

Psychology Council of NSW

Annual Report 2018-19

JOINT ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE 15 NEW SOUTH WALES HEALTH PROFESSIONAL COUNCILS
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH PRACTICE COUNCIL [CHINESE MEDICINE COUNCIL](#)
[CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL](#) [DENTAL COUNCIL](#) MEDICAL COUNCIL [MEDICAL RADIATION PRACTICE COUNCIL](#) NURSING
AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL [OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COUNCIL](#) OPTOMETRY COUNCIL [OSTEOPATHY COUNCIL](#)
[PARAMEDICINE COUNCIL](#) PHARMACY COUNCIL [PHYSIOTHERAPY COUNCIL](#) [PODIATRY COUNCIL](#) [PSYCHOLOGY COUNCIL](#)

I am pleased to introduce this Annual Report for the Psychology Council of New South Wales for the period ending June 2019.

This is my second President's message and as well as reflecting on the work of the Council over the past year, I look forward to another rewarding and productive year ahead.

The Council is a statutory body established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). Council members are appointed by the Governor of NSW and the Council is comprised of eight members from all Divisions of registered psychology practitioners, as well as community and legal members. The Council's activity continues to be focused on protecting the public through avenues that require safe practice and compliance with the Guidelines and Standards that have been established for our profession.

The Annual Report is an important document that all registered Psychologists are encouraged to read as it describes the nature and number of complaints received and the potential areas of difficulty that practitioners commonly encounter that could result in complaints.

It has been a very busy first year for the current Council members. The level of regulatory work this year was comparable with last year, though there is a general trend for complaints numbers to increase year on year. As complaints numbers increase, assessment and management of these complaints means more psychologists have conditions imposed on their registration by the Council. This then has a cumulative effect of increasing the number of cases being monitored.

In the past year, Council members have continued to provide information via a twice-yearly Bulletin to provide information on issues related to frequent complaints. In the last Bulletin articles included adequate record keeping; mandatory reporting; boundary violations; and ethical challenges in the practice of couple therapy. Psychologists are encouraged to read these articles to ensure their knowledge and skill in these areas is current.

In the coming year the Council is focused on ways to better provide education to psychologists related to improving compliance with regulatory processes aimed at reducing the number of complaints.

The Council has continued its valued collaboration and stakeholder engagement with the Psychology Board of Australia, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and ongoing co-regulatory activities with the Health Care Complaints Commission and looks forward to continuing to strengthen these relationships as well as the relationship with the Children's Court Clinic.

In the coming year the Council is planning to increase its stakeholder engagement in areas of education and professional associations to promote the Council, its role in public protection and regulation in NSW.

Part 2: Reports from Health Professional Councils

I would like to thank the Health Professional Councils Authority staff for their continuing support and contribution in assisting the work of the Council so ably. A special thank you to Ms Farina Bains, Executive Officer, and her staff for their support and guidance, and Professional Officer, Simon Milton whose professional and regulatory skill and guidance has kept the Council business running smoothly over the past 12 months. I would also like to thank the panel members who carry out much of the investigative work, for their expertise and ongoing support of the Council.

Finally, I would like to thank the Council members, Conjoint Associate Professor Chris Willcox, Associate Professor Maree Abbott, Mr Bob Lorschy, Ms Joanne Jousif, Dr Liz Tong, and Mr Hugh Macken for their support, expertise and much appreciated teamwork. The Council would also like to congratulate one of its members, Dr Lizbeth Tong, who was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday 2019 Honours List for her significant service to medicine, particularly to child mental health. Congratulations Liz!



