

18 June 2025

A Message from the General Counsel of the VMHPAA

Dear Members,

It has come to our attention that defamatory and misleading statements concerning the Vocational Mental Health Practitioners Association of Australia (VMHPAA) are currently being circulated on social media platforms, including LinkedIn.

We take this matter extremely seriously. These communications **misrepresent** both the mission and regulatory positioning of the VMHPAA and, in some instances, appear designed to damage the reputation and legitimacy of vocationally trained mental health practitioners.

Let us be unequivocally clear:

The VMHPAA does not claim that vocational diploma qualifications are equivalent to tertiary (i.e., bachelor or postgraduate) degrees etc. *Equivalency is not the same as equity*. Our association exists to advocate for, support, and professionally represent vocationally qualified practitioners in mental health. These members operate within a clearly defined scope of practice, meet strict Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements, and receive regular clinical supervision from recognised and appropriately registered supervisors.

These are the same high professional standards expected of members of established national counselling bodies such as the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) and the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA).

The VMHPAA is proud to be the *only association* in Australia solely dedicated to protecting and promoting the vital contributions of vocationally trained mental health practitioners. We will continue to advocate for our members at all levels of government and policy making to ensure their role in providing critical frontline support is both protected and recognised in any regulatory or law reform discussions.

Our position is clear:

Diploma qualified mental health practitioners are and have long been first responders in the delivery of mental health support especially in underserved rural, remote, and disadvantaged communities.

These practitioners have been an essential component of Australia's mental health workforce for more than 30 years, often providing accessible and timely support where no other services exist.

To that end, any misinformation published by individuals, organisations, or other associations whether intentionally defamatory or otherwise will be formally investigated.

The VMHPAA reserves its legal rights and will take all necessary steps to protect the reputation and practice rights of its members, including potential legal or regulatory action where appropriate.

If any member or external party has questions or concerns, or if you become aware of defamatory or misinformation being shared, we encourage you to contact us directly at: info@vmhpaa.org.au

Yours sincerely,



Martin John Taylor

General Counsel

Vocational Mental Health Practitioners Association of Australia (VMHPAA)