

Australian Psychological Society | Candidate Profile | 2026 Board of Directors Election

All candidate information is supplied by the candidate



Name: David Preece

Candidacy: General Director, Division of Colleges, College of Clinical Psychologists

CANDIDATE CAPABILITY RESPONSES

Demonstrated interest in working across various professions for the psychological health and wellbeing of the Australian community

Psychology has such an important role to play in the community. I see three areas as particularly important for the APS:

1. Connecting and supporting the psychology community: the APS needs to be a grassroots member organisation at its core, that is great value for money and has serving members as its top priority. We need to be a space to bring people together, to create vibrant, supportive, connected communities within our wonderfully diverse profession.
2. Education, development, and resources: the APS needs to be world-leading in the development opportunities it provides members, with large sets of affordable professional development opportunities catering to diverse interests and needs, and authoritative resources/guides that give members the confidence and pathways to reach their potential.
3. Advocacy: the APS needs to have a strong voice with government and other stakeholders. We need to ensure that the value of advanced training and endorsement areas is advanced and championed, thus enabling members to reach their potential across areas like Medicare, NDIS, and Thriving Kids, the hospital, education, business, and public sectors, and other industries. I know how highly we all prioritise these areas and I will strive to represent your voices.

Extensive and current knowledge of, and good standing within, the APS and psychology

I have been an APS member for over 10 years, a long-term volunteer of the APS Clinical College (including National Chair 2024-2025), and am a current APS Board Member. I commenced my time volunteering on APS Clinical College committees at the state level, as the student representative for the WA committee of the Clinical College (2018-2019) while completing my PhD. I was then a general committee member (2020), the Professional Development Coordinator (2021-2022), and Chair (2023-2024) of this WA committee. Nationally, I commenced in the national committee of the APS Clinical College as the Membership Engagement Lead (2022-2024) and then was the National Chair (2024-2025).

In November 2025 I became a Director on the APS Board, and throughout 2026 I have been General Director, Division of Colleges – College of Clinical Psychologists. Throughout my time in these roles, it has been a great privilege to work alongside many other passionate people. I feel my years of experience working across many areas of the APS (e.g. organising professional development/networking events, co-ordinating advocacy groups, creating and administering awards/grants, discussing member needs with APS staff and Board members) means I am well placed to achieve strong outcomes.

Demonstrated understanding of the role of a Non-Executive Director of a NFP company limited by guarantee

In November 2025, I moved from being the National Chair of the Clinical College, moving into the APS Board Director role that I am re-nominating for here (General Director, Division of Colleges – College of Clinical Psychologists). Thus, I have around one year's experience already in this role. I am a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), having completed coursework that provides me with strong knowledge of the role of a Non-Executive Director. I commit to abiding by the values of the APS and the responsibilities of a Non-Executive Director. I know we need a Board that has member needs at its heart, with strong integrity and accountability to members, the Australian community, stakeholders, and regulators – with the capacity to implement a clear, sustainable vision that continues to lift up all the diverse areas of psychology and enables a strong voice for members across all career stages. As members, we need and expect clear, transparent, and respectful communication across all levels of the governance of our Society. I am committed to working hard to be part of this.

Effective leadership of membership teams or organisations that demonstrate a strong, values-based culture

In my leadership style, my core focuses are on collaboration, respect, and transparency. We have so many amazing people within the APS with such diverse expertise. I believe it is so vital that we learn from each other, combine our ideas for strategic thinking, give people platforms to reach their potential and pursue what they are most passionate about, and do so with a culture of warmth, openness, and respect. These are the core principles I have tried to embody across all my leadership roles – including across APS, university, private practice, and community or other charity sectors. For example, within the APS, I have been a Board member, and past National and WA Chair of the Clinical College. In university settings, I direct a large research lab, have been on research committees, and have experience in course-level teaching leadership. In clinical settings, I direct a private practice. In the community, I am WA Chair for Australian Rotary Health. This diversity of roles has given me strong experience leading different types of small, medium, and large sized teams, and making sure that people feel valued and supported in achieving great outcomes together.

Experience in, or a thorough understanding of, advocacy expectations and engagement of the community and all APS members

I know we all care so deeply about the positive impact psychology can have in people's lives. We need strong advocacy that champions the value of advanced training across diverse areas of psychology, ensuring that government structures support the viability and accessibility of such training. We need Medicare, NDIS, and hospital systems that enable our clients to adequately access the types and amounts of care they need. We need the value of psychology to be well represented within healthcare systems, and for this value to be widely known throughout the public. As one of the founders of the APS Members Leadership Group, I worked with representatives from all Colleges and the Division of Professional Psychology, and alongside APS staff/Board members, to unite our resources in driving in these important directions. I am excited by strong advocacy giving a voice to members - giving passionate members the opportunities to contribute first-hand to APS advocacy with government and other stakeholders. For example, when I was National Chair of the Clinical College, I established and chaired the APS Severe Disorders Medicare Working Group, giving APS members an opportunity to unite in developing official documents to advocate for more Medicare sessions.

