicide. Ageing was also high on the agenda with a submission to the Productivity Commission Draft Report on Caring for Older Australians. Workforce issues continue to be a primary government focus and the APS provided a submission to the Health Workforce Australia Paper, National Consultation on Health Workforce Innovation and Reform, and to the Inquiry into Mental Health and Education and Workforce participation.

RAISING THE INTERNATIONAL PROFILE OF AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGY

ICAP 2010

The successful hosting by the APS of the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP 2010) in Melbourne in July 2010 has been highlighted in the Executive Director's report. The truly international nature of the Congress was demonstrated by 67 different countries being represented among the 3,400 delegates who attended ICAP 2010. The APS was responsible for organising the extensive scientific program, and close to 4,000 abstracts were received from psychologists in more than 60 countries, requiring a complex process of blind peer reviews by teams of experts located across the globe. Over 90 internationally renowned psychologists presented keynote addresses as part of the Congress. ICAP 2010 was a huge success and has significantly raised the international profile of Australian psychology and the APS. Representatives from psychology

associations from around the world were in attendance and opportunities to strengthen international connections were plentiful.

Linkages with international psychology organisations

Whilst hosting ICAP 2010, the APS celebrated the recent signing of the MoU with the Canadian Psychological Association, and signed new MoUs with the Indonesian Psychological Association and the Japanese Psychological Association, further strengthening the APS' international linkages.

This year the APS Executive Director visited the Hong Kong Psychological Society as well as the Japanese Psychological Association to further the APS ties. The visit to Japan coincided with the devastating earthquake and the Executive Director was able to personally offer condolences and support from the APS.

Asian marketing of APS journals

As part of the new publishing partnership between the APS and Wiley-Blackwell, initiatives to increase the awareness and impact of APS journals in Asia commenced during the year. These included an email campaign promoting the new look-APS journals, which saw messages sent to 666 contacts in Asia.

New APS International Affiliate membership

A new category of APS College membership was introduced this year, that of International Affiliate, which has provided APS Colleges with the opportunity to encourage greater involvement and participation of psychologists from other countries in the APS. This was especially introduced to coincide with ICAP 2010 given the number of international psychologists who attended the Congress.

CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The APS has worked hard to heighten awareness of psychological knowledge and its role in enhancing community wellbeing through maximising opportunities to influence public debate and improve access to psychological services.

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY

Strategic promotion through the media

The APS has instituted a proactive campaign to promote psychological responses to issues of significant community concern as well as those of strategic importance to the APS and its members. The campaign was sustained throughout the last year and included the development of a suite of topic background briefings for distribution to the media, with the aim of educating journalists about the role of psychologists and the evidence-based nature of their contribution. Key media outlets of relevance to psychologists were actively engaged, and material developed for their specific needs.

This strategic media approach over the last year resulted in an unprecedented number of media placements across a diverse range of psychology topic areas, including the Better Access initiative, health reform, registration of psychologists, immigration detention and autism to name just a few. Hundreds of media articles and interviews were generated through the 37 media releases developed through the year. As part of its work with the media, the APS managed 400 enquiries this year, connecting journalists and researchers from an array of media with APS psychologists with relevant expertise. Media training was conducted to boost the number of experienced APS members able to respond effectively to this array of media interest.

Communications work has also sought to raise public awareness by engaging

directly with local communities, and the community agencies that work with them, to educate about the diversity of resources and initiatives produced by the APS. This work had a particular focus on regions that were affected by the spate of cyclones and floods over the last year, where new materials on preparing for, and recovering from, natural disasters were distributed to local media and to emergency services, in addition to a wider awareness campaign that appeared in national and international media.

2010 APS Annual Oration

The 2010 APS Annual Oration, 'The psychological cost of disasters', was delivered by Professor Richard Bryant who is an APS Fellow, Scientia Professor in the School of Psychology, University of New South Wales, an ARC Laureate Fellow, and Director of the Traumatic Stress Unit, Westmead Hospital. Richard is an internationally renowned disaster expert who has been involved in recovery work for most of the major disasters around the world over the last few decades. Given the spate of devastating natural disasters over the last year and the increasing involvement of the APS in disaster preparedness and recovery work, this Oration was timely. Richard's overview of the current approach internationally to helping people affected by a disaster described a commonsense model of caring for people and groups that draws on fundamental understandings of what people need to feel safe, supported and cared for. The challenge is changing media and public

expectations of what is needed after a disaster, and ensuring the best type of support is available and accessible at the most appropriate times.