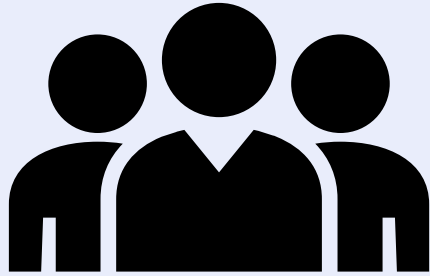
Ms Gail Purkis

President

Psychology Council of New South Wales

2018-19 Summary

PSYCHOLOGISTS



12,318

Registered psychologists in NSW

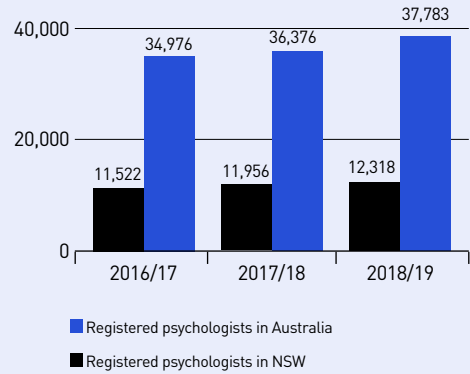
33%

of Australian psychologists practise in NSW

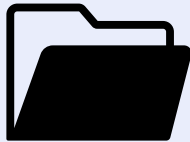
2%

of NSW psychologists had complaints made about them

3 year trend in number of registered psychologists

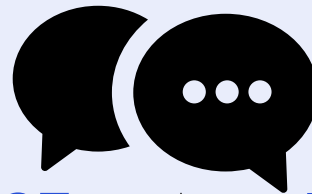


COMPLAINTS ABOUT PSYCHOLOGISTS



146

cases were open at the beginning of the year



295

complaints were received about 245 psychologists in 2018/19

31

of the complaints received were mandatory notifications about 29 practitioners



307

cases were closed during the year

Complaints were mainly from:

Patients - **31%**

Relatives - **18%**

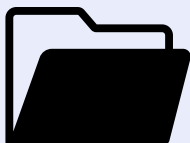
Member of the public - **12%**

Complaints were mainly about:

Clinical care - **27%**

Communication - **12%**

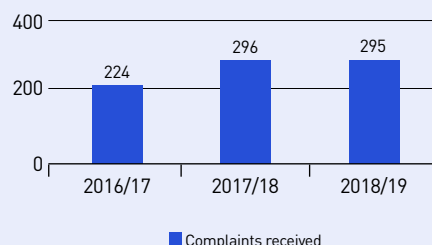
Boundary violation and documentation - **9% each**