Ability and/or aptitude to act as an ambassador for the APS in the community and in government settings

I know that key to being a successful ambassador is to be able to establish strong relationships. I have found the foundation of this is to approach people with an attitude of kindness and openness, with a genuine interest and valuing of their perspectives and needs. One endorsement of my ambassadorial qualities was my receipt of a Fulbright Scholarship. Fulbright is the flagship academic exchange program of the United States, and alongside academic excellence, requires candidates to demonstrate strong capacities to be a cultural ambassador and representative for Australia.

In the academic side of my career, I have had strong practice in distilling complex ideas into forms that are accessible to audiences outside of my field (e.g. via written works, verbal presentations, or discussions), including government representatives and the public. Here, I have also received formal media training and have experience engaging with the media (e.g. discussing psychology on podcasts and radio shows). I am therefore confident in my ability to be able to effectively convey the needs and positions of the APS in ways that suit different settings and audiences, and to do so while forging strong working relationships.

Demonstrated ability to constructively resolve conflict

Conflict is often a marker that people care deeply about an issue, as well as a marker that they may be feeling misunderstood, blocked, or unvalued. I approach conflict resolution by trying to foster an environment of strong communication, empathy, shared understanding of each other's needs and perspectives, and of collaborative problem solving. I try to be reflective on my potential role in conflicts, and maintain a willingness to recognise and apologise for my mistakes. Also informing my experience here, I study aspects of conflict resolution as part of my published research on emotion regulation and apologies/forgiveness. I often actively teach conflict resolution (e.g., including communication skills and self/other-focused emotion regulation techniques) in therapy with clients at my private practice. These approaches – prioritising respect, empathy, and collaboration – have allowed me to develop a strong track record of leading cohesive teams that can successfully resolve conflicts, and which use these opportunities to strengthen relationships and reach better solutions, forged via respectful conversations and careful consideration of multiple perspectives.

Demonstrated ability to conduct fair, respectful and ethical interactions with fellow Board members, the CEO, APS members and relevant stakeholders

Across my past leadership roles, I have worked successfully alongside other APS members, staff, the CEO, Board members, and stakeholders, to achieve strong outcomes. For example:

- I have been involved in the organisation of many APS workshops, webinars, and networking events, that have collectively reached thousands of psychologists and students.
- I worked with APS staff to significantly increase APS membership value by being part of a Board that reduced membership fees. I previously advised on the introduction of several new resources for all members, such as online access to the DSM-5-TR and new larger databases of psychology journals and books.
- I have worked with the APS Policy Team to develop processes to involve members in the APS's ongoing advocacy efforts (including creating new advocacy working groups), helping to ensure that members can more easily contribute to the advocacy efforts that matter most to them.
- I have developed new APS award/grant categories to recognise and support the achievements of APS members across all career stages (e.g. student travel awards, significant contribution awards). I feel very lucky to have had the chance to work with and learn from so many wonderful APS members and representatives over the years.

CANDIDATE DISCLOSURES

Declaration of Interests – General

- Past National Chair, APS College of Clinical Psychologists
- Past WA Chair, APS College of Clinical Psychologists
- Fellow, APS College of Clinical Psychologists
- Past Chair, APS Severe Disorders Medicare Working Group
- Past Chair, APS Clinical College Prescribing Rights Working Group External
- Senior Lecturer, University of Western Australia
- Director & Clinical Psychologist, the Psychology Centre of Western Australia
- Adjunct Associate Professor, Curtin University

- Honorary Research Associate, the Kids Research Institute Australia
- Research Affiliate, Stanford University
- WA Chair, Australian Rotary Health
- WA committee member, Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy
- Board member, Alexithymia Research International Alliance
- WA Chapter President, Australian Fulbright Alumni Association
- Member, Australian Fulbright Alumni Association
- Member, Rotary Club of Perth
- Member, Society for Affective Science
- Member, Association for Psychological Science
- Member, Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy
- Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Emotion and Psychopathology
- Editorial Board, Journal of Personality Disorders
- Editorial Board, Frontiers in Psychiatry

Declaration of Interests – Directorships/Committee Memberships

- Director, The Psychology Centre of Western Australia
- Board Member, Alexithymia Research International Alliance
- WA Chair, Australian Rotary Health
- WA Chapter President, Australian Fulbright Alumni Association
- WA committee member, Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy

Declaration of Interests – APS Member Groups/APS Committee Memberships

- Fellow, APS College of Clinical Psychologists
- Past National Chair, APS College of Clinical Psychologists
- Past WA Chair, APS College of Clinical Psychologists

Declaration of Interests – Other Memberships

- Member, Australian Fulbright Alumni Association
- Member, Rotary Club of Perth
- Member, Society for Affective Science
- Member, Association for Psychological Science
- Member, Australian Association for Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy