



The New Zealand Psychological Society

Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

Media Release

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For immediate release

Attention: Health and Social Issues Reporters

New Zealand Psychological Society Supports Findings of the Independent Review Panel

The New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) is pleased that the independent panel set up to review the clinical pathway implemented by ACC for the management of sensitive claims has clearly identified issues which must be addressed. The NZPsS, along with many other agencies identified a number of serious concerns which we considered impacted on sexual abuse survivors and the ability of psychologists and other practitioners to provide appropriate services. Until the independent review validated these concerns many lay unaddressed.

Dr Kerry Gibson, NZPsS Director of Professional Development and Training said today that there is clearly a need for a protocol for managing change in the public sector particularly when getting it wrong can have serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of the public. Vulnerable people who seek assistance should not be subjected to processes which deny them that assistance or make it so difficult for them that they choose not to receive assistance. The issues which emerged in relation to the sensitive claims clinical pathway clearly point to a need to do things differently she said.

An important part of the protocol would be to consult with and hear the concerns of consumer groups and practitioners at an early stage of the proposed change. It is also essential for an organisation like ACC to be able to acknowledge when things are not going well, move in a new and appropriate direction and avoid the need for expensive independent reviews and monitoring groups.

Dr Gibson said the most important thing now is to ensure that those seeking ACC's sensitive claims assistance get the help they need as soon as possible. Establishing protocols and processes to effectively manage any future change is also an important priority.

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Background to the New Zealand Psychological Society

The New Zealand Psychological Society is the largest professional association for psychologists in New Zealand. It has over 1000 members and aims to improve individual and community wellbeing by representing, promoting and advancing the scientific discipline and practice of psychology. See www.psychology.org.nz for more information about the Society.