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Letter for broad distribution including to the APS CEO, APS Executive Board, APS College Committee Members and APS Branch Committee Members.

Dear APS CEO, APS Committee Members, APS Board Members and others,

I am writing to bring attention to an unfortunate and quite serious development in the area of sport psychology within Australia. A primary concern over the development I am drawing attention to is the growing level of frequency and ongoing negative impact such developments continue to have on:

- 1) The reputation and good standing of psychologists throughout Australia and
- 2) The potential benefits gained by the Australian community from psychologists across all domains and areas of practice in our shared field of mental health service provision.

An Unfortunate & Quite Serious Development In The Field Of Sport Psychology In Australia

The Australian Government through the Australian Sports Commission (SPORTAUS) and the AIS have advertised for a psychologist this month (November 2018) to fill the position of Mental Health Advisor. It is a role for Australia's strategic high-performance sporting agency aimed at providing guidance in best practice for mental health services for elite athletes.

This [position vacant](#) is an unfortunate development because the selection criteria states explicitly that it will give preference to clinical psychologists over all other psychologists.

Please understand that I am not suggesting a clinical psychologist should not have the opportunity or legal right to apply for this position. All psychologists who are registered and in practice throughout Australia should have both the legal right and opportunity to apply for any advertised position in psychology. So the concern I raise is in the fact that the Australian Sports Commission and the AIS have chosen to intentionally give preference to a clinical psychologist over all other psychologists for a position that focuses on the provision of mental health services for elite athletes.

This action by the Australian Sports Commission and AIS is another clear example of our national institutions giving credence to clinical psychologists over all other psychologists practicing in Australia.

Such developments only serve to cripple (i.e., to deprive of capability for service or of strength, efficiency, or wholeness) all other areas and domains of practice in psychology for the benefit of the endorsed area of clinical psychology. While motive behind such developments can be debated, the fact of these crippling developments is abundantly clear. To deny such developments, in my professional judgment as a psychologist, is a sign of either ignorance or arrogance.

Advocacy of the APS CEO in Canberra with The Australian Sports Commission (SPORTAUS)

I would also like to raise concern over the advocacy the APS CEO had undertaken last month in her trip to Canberra to talk with representatives of the Australian Sports Commission. From my understanding the APS College of Sport & Exercise Psychologists were not aware of this advocacy and were not included in any discussions involving the APS CEO and the Australian Sports Commission. It is very concerning that only weeks after the APS CEO had talks with the Australian Sports Commission an advertisement appears by the Australian Sports Commission with the specific aim of recruiting clinical psychologists over all other psychologists for psychological services with elite athletes.

Seeking Clarity From The APS Over The Serious Development I have Highlighted

Do I need to explain my concern any further? Or is it obvious? Ultimately, the fact I need to write this letter and feel compelled to take great lengths in explaining the current state-of-affairs for psychologists across this country to the APS leadership is in my mind irrefutable evidence that the society has failed its members, the broader profession of psychologists and the communities we serve. So, instead of explaining my concern any further, I am asking for clarity on how the APS intends to address the problem I have raised. Both in relation to the specific case I have highlighted and in the context of this same theme that continues to undermine all other psychologists registered and in practice across Australia who do not hold endorsement in clinical psychology.

I would also like to suggest that under the circumstances I think it is reasonable for APS members and the broader profession of psychologists to presume that the APS is a perpetrator of the serious development I have raised. Hence even more reason for the APS to provide its membership with a clear and succinct action plan on how to rectify the problem. Unless of course it is a problem the APS has intentionally instigated and so an explanation of why the APS has intentionally promoted this development with the Australian Sports Commission needs explanation.

If the APS executive cannot see the issue, have no strategy to apply in redress of the issue, or are in some way contributing to the issue, then again this is further evidence of the APS failing its membership, the broader profession of psychologists and the communities we serve.

I can state with confidence that there are thousands of psychologists across Australia waiting in anticipation of the APS boards response to the concern I have raised through this letter and most importantly the action the APS will take in an authentic attempt to rectify the issue.

Failure to respond will be taken as further evidence of the APS failing its membership, the broader profession of psychologists and the communities we are all committed to and appropriately trained to serve.

Deeply concerned and troubled,



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