



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

**Caroline Hunt**

Associate Professor, Director of Clinical Training  
School of Psychology

17<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Dr Ian Holland,  
Committee Secretary,  
Community Affairs References Committee,  
Australian Senate,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Holland,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the adverse comment about my appointment as Chair of the NSW Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia. It has been alleged that this appointment, together with my role as a Director of the professional organisation the Australian Clinical Psychology Association, presents a conflict of interest.

I was appointed by Carmel Tebbutt MP, NSW Minister of Health, as Chair of the NSW Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia in December 2010. It is my understanding that this appointment was based on my skills and experience relevant to the functions of the Board, and based on my work as a member of the NSW Psychologists Registration Board since November 1999, which was the body responsible for the registration and regulation of psychologists in NSW prior to the current *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority is the body responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia, and there are clear guidelines for dealing with conflicts of interest, both at the time of a member's appointment, and when dealing with specific matters that come to the Board's attention. For example, conflicts of interest have arisen when Board agenda matters have dealt with students enrolled in the Doctor of Clinical Psychology degree at the University of Sydney, of which I am Director of Clinical Training, and I have absented myself during deliberations of these matters or have not taken part in making a decision. It is recognised that many members of the both the National Board and Regional Boards will have responsibilities and be active in the profession outside of their Board role. Both my long standing engagement with a range professional organisations and my academic roles were public knowledge and disclosed at the time of my appointment. In addition to

School of Psychology  
Faculty of Science  
Mackie Building (K01)  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 Australia

**T** +61 2 9351 5446  
**F** +61 2 9351 2984  
**E** caroline.hunt@sydney.edu.au  
**sydney.edu.au**

ABN 15 211 513 464  
CRICOS 00026A



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the Australian Clinical Psychology Association, I am a member of the Australian Association for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, and the Anxiety Practitioners Network.

Furthermore, the NSW Regional Board of the Psychology Board of Australia is delegated by the National Board to deal with individual registration matters at the local level. There are clear standards and guidelines that must be applied to individual registration matters considered by the Board, all of which fall under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*. All members of the Board are obliged to function within the limits of the law and the standards and guidelines set down by the National Board.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Hunt, Ph.D