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Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
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Submission to the Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services Committee Inquiry

I am extremely concerned about the consideration of simplifying the current Medicare rebate system for psychologists to one level at the lower rebate rate.

As a new graduate I have spent many years studying to become a clinical psychologist. I feel there is push for psychology to be a six year degree as it is in the USA and UK. This is being encouraged by universities and the APS with ongoing discussions about weaning out the four by two route. What incentive is there for further study if clinical psychology is not recognised in private practice.

I also feel that as Clinical psychologists do two extra years of this should be officially recognised and rewarded as such. We have a big contribution to make to society and people with severe mental health illness and the rates appear to be rising. I feel clinical psychologists should be embraced and encouraged not discouraged.

One only has to look at the burden on the public system (Community mental health) not to mention the long waiting lists to know that reducing Medicare rebates for clinical psychologists would be disastrous as what would be the incentive to work in private practice.

Clinical Psychologists are the only professionals, other than Psychiatrists, who have received training exclusively focused on the identification and evidence-based treatment of mental health disorders.

Please consider the bigger picture here.