



APS STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017

Our vision...

Psychology enhances all aspects of Australian life.

Our mission...

The APS is dedicated to advancing the discipline and profession of psychology for the benefit of members and the communities they serve.

Our values...

The conduct, activities and decision making of the APS and its member groups are guided by these values:

- Proactive and responsive
- Making a difference
- Integrity and professionalism
- Respectful relationships.

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Psychological Society

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) is a leading source of psychological knowledge in Australia and the premier professional organisation for psychologists. The APS has 22,000 members and operates through its National Office in Melbourne. Members are engaged in a large network of member groups throughout Australia which includes nine Colleges, 40 State and Territory Branches and 44 Interest Groups.

Psychology is a discipline and practice that, based on research, systematically addresses the many facets of human behaviour, experience and functioning at individual, family and societal levels. All psychologists share foundational training in human development, and the principles of healthy psychological functioning and behaviour change. However, psychologists' skills are highly diverse and they contribute their expertise to a wide range of industries, organisations and programs as well through provision of direct psychological services to individuals and groups.

The APS provides professional resources and support to its members in their wide-ranging roles, and harnesses their expertise to promote the profession and discipline of psychology and the psychological wellbeing of the community. The APS is represented on a wide range of Federal and State Government advisory groups involved in the planning, implementation and ongoing monitoring of government policy and initiatives.

The current environment for psychology in Australia

The APS is cognisant of, and responsive to, the political, professional and social environment in which it functions. This environment is impacted by regulatory matters, psychology education and training developments, government policies and organisational practices that influence the psychology workforce and the professional services that psychologists provide to the community.

The regulatory authority for the psychology profession has introduced changes to the requirements for the internship pathway to registration, which have markedly decreased opportunities for placements and supervision and have had an associated impact on the psychology workforce. A major independent review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is due to report during 2015 and may recommend further changes to the regulatory environment for psychology.

A further impact on the psychology training pipeline is the chronic underfunding of postgraduate psychology training which is limiting the number of new psychologists entering the workforce. At the same time, the Federal Government's proposed deregulation of higher education is likely to impact on numbers of people undertaking postgraduate psychology training. Psychology research is also likely to be affected by the changes to higher education as well as through cuts to key science and research agencies.

Given the growing psychology workforce shortage, there is interest from the Government in alternative, less costly, more general workforces, with significant implications for the standard of services provided to the community. Other significant national health reforms currently being considered by the Government include those contained in the National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services, and the wide-ranging review of the Medicare system. Both of these reviews contain significant implications for the delivery of psychological services to the community, with recommended shifts to an enhanced primary care system, more efficient management of people with complex and chronic illness, and greater use of ehealth models of care and treatment.

A careful analysis of the opportunities and challenges in this complex environment has shaped the development of the objectives presented in this triennial Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan identifies five key strategic objectives for action over the 2015-2017 period. These objectives complement each other. Action to progress one strategic objective will also contribute to outcomes achieved against other related objectives.

- 1** Unity within diversity
*Foster **unity** in the profession to grow the influence and impact of psychology*
- 2** Value for members
*Enhance the **value** of APS membership*
- 3** Voice of psychology
*Further ensure that the APS is the **voice** of psychology in Australia*
- 4** Knowledge and evidence-based practice
*Foster and promote the **knowledge** base of the discipline and the profession of psychology*
- 5** Value to the community
*Promote the **value** of APS psychologists to the community*

The key objectives are underpinned by enhancing the organisational capabilities of the APS to deliver on these priority areas through a sixth objective.

- 6** Organisational capabilities and effectiveness
*Enhance the **capability** of the APS*

1 Unity within diversity

*Foster **unity** in the profession to grow the influence and impact of psychology*

Objectives

- 1.1 Promote unity within the APS while respecting diversity and addressing areas of concern
- 1.2 Promote collaboration across psychology stakeholders in Australia
- 1.3 Contribute to the national and international psychology community for the benefit of world communities

Strategies

- Develop processes to increase understanding, mutual recognition and appreciation of professional diversity within the APS
- Engage in effective working relationships with key psychology stakeholder organisations across Australia for the benefit of the whole profession and the community
- Partner with international psychology associations and work together for the benefit of our communities and members

Outcomes

- Processes are implemented to support members to communicate and build relationships with each other and with the APS National Office while promoting unity
- Initiatives are implemented that support diverse groups of members to work together for the benefit of the profession and the community
- Collaboration with external stakeholder organisations is initiated
- Partnerships are further developed with international psychological societies

2 Value for members

Enhance the **value** of APS membership

Objectives

- 2.1 Provide a sense of identity and belonging
- 2.2 Provide value for money
- 2.3 Support the journey of psychologists across all settings
- 2.4 Understand and respond to members' needs

Strategies

- Implement strategies to assist members to network and support each other
- Support member groups to thrive and encourage member participation
- Inspire pride in the APS by enhancing professional standing through membership
- Provide an expanded suite of member benefits and services
 - Provide tailored member benefits, resources and services to members at different career stages and in different areas of practice (including students and early career psychologists)
- Promote the value and benefits of membership
- Be the key source of professional information and advice for members
 - Develop resources to support standards for ethical and professional practice, including resources to support self-care
 - Provide advice to members on key issues affecting psychological practice
- Seek feedback on the member experience and respond regularly

Outcomes

- Members feel supported
- Increased participation in member groups
- The APS brand is recognised by psychologists and the public as being synonymous with high quality psychological services
- Member benefits are expanded and promoted, with tailored resources and benefits for different segments of the membership provided
- Additional member engagement and communication initiatives are implemented

