

John Dunn

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Mr Dan Harvey
Service and Workforce Planning Branch
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Response to DHS invitation re: Report and findings on Best Practice Self-Regulation Models for
Psychotherapy and Counselling in Australia.

- 1 I make this submission as a practicing professional Counsellor.
- 2 My practice includes private clients, as a part time TAFE student Counsellor and working through a medical practice as part of the government funded MAHS scheme.
- 3 I belong to two professional counselling associations with an ethical, supervision and professional development responsibility. In one, I am a clinical member and the other a Fellow on the Board.
- 4 The Report does not represent me and has in no way solicited my input privately, professional or representatively and to suggest that it may have done so is erroneous.
- 5 I believe in the regulation of a national registration of practicing Counsellors.
- 6 This registration of those claiming Counsellor status should be restricted to Counsellors who have undergone training under an AQTF approved and accredited course of study.
- 7 The registration should be available to accommodate all levels of training from Certificate IV to post graduate studies.
- 8 It should have, as part of its registration conditions, and in addition to a qualification requirement, that the Counsellor should have membership in a national or state counselling Association, undertake minimum supervision requirements, continue with professional development and have public and professional liability insurance as applicable.
- 9 Bearing in mind the multiplicity of industrial environments and regional, rural and metropolitan locations such conditions, although needing to be firm, need a degree of flexibility to be practicable.
- 10 It should be made manifest, and in some degree the report is indicative of this, that current people claiming Counsellor status may in fact not have any recognised separate counselling qualifications, and who may have had none, or some, introduction to counselling within their chosen fields of study and yet have the public and political perception as being the primo counsellors and benefits of such perceptions.
- 11 These people may come from the undergraduate, graduate and post graduate fields of medical or para-medical studies. They practice as "Counsellors" and yet do not have any formal counselling qualifications. From this they claim professional membership of Associations and gain benefits.
- 12 That the Report is not necessarily engineered to this issue, the issue is germane and it must be supported as part of whatever method of regulation is to be adopted. Counselling registration must be accommodating to this end and not restrictive or inhibitive and allowed to exclude practising professionally qualified Counsellors due to this common mis-perception by those who see counselling not as a profession but an ancillary modality. It is an individual allied health industry.

Yours faithfully

John Dunn

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