National Psychology Week 2010

National Psychology Week (NPW), held on the second week of November each year, is the APS annual campaign to highlight psychology and its contribution to the Australian community. For NPW 2010, a record number of 892 events were held around Australia. Local NPW event organisers were supplied with supporting resources that included detailed tip sheets on topics such as anxiety and depression, templates for press releases suitable for local radio and print posters, as well as promotional materials.

A key part of the NPW campaign each year is the annual NPW survey, which runs alongside a wider media campaign that for NPW 2010 resulted in more than 150 articles and interviews, reaching a potential direct audience of 3.75 million. The research survey investigated the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, and the effect of these popular new technologies on wellbeing. The topic resonated with concerns in the community, as evidenced by the coverage secured in radio, newspapers and magazines throughout Australia, as well as in New Zealand, India, Ireland and Canada.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

PROMOTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Recovery following natural disasters

Last summer, floods, cyclones and bushfires devastated many regions of Australia, and the APS made a significant contribution to the recovery efforts. This included facilitating considerable media coverage on preparing for disasters and psychological aspects of recovery, including caring for children, psychological first aid, and longer-term adjustment. In addition, the APS developed a number of downloadable resources for the general public and for people providing support to those affected by the floods, cyclones and bushfires. Much useful information for the public on disaster recovery was placed on the Psychosocial Support in Disasters website, which the APS and other peak mental health organisations developed and launched last year. Guidelines were also developed for psychologists working with communities affected by natural disasters.

The APS consulted with other agencies and authorities to plan the development and dissemination of appropriate training workshops for APS members, and others as needed, within an integrated recovery plan for regions affected by the natural disasters. The APS ran a series of webinars on disaster recovery to orient psychologists to working effectively with people affected by floods or cyclones.

The APS offered resources and support to colleagues in New Zealand and Japan in the wake of the devastating earthquakes and tsunami in those countries. The New Zealand Psychological Society found the Psychosocial Support in Disasters website very useful and distributed materials widely through the Red Cross, schools, hospitals and community support groups.

Indigenous disadvantage

The APS this year formally embarked on its undertaking to engage its membership in developing an APS Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This is a major opportunity to make a public contribution to reconciliation and healing by influencing professional education and practice in the psychology field.

The APS has continued to auspice and provide infrastructure to support the work of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA), whose numbers continue to grow. AIPA received funding to develop and conduct a series of cultural competence workshops around Australia, which have been independently evaluated as highly successful. AIPA is now represented on a number of government advisory bodies, and is increasingly recognised as a key national advocate and advisory body in Indigenous mental health. In partnership with AIPA, the APS completed a funded project to develop a website resource for promoting mental health awareness and help-seeking in Indigenous communities, and a youth-focussed overlay to AIPA's cultural competence training package.

Multiculturalism and refugees

The APS hosted the International Cross-Cultural Psychology Congress immediately prior to ICAP 2010, which in turn was commended as setting a new standard for putting community, environmental and public interest psychologies on the agenda. This was followed up by the presentation of a special cross-cultural feature of *InPsych*, which provided a series of articles highlighting psychological perspectives on cultural issues in a variety of

contexts. The APS Grant for Intercultural and/or International Projects in 2010 supported a training exchange partnership between Mongolian and Australian psychologists. The APS issued a Position Statement on the psychological wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia. The Statement noted the consensus among psychologists and other health professionals about the vulnerability of people seeking asylum, and formed the basis for submissions to a series of government inquiries and advocacy for humane and just immigration policies. Attention was also drawn to the ethical and practical challenges of psychological service delivery in remote and offshore immigration detention centres.

Gambling harm

Another special feature of *InPsych* in the last year focussed on the psychology of gambling, drawing in part on an APS-commissioned review of the literature. The Review Paper, and the subsequent presentation in *InPsych*, provided an account of current psychological theories and research on problem gambling behaviour, together with a review of public health approaches to reducing gambling harm and the treatment of problem gambling. The Review Paper highlighted the importance of understanding problem gambling and its impact to ensure that the regulation of gambling in the community is well informed. The accessible *InPsych* report was used to generate media and political interest in psychology's contribution to addressing this area of increasing community concern.

