



The New Zealand Psychological Society

*Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa*

## Media Release

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### Psychologist shortages unsustainable and unfair

The New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPSS) endorses the Association of Professional and Executive Employees (Apex) concern in the media today that the shortage of psychologists in mental health services is both unsustainable and unfair on patients.

“It does not make sense that problems have to be so severe and the crisis compounded before you can see a psychologist,” comments NZPSS president Quentin Abraham.

Mr Abraham says NZPSS is concerned that its members who remain in understaffed teams could be at risk by working in some of the most challenging situations.

“Psychologists have trained for more than six years to apply the science of psychology to everyday difficulties. Many other health workers such as nurses and assistants use psychological approaches often successfully supervised by a psychologist.

“However, if the problems are complex, people in our communities may not receive the best type care they need without access to a fully qualified psychologist. It makes good sense to invest in high quality, professional psychologists to prevent problems escalating.

“If mental health is a priority for our country the NZPSS would like to see a fully funded health system and expertise made available to those who need it most.”

He says district health boards (DHBs) have sought to plug gaps by recruiting professionals from overseas.

“We would like to see a more sustainable and national, home-grown solution to this workforce shortage.

“For those in crisis, a psychologist is not a ‘nice-to-have luxury’ it is a vital service.”

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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 1200 members and 600 student subscribers and aims to improve individual and community wellbeing by representing, promoting and advancing the scientific discipline and practice of psychology.

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