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To whom it may concern

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding the National Registration Scheme.

I am extremely concerned that the new system with the PBA is in chaos and thus putting psychologist in precarious situations. My personal experience with the PBA has been one of frustration and time consuming, in that you get a different message every time you have contact with them. It is also impossible to actually speak to anyone and if you leave a message they do not get back to you. This is very stressful when you are trying to work within cut off dates.

After sending in my IBP (Independent Bridging Plan) to the PBA I had no response from them that regarding receipt of my documents. This was extremely worrying as I had been informed by PBA that if I missed the cut off date my IBP would not be accepted and I would miss the opportunity to gain Registration in the endorsement I was undertaking the IBP for. My experience has been that the lack of response and confirmation of the process's that have been required for psychologist to go through has meant that a lot of time has been spent following up with PBA. It appears that the psychologist is doing the work PBA should be doing for its members.

I personally found this process very frustrating as the response from the PBA often took several follow up emails and calls on my behalf to get an answer. Adding to this I was given wrong information and filled out the incorrect forms which had taken a lot of time and effort to obtain certified documents and signatures of supervisors only to be told the information supplied was not required and I needed to fill out a further form. I might add I have been waiting six weeks now for confirmation regarding the registration of my second endorsement. In keeping with this, the lack of notification of registration renewal and confirmation of receipt of documents places psychologists in precarious positions. Hence, the recent floods in Queensland, many psychologists were left in the position of being de-registered due to these administrative faults.

Furthermore, when I did a search on the PBA website I come up as not being listed/registered even though I have a registration number and certificate. This is concerning because I cannot check my profile to make sure my information is correct. Further, other people may think I am not registered if they do a search. This could impact on my credibility and loss of income, and my insurance policies. I am left with having to put my trust in a body that to date has a very poor record of managing their core business.

In addition to this, the PBA website is misleading and confusing. Not only does it

not provide a profile of those who are registered but also lists endorsed areas of practice directly under a section that reads 'Specialties - None'. It is only at the very bottom of the page that their specialist title is mentioned, as a notation. This does not give consumers a clear way to identify psychologists with specialized training. There is also no way for consumers to search for specialists in the system, as there was on the WA Psych Board system. This creates further obstacles for people trying to locate a psychologist from our existing specialist areas.

It was my understanding that one of the main aims of implementing national registration was to create more generic systems so as to reduce duplication of processes and paperwork and alleviate obstructions and barriers to providing health services. However, this does not appear to be taking place given that it appears that Medicare providers will be required to lodge their Medicare-related CPD with the Australian Psychological Society (APS). This has made the system more complicated than it was and duplicates the reporting of CPD events, as psychologists are also required to report their CPD to the Psychology Board of Australia. Furthermore, the demand put on psychologists for them to produce half a page of written notes for each hour of CPD is excessive and does not align with the requirements of any other health profession in the system. This is extremely time consuming because for example, completing a 2 day workshop, psychologists would be required to provide 6 pages of written reflections, which is essentially like being asked to write an essay on top of doing the CPD itself. Many psychologists find this demand unrealistic in their busy life as a practitioner in the field and takes away from them providing services to the community.

Furthermore, many psychologists are not members of the APS and thus are not on their mailing list so are left out of the loop as far as being informed about needing to log their CPD on the PS website. There has been no communication to my knowledge from the PBA to their members regarding the process of logging CPD on the APS website. This could mean that many Psychologists could have their Medicare provider numbers revoked. This would not only be a result of loss of income to the psychologist but also to the consumer as psychological treatment without the Medicare rebate would not be affordable for the majority of people with mental health issues.