3 Voice of psychology

*Further ensure that the APS is the **voice** of psychology in Australia*

Objectives

- 3.1 Advocate for the profession, the discipline of psychology, psychological services and standards
- 3.2 Increase the impact of psychology on public policy for the benefit of all sectors of the community
- 3.3 Ensure the APS is seen as the leading source of knowledge for psychology in Australia

Strategies

- Promulgate the APS as a leader of education and workforce standards and planning for psychology in Australia
- Actively engage with governments to inform public policy and health and social reform initiatives
- Further develop influential relationships with key stakeholder organisations across relevant sectors for the benefit of the profession and the community
- Prepare and disseminate evidence-based material to increase the impact of psychology on public policy
- Develop and disseminate position statements on key strategic community issues
- Aggregate existing sources of psychological expertise (e.g., in Centres of Excellence)
- Effectively engage the media in the promotion of psychology

Outcomes

- The APS is influential in shaping psychology education and workforce planning
- The APS is recognised as a key and influential stakeholder by government
- Government policy and health and social reform is informed by psychological evidence
- Increased public awareness of the benefits of psychology
- Increased awareness of the role psychology has in addressing a wide range of community issues
- Joint advocacy, public statements and projects are undertaken with stakeholders
- A five per cent increase in the number of website visits and downloads of submissions and position statements

4 Knowledge and evidence-based practice

*Foster and promote the **knowledge** base of the discipline and the profession of psychology*

Objectives

- 4.1 Support and promote the advancement of the scientific knowledge base of psychology
- 4.2 Facilitate the transfer of the knowledge base into education and professional training
- 4.3 Facilitate the uptake of evidence-based training among the profession to ensure competence in effective psychological practice

Strategies

- Provide leadership in the setting of competency standards for psychology education and practice
- Facilitate dissemination of high quality psychological research
- Advocate for increased resources for psychological research
- Implement processes to recognise excellence in research and training
- Further develop evidence-based education programs through:
 - APS Institute
 - Conferences
 - Member groups CPD events
- Encourage psychological literacy in the community
- Promote the broad application of psychological knowledge
- Support the uptake of best practice based on evidence
- Facilitate the development and dissemination of research, education and resources to ensure psychologists are culturally aware and competent when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and communities
- Develop and disseminate accessible evidence-based psychological information to the public

Outcomes

- Effective relationships are maintained with the higher education sector and joint initiatives are implemented to further development of the standards for education and practice
- High quality research is disseminated via APS publications, websites and social media
- Organisations allocating research funding are informed about the benefits of funding additional psychological research
- Processes for recognition of excellence in research and training are implemented
- High quality education and continuing professional development is offered
- Resources are developed to support the uptake of best practice
- Increased psychological literacy in the community

5 Value to the community

Promote the **value** of APS psychologists to the community

Objectives

- 5.1 Promote the high standards of APS psychologists to the community
- 5.2 Create awareness of the diverse skills of APS psychologists and the benefits they offer the community
- 5.3 Be responsive to community needs and advocate for community wellbeing

Strategies

- Implement strategies to build public awareness and understanding of what the different types of APS psychologists do
- Promote the quality of APS psychologists
- Promote the APS brand as standing for high quality, trustworthy and reliable services for the community
- Implement strategies to showcase psychology to the community
- Prepare and disseminate evidence-based material to raise awareness of the impacts of policies and practices on community wellbeing
- Develop and disseminate position statements on key strategic community issues
- Work with consumers and carers to assist psychologists to understand and respond to their needs

Outcomes

- Increased public understanding of the role of psychologists and the high standards of APS psychologists
- Increased public understanding of the diverse skills of APS psychologists and the benefits they offer
- Increased awareness of the role psychology can play in addressing a wide range of psychological issues
- Partnerships are established with key consumer and carer organisations

6 Organisational capabilities and effectiveness

Enhance the *capability* of the APS

Objectives

- 6.1 Grow the membership base
- 6.2 Strengthen the financial resources of the APS
- 6.3 Utilise member expertise
- 6.4 Improve governance processes
- 6.5 Continue to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of operational processes

Strategies

- Develop and implement strategies to recruit new members
- Develop and implement initiatives to increase revenue in existing and new areas
- Engage members with key areas of expertise to contribute to the work of the APS
- Review governance process to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of all member groups
- Implement strategies to continue building strong relationships and enhanced respect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Facilitate staff access to continued professional development to increase capacity in key areas including advocacy and member services
- Continue to streamline operations and infrastructure for maximum effectiveness and efficiency

Outcomes

- Increased membership base
- APS Institute growth and success
- New revenue streams are identified and implemented
- Increased utilisation of members' expertise
- Governance structures and processes are reviewed and clarified
- Continued progress of the APS Reconciliation Action Plan
- Implementation of ongoing training and development for staff
- Improvements are made to streamline operational processes
- Efficiency and effectiveness monitoring is established

CONCLUSION

The APS Strategic Plan for 2015-2017 identifies the strategic priorities and challenges with which the APS will engage in the next few years. It attempts to respond to both the external environment as well as the range of member needs with which it is faced. In doing so the Plan attempts to represent the diversity of APS membership but also the changing environment for the discipline and profession of psychology and the community to which APS members provide services. The challenge for the APS is to capture these diverse issues and communicate them to government in an effort to influence policy and practice that will enhance the psychological health and wellbeing of the Australian community. By so doing the APS will fulfil its mission “to advance the discipline and profession of psychology for the benefit of members and the communities they serve”.



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