

Dear ReLPAG members,

The history of ReLPAG is known to you all, if not, visit the archives which houses the historical facts and makes for interesting reading.

I was recently asked “Does ReLPAG still have a role to play after the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, when the Minister of Health signed the final withdrawal of the 2011 and the 2018 Scopes of Practice?” As the current chairperson of ReLPAG, my answer was a resounding “YES! As an action group our work only starts now!”

- Scope of Practice cases dormant for 12 years are now being prosecuted by the legal department of the HPCSA
- Medical aids are taking it upon themselves to report psychologist to the HPCSA for practising out of Scope of Practice.
- The HPCSA sent investigators to the homes and practices of a number of psychologists, the place of work of intern-psychologists and psychometrists of a Department of Education to investigate unannounced, in loco and expect a declaration of the action without giving these professionals an opportunity to consult with a colleague and/or their lawyers from the respective Legal Protection firms they are members of.

Another point of concern struck me in discussion with a ReLPAG EXCO member, which the EXCO member put succinctly:

- Referral and multi-disciplinary networks have been negatively impacted by perceptions and policies based on the previously proposed SoP. The networks affected include the Medical, Psychiatric and Legal fraternity. It is now up to us to set perceptions straight and carry the message of the new legislation through and make it count.
- Inter- psychological networks have also broken down as mistrust has developed between the various categories which in my opinion need to be addressed in a summit.
- Our renewed work is especially focused on the clients and communities we serve. We aim to increase awareness of psychological services as a whole, rather than emphasising divisions. In so doing, we can stand shoulder to shoulder with colleagues to speak for psychology and fight the stigma of mental health services.

ReLPAG members and/or ReLPAG was consulted as an organisation in these respective matters and stepped in to assist.

My question is when will the criminalisation of our profession stop? Who will stand in for us and our colleagues if ReLPAG does not do it?

The very same colleague challenged me and said, “*There are now other groups representing different registration categories.*” They were all named. Of course, it is true. I pose to all the ReLPAG members here and now: Are these other groups interests groups working towards their members interests, or are they action groups? Did they and their members contribute financially to the Court cases that led to the change brought about by the action ReLPAG initiated and saw through to the end? No, ReLPAG members and EXCO put themselves on the line.

I ask each and every ReLPAG member now, to stay on the journey with your EXCO and each newly elected EXCO in future, to support each member, so we as trained and competent professionals can take our role amongst other colleagues as we did in the past. Again to be recognised and ply our profession on an equal footing with our colleagues, in a fair dispensation to serve the communities where we live and work in.

Go well and serve all without regard for creed or affiliation.

Anne-Marie Rencken, no

ReLPAG, Chairperson

*Working in your interest with kindness, diligence, integrity and fairness for al*