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\textbf{Letter for distribution to the Australian Psychological Society’s (APS) Board of Directors, APS Branch Committee Members, APS College Committee Members and the broader membership}

Dear Colleagues,

This letter communicates a concern I would like to have tabled at the respective meetings of the APS National Board, APS Branch Committee Meetings and APS state and national College Committee meetings and the broader membership.

In the October 2017 Edition of InPsych the President of the APS shared his thoughts on the RAPS initiative and the spill motion proposed. While I’m sure most reading this letter would have read the president’s statement and formed their own conclusions, I would like to offer a different opinion through a short rebuttal of three key points expressed directly by the president through the October 2017 InPsych article.

\textbf{Excerpt One (APS President InPsych October 2017)}: “... it appears that the RAPS action to spill the entire Board was in service of dramatically changing the strategic direction of the APS to reflect their own narrow agenda, and certainly not in the interests of all psychologists.”

\textbf{Rebuttal}: as it now stands, all APS board members except one, are members of the college of clinical psychologists. The spill motion’s intent was to counter this unfortunate development from occuring for the sake of all members.

The spill motion failed; hence the current imbalance in APS board representation.

\textbf{Excerpt Two (APS President InPsych October 2017)}: “The basis on which the Spill Motions had been requested by RAPS was ill-conceived...”
Rebuttal: From my understanding, it is the opinion of RAPS that the new board election process, that restricts members from voting across all areas of board representation, is ill-conceived and does not serve in the best interests of the membership.

Excerpt Three (APS President InPsych October 2017): “It is clear that a small group of the RAPS protest movement disagrees with certain decisions of the Society and has particular self-serving policies and agendas that it wishes to pursue”.

Rebuttal: I do not believe the RAPS movement has self-serving policies and agendas. It is a movement that stems from a legitimate concern over the real and ever-growing risks faced by our profession.

A primary concern expressed by RAPS is in the snowballing of clinical psychology predominance across APS board representation, private practice, academia and associated training pathways.

Most specifically, RAPS is concerned that this on-going and ever-growing predominance of clinical psychology practitioners, academics and training programs places at risk:

1. the integrity of our diversity as a profession,
2. the quality of our service to the community,
3. the depth and complexity of our expertise as practitioners
4. the breadth of our innovation as scientists, and
5. the extent of our influence on national policy.

Confirming the motivations and position of RAPS

The APS president sees these concerns raised by RAPS as a “narrow agenda” that is “ill-conceived” and “self-serving”. I disagree; and I advise the president to re-think his perspective.

The concerns raised by RAPS are real and need to be fully acknowledged and openly addressed.

Rather than being narrow, ill-conceived or self-serving, the RAPS initiative draws attention to and seeks to overtly address, a serious problem and the associated ramifications that are clearly understood and openly acknowledged by the APS membership across academia and private practice.

The negative impact of snowballing clinical psychology predominance permeates through the APS membership, the community, expert practice, research innovation and national policy. It is unfortunate that the APS president has chosen to publicly question the motivations of those who bring attention to such concerns.

I highly recommend, for the sake of our membership and the community we serve, to have the APS president and its Board openly acknowledge the
problems raised by RAPS and communicate overtly and with clarity to the membership possible solutions for consideration.

Sincerely,

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