134

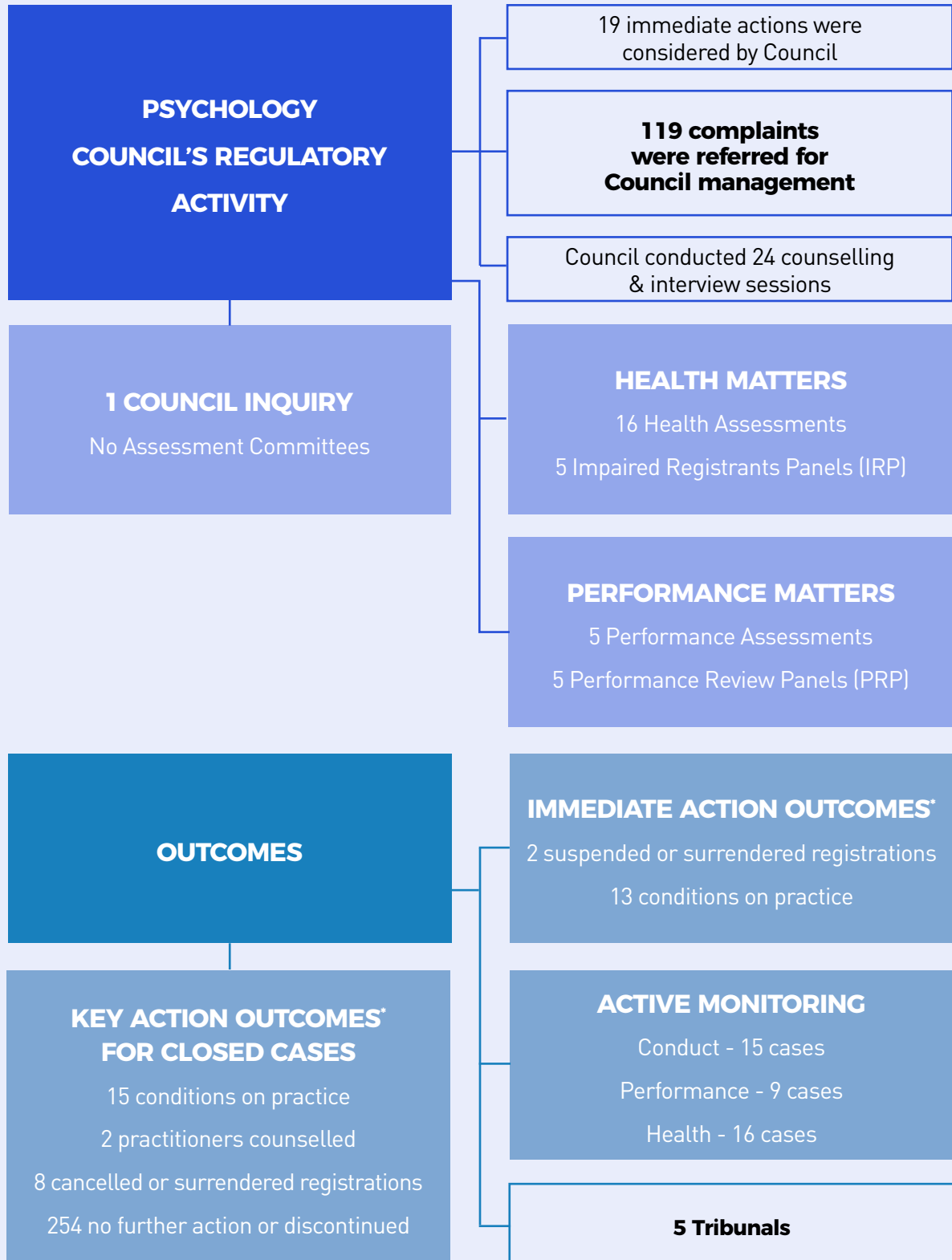
cases were open at the end of the year

3 year trend in number of complaints about psychologists



2018-19 Summary

PSYCHOLOGY COUNCIL'S REGULATORY ACTIVITY - MATTERS CONCLUDED



*Not all outcomes are included & a complaint may have more than one outcome

Council Members

Eight members sit on the Psychology Council as set out in the National Law.

Council members are nominated by the Minister for Health and appointed by the Governor.

Registered Psychologist practitioner members:

- Ms Gail Purkis BSc(Applied Psych), Dip Psychol, GAICD
- Conjoint Associate Professor Christopher Willcox BSc (Psych) Hons, MPsych (Clin), GC (PSM), MAPS, FCCLP
- Dr Lizabeth Tong AM, BA (Hons)(Psych), MA, Dip Clin Psych, PhD (Med), Cert TSL (Eng), AFBPS, MACPA, MACAPP, MAPS, FCCLP, JP
- Associate Professor Maree J Abbott BA, (Hons) (Psych), M Clin Psych, PhD, FACPA, MAACBT
- Mr Thomas O'Neill BA (Hons)(Psych), MPsych (Clin), FAPS

Legal member:

- Mr Hugh Macken BA, LLB, LLM

Community members:

- Ms Joanne Jousif BA, Dip Crim, Cert IV Training & Assessment
- Mr Robert Lorsch JP

The Governor appointed Ms Gail Purkis as President of the Psychology Council.

The Governor appointed Conjoint Associate Professor Christopher Willcox as Deputy President of the Psychology Council.

Executive Officer

Ms Farina Bains is the Executive Officer for the Psychology Council. The Executive Officer leads a team of 11. This team works with 11 of the health professional Councils.

All staff working both directly and indirectly with the Council are employed by the HPCA as an executive agency of the Ministry of Health. Councils cannot employ staff under the National Law.

Council Meeting Attendance

The Psychology Council met 10 times during the year.

Table i: Member attendance at Council meetings, eligibility to attend and term of office

Member	Meetings Attended	Meetings Eligible to Attend	Date first appointed	Current Term of Office*
President Gail Purkis	10	10	1 July 2018	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Deputy President Christopher Willcox	9	10	1 July 2018	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Maree Abbott	10	10	1 July 2018	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Joanne Jousif	10	10	1 July 2018	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Robert Lorsch	4	10	29 June 2016	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Hugh Macken	9	10	29 June 2016	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Thomas O'Neill	9	10	1 July 2012	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021
Lizabeth Tong AM	9	10	1 July 2015	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021

* Council members are appointed for a term up to three years and may be reappointed up to a maximum of nine years.

Regulatory Committees and Panels

The National Law sets out the committees and panels that assist the Council to undertake its regulatory activities.