School chaplains debate

The APS has raised significant concerns over the last few years about the National School Chaplaincy Program,

which was introduced by the Howard Government in 2006 and has been continued by the Rudd and Gillard Governments since then. This year the APS achieved some high profile media coverage on the issue on national television, radio and in the print media. The APS has stated repeatedly that it is not opposed to the presence of chaplains in schools for pastoral care, however the investment of scarce government-funded resources should be redirected to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of students and their families. The extensive qualifications and accountability required of registered psychologists providing services in schools has been contrasted with the lack of qualifications and regulation of chaplains. The increasing evidence of professional boundary violations, lack of provision of impartial advice, and, by their own admission, a failure to refer on for expert assistance are significant problems for the chaplaincy program.

Inequities for regional, rural and remote Australia

In 2010 the APS established a new Advisory Group to the Board of Directors focused specifically on issues associated with the profession and practice of psychology in regional, rural and remote Australia. The primary objective of this was to coordinate APS expertise about the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of people in rural and remote Australia, including that of Indigenous people, and to increase appropriate representation on rural and remote peak bodies. Resources relevant to rural and remote issues and practice for APS members have been developed, and research has been undertaken to assist in identifying and resolving issues relevant to mental health service delivery in regional, rural and remote

Australia (e.g., the recruitment and retention of psychologists).

Suicide prevention

The APS has received funding from the Department of Health and Ageing to deliver training and support to allied health professionals providing immediate, intensive and relatively short-term treatment and support to individuals at risk of suicide and self harm under an Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Suicide Prevention Service Trial project. Specifically, the APS developed and delivered training materials, clinical support and advice, and a range of resources to allied health providers regarding suicide prevention. Clinical support and advice were provided through peer networking webinars on a range of topics, and telephone and email provision of a Clinical Support Service. The project was highly successful, with the services provided under this trial to be incorporated into ATAPS service provision across all Medicare Locals and the remaining Divisions of General Practice during the remainder of 2011.

Drugs in sport

The APS was contracted by the Federal Government to assist with an aspect of the Illicit Drugs in Sport National Education and Action Plan. The APS has been facilitating referrals to suitably qualified psychologists to provide a range of services to meet the needs of national sporting organisations implementing an Illicit Drugs in Sport testing and education program. The APS has also facilitated professional development for psychologists and counsellors involved in the program.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

STRENGTHENING CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

KidsMatter initiatives

The KidsMatter initiatives in which the APS is a development partner have continued to expand over the last year. The APS is a partner in four KidsMatter initiatives: KidsMatter Primary, KidsMatter Early Childhood, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander KidsMatter Early Childhood, and the KidsMatter Transition to School: Parent Initiative.

Over the past year, the KidsMatter team at the APS National Office has grown to respond to the expansion of the initiatives. The team comprises mostly psychologists from a range of different fields of psychology, including clinical, education and developmental, community, organisational, social and environmental, who have expertise in children's mental health and in working with schools and early childhood services.

Over 400 schools across Australia are now participating in KidsMatter Primary. Following a successful pilot, the Federal Government has committed a further \$18.4 million to KidsMatter Primary, which will enable it to be expanded to an extra 1,700 primary schools by June 2014. As part of this expansion, the APS team has been working on redeveloping the professional learning for school staff into a multimedia format.

The KidsMatter Early Childhood pilot, which began at the end of 2009, will continue until the end of 2011, with the evaluation report due in mid 2012. More than 100 long day care and preschools are participating in the pilot. The APS works closely with its

partners, Early Childhood Australia and *beyondblue*: the National Depression initiative, to develop resources for pilot sites, including implementation manuals, professional learning materials and information packs about mental health topics. Feedback from the pilot sites is extremely positive and the APS hopes to be in a position to help expand the initiative in the future.

The APS also received funding to partner with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) and *beyondblue* in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander KidsMatter Early Childhood Initiative. The objective of this initiative is to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending those services.

In December 2009 the APS was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to develop a new KidsMatter Transition to School: Parent Initiative targeting the parents and carers of children transitioning to their first year of primary school. This initiative was piloted with 17 schools nationally from August 2010 to July 2011. Evaluation feedback is currently being analysed and indicates that schools and parents and carers found the information and resources provided highly valuable. The APS will be working with the Department of Health and Ageing and KidsMatter partners to make the resources more widely available.

headspace

The APS is a partner in the Australian Government-funded headspace youth mental health initiative, and is represented on the Board which sets strategic directions and policies for the program. This year saw a significant expansion of headspace with new funding allocated in the 2011 Federal Budget. Funding has been provided to establish an additional 30 headspace sites, bringing the total number of headspace sites around Australia to 90. Additional funding was also provided to existing headspace centres to ensure their sustainability and to enhance their capacity to meet existing demand for youth mental health services.

