

The current provisional psychologist requirements impact unfairly on regional and rural provisional psychologists.

### **Providing services to regional and rural areas**

One of the amazing aspects of many regional and rural psychologists is their willingness to travel to be able to provide a service to many towns that otherwise would be without any psychological services. Reading the current requirements, travelling to appointments does not count towards the 3080 hours required. Therefore, those that travel long distances or travel regularly to provide what is often the only psychological service in that area are severely hindered in being able to progress through their provisional registration at a rate similar to those who do not travel. It seems unfair that regional and rural provisional psychologists are disadvantaged for providing a service to those who are already disadvantaged by their locale.

### **Lack of employment options**

The new requirements also state that to meet the broad requirements to be registered, a provisional psychologist may need to do multiple placements. While this is stated for the purposes of protection of the community, it causes significant concerns in regional and rural areas. There will be very few places that can offer all of the requirements. It is understandable why an organisation would choose not to employ a provisional psychologist, provide significant support in both finances and supervision, with the knowledge that the provisional psychologist will have to leave and find employment elsewhere. This is also exacerbated by the reduction of services that provisional psychologists can provide. Changes within Work Cover, a restriction on providing services through Better Outcomes, and following on from this, a range of individually negotiated contracts with organisations who have followed this lead and put restrictions on the services provisional psychologists can provide, severely restrict the broad range of experience available to provisional psychologists which is highlighted as necessary. One of the significant programs that can employ provisional psychologists is the ATAPS program, which however can require significant travel time, which as stated above, disadvantages regional and rural provisional psychologists.

In this region this has led to some workplaces that have trained many intern psychologists under the previous requirements to no longer do so. Were this trend to continue and possibly increase, the long term impact would be a reduction of psychologists in regional and rural areas in the coming years.

### **Supervision hours and costs**

The final aspect that unfairly disadvantages regional and rural psychologists further through the introduction of the new requirements is the amount of supervision hours required. For every 17.5 hours of psychological practice one hour of supervision is required. For a full time worker that is two hours per week. The impact this has on those

willing to provide that amount of supervision is that they are reluctant to become supervisors, in areas in which finding supervision may already be limited. This requirements also makes supervision cost prohibitive for the provisional psychologists with the need to pay \$200+ per week for supervision.