Regulatory committees and panels include:

- Impaired Registrants Panels (IRP)
- Performance Review Panels (PRP)
- Assessment Committees

The Psychology Council appointed 10 regulatory committees and panels during the year.

Table ii: Regulatory Committees and Panels appointed

Regulatory Committees and Panels	Number of Regulatory Committee and Panels
Impaired Registrants Panels	5
Performance Review Panels	5
Assessment Committees	0

Table iii: Regulatory Committee and Panel Membership

Impaired Registrants Panel	Performance Review Panel
Council Members Nil	Council Members Nil
Non Council Members Dr Karen Arnold Dr Mary-Anne Friend Dr Emma Collins Dr Amanda White Dr Alison Reid Dr Wendy Roberts Mr Christopher Allan Mr John Haigh Mr Michael Diamond	Non Council Members Ms Frances Taylor Dr Wendy Roberts Mr Brian Sheridan Dr Amanda White Mr Christopher Allan Mr John Haigh Ms Margaret Crowley Mr Peter Walker Dr Emma Collins Mr David Mutton

Council Committees

Councils may establish committees to assist with Council functions. Committee members are not necessarily Council members.

The Psychology Council did not appoint any committees this year.

Meetings and Events

The Psychology Council was represented at the following meetings and events during the year.

Table iv: Psychology Council representation at meetings and events

Name of Meeting / Event	Attended By
Meeting between Council Presidents, Health Professional Councils Authority and AHPRA	Ms Gail Purkis – President
NRAS 2019 Combined Meeting and Research Summit	Ms Gail Purkis - President
Children’s Court Clinic Advisory Group and National Psychology Regulatory working group	Ms Gail Purkis - President
Monthly AHPRA Regional Board Chairs Meeting	Ms Gail Purkis - President
National Board Chairs and Council Presidents and Executive Officers meet and greet	Ms Gail Purkis - President

Council Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

The Psychology Council website provides easy access to information about the Council and its work, publications, the complaints process and an online complaint form.

The Psychology Council also distributes electronic newsletters, or bulletins, to psychologist practitioners working in NSW. Two bulletins were distributed this year including topics such as the pitfalls of private practice; the challenges of couple counselling; mandatory reporting obligations; importance of client records; and avoiding boundary violations.

As part of the engagement plan for the Psychology Council and the National Board, representatives meet regularly either via teleconference or in person. The Council is included in monthly teleconferences for all Chairs of Regional Boards. The Executive Officers of the Board and Council hold bi-monthly teleconferences. Representatives of the National Board have been invited to attend a Psychology Council meeting scheduled for July 2019.

Overseas Travel

The Psychology Council did not incur any overseas travel costs during the year.

Remuneration

Remuneration for Council members aligns with the Public Service Commission Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees. Council members receive additional payment for interviews, counselling sessions, immediate action inquiries, Council Inquiries and panels. No additional payments are made for other regulatory work such as official visits, committee meetings, training, conferences or preparation for meetings.

Council members are reimbursed for expenses when travelling on official business at Council direction.

Psychology Council member remuneration rates are as follows.

President	\$20,000 per annum
Deputy President	\$11,143 per annum
Council Members	\$9,690 per annum

Education and Research Account

The Psychology Council maintains an Education and Research account. This can be used to fund activities that promote better understanding of professional standards and compliance, issues that lead to complaints and how complaints are managed. The account may also be used to fund research activity including Council specific initiatives and collaborative projects.

There was no expenditure from the Education and Research account this year.

Financial Management

The Psychology Council's accounts performance was reported in the Financial Statement as follows.

Accounts Performance 2018/19	\$
Revenue	1,825,422
Operating expenditure	1,611,857
Gain / (loss) on disposal	(25)
Other gains / (losses)	(1,332)
Net result	212,208
Net cash reserves* (cash and cash equivalents minus current liabilities)	2,824,665

* Included in the cash reserves is an Education and Research bank account balance of \$77,879.

The Psychology Council's budget for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 is as follows.

Budget 2019/20	\$
Revenue	1,619,899
Operating expenditure	1,790,856
Net result	(170,957)

Full financial statements are presented in Part 3 of this report 'Financial Statements for NSW Health Professional Councils'.