STRENGTHENING MEMBER SATISFACTION WITH THE SOCIETY

The APS has continued to focus on providing meaningful benefits to its members and to remain accessible and relevant to those working across diverse work contexts.

ENHANCING MEMBER ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Improvements to member assistance and support

The APS National Office receives a high volume of phone calls and emails from members seeking assistance on a range of professional and membership matters. Now with over 20,000 APS members, the average number of calls to the National Office per day is approximately 300. The confusion and anxiety about the transition to national registration in July 2010, particularly in relation to eligibility for area of practice endorsement, resulted in a peak of over 770 calls and emails a day.

To improve service at the point of contact with the APS and enable more efficient and accurate responding, the Member Assistance Centre was established in 2010 to deal with a wide range of member enquiries. This member service has been enhanced by the use of call-forwarding technology. The Member Assistance Centre has been staffed to be able to respond to member queries about national registration, continuing professional development, membership matters, assessments of overseas qualifications, professional indemnity insurance and APAC-accredited courses. The Member Assistance Centre complements the existing Professional Advisory Service – a service that provides support and practical advice to members about professional practice matters.

Greater understanding of member needs

The Society this year continued its drive to identify and respond to the diverse needs of APS members. In line with the recommendations of the external consultancy report of early 2010, work was initiated to determine the needs of different sections of the membership, to assist in tailoring member benefits, communications and future initiatives to address these needs. Attention was also focused on the work contexts in which psychologists are employed, in recognition of the role that professional environments play in shaping specific needs and experiences of members. This work included input from a number of expert APS Advisory Groups and APS Member Groups, and gathered existing research and information to build a complete picture of the diverse member requirements. One area of early focus has been on the challenges facing student members of the APS, and the way the APS could engage with and support the existing and future members of the Society as they navigate their path through education and full registration.

Responding to another key recommendation of the report, the APS engaged an expert consultant and has commenced work on the design of a new brandmark. The results of this important work will be rolled out in the coming financial year, and will provide the momentum for a further review of the way in which the APS can best be positioned to promote the interests of psychologists and psychology in Australia.

Increasing member participation

A formal review of the various Member Groups through which the Society's membership and activities are organised (State Committees, Branches, Colleges and Interest Groups) commenced in late 2008 and has involved extensive data collection and analysis through research, submissions, member focus groups and consultations with key stakeholders. The review continued during the last year and discussed various options for avenues to enhance member participation and two-way communication within the increasingly diverse membership.

The review, which is being conducted by a representative group of members with the appropriate expertise, has recognised that the current structure represents the membership in the areas of specialist practice, geographical location and specific areas of interest. However, the Review Committee has recommended that additional groups are needed to support members in different workplace settings as well as informal peer consultation, networking and learning groups. In addition to this, a new member group structure has been proposed to give a voice to both the practice and discipline of psychology, providing equal representation to specialist and non-specialist psychologists as well as academics and educators.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

IMPROVED MEMBER SERVICES AND BENEFITS

New APS member benefits introduced in 2011

The following new member benefits were introduced in 2011 (described in detail elsewhere in this report).

- Free online access to the Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection database, providing full-text access to more than 550 international journals
- Redesigned online CPD logging system, offering an easy-to-use system to log and monitor individual progress towards meeting CPD requirements
- Member Assistance Centre, providing improved responsiveness to member enquiries
- Revamped APS journals with a new publisher, Wiley-Blackwell
- Access to a large and growing number of APS peer consultation networks throughout Australia
- An increasing number of CPD opportunities offered in a convenient online learning format

Enhanced communication with members

InPsych, the bimonthly bulletin of the Society, provides a prominent voice for the APS and remains the primary means of communicating with members. This year *InPsych* has seen continued improvement in editorial content and strategic presentation of cover features highlighting health and community psychology under threat, psychology in the courts, assessing and managing dementia, the psychology of gambling, couple and family relationships under pressure, and positive psychology. *InPsych* has also provided members with information on important developments in professional matters, education and training, and membership initiatives, as well as

highlighting the APS contribution in matters of public interest.

The APS State Newsletters, also produced bimonthly, have provided members with State-based news and information, and also include a report of National Office news. The fortnightly email alert, *APS Matters*, provides members with up-to-date developments in the profession and news of current APS activities, as well as links into the APS website.

Multifunctional website

The APS website is a vital communication tool that services the needs of members, informs the wider community and facilitates access to psychologists. The website allows members to effectively log their CPD activities, renew their membership online, vote in Board elections and manage their own details, while enabling them to search for professional resources, access member benefits and keep up-to-date with APS efforts to advocate and represent members.

There were over one million visitors to the website during 2010-11, with the the most popular searches including the Code of Ethics, professional indemnity insurance, Medicare services provided by psychologists, the APS Events Calendar, and the APS Find a Psychologist service. The past year has seen the introduction of some new online services, including the highly valued CPD logging system, and the Member Groups trial online forums and member directories.

APS Find a Psychologist Service

For the past financial year the number of members in private practice choosing to list themselves on the searchable online register, Find a Psychologist,

reached an all-time high of 2,582.

Analysis of the online search data over the reporting period revealed there were consistently over 900 searches per day of the online service, peaking at more than 1,000 per day in the months of August, October and March.

Professional indemnity insurance

Professional indemnity insurance is offered to members at substantially reduced rates through the broker for the professional indemnity insurance facility, Aon. The policy underwritten by Vero is compliant with the new professional mandatory indemnity insurance requirements of the Psychology Board of Australia. Aon has continued to run risk management seminars to APS Branches across Australia to support members around issues of professional risk.

PsychXchange

The APS PsychXchange website advertises national and international employment and business opportunities for psychologists and is established as the major Australian search mechanism for both recruiters of psychologists and those seeking employment. This year a total of 1,693 jobs were advertised, representing over 141 advertisements per month, and 384 classified advertisements were posted.

APS Advantage Program

APS members have continued to benefit from the APS Advantage package which offers personal benefits and preferential rates and services from a range of leading providers. These include American Express Gold or Platinum cards, an AMP Banking Affinity package, OnePath Professionals SelectLife Plan, ProSecure Income Replacement Plan, and Hertz discounted rental rates.

APS NATIONAL OFFICE

The National Office undertakes the work of the Society to advance the discipline and profession of psychology and promote the important contribution of psychological knowledge to community wellbeing, according to the strategic policy set by the APS Board of Directors. Over the last year, 118 staff in the National Office worked to achieve these aims across various management, policy, project, service and administrative roles. A large number of the staff are psychologists, which brings

psychological expertise to advocacy efforts and the development of a range of resources and project materials, and ensures the Society has an accurate understanding of the aspirations, needs and concerns of its membership base.

The work of the National Office is managed by Professor Lyn Littlefield, with oversight of day-to-day operations provided by the General Manager, Barry Whitmore. The activities of the National Office are

undertaken by six units corresponding to the following key areas of business of the Society. In addition, the areas of strategic policy, projects and public interest are located within the Executive Director's department.

- Membership and Member Groups
- Science and Education
- Professional Practice
- Professional Training and Development
- Communications
- Corporate Services

CONTRIBUTING TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The National Office has established a 'Green Team' that has the responsibility to investigate and pursue ways of reducing the Society's carbon footprint, both within the National Office and more broadly throughout APS operations. Through monthly meetings and feedback from APS office bearers and staff, the Green Team aims for the APS to be as environmentally responsible as possible.

Some of the initiatives that have been introduced are outlined below.

General operations

- Carbon off-sets purchased for all flights for APS Board, staff members and office bearers by supporting Greenfleet's biodiverse forest sink program
- Online availability of APS membership renewal and voting for APS elections

- Brochures, reports and other printed matter printed on recycled paper wherever possible
- State Newsletters now available electronically
- APS conferences
 - Online submission and review of abstracts
 - Online registration
 - E-marketing opportunities utilised wherever possible for conference advertising
 - Environmentally-friendly conference products used wherever possible
 - Conference handbook and Daily Delegate printed on recycled paper
 - Recycling of name badge holders

APS National Office

- Regular recycling of superseded IT equipment
- 20 per cent green power purchased
- Use of 100 per cent recycled printing paper
- Recycling of all paper, plastic and toner cartridges
- Introduction of the following initiatives for staff:
 - Recycling of mobile phones and batteries
 - Opportunity to purchase 'Keep Cups' for tea and coffee
 - Education on environmentally-friendly printing, power use, switching off computers and screens
 - Green Tip of the Month for staff