

Dear Senate Community Affairs Committee,

*I am writing in respect to The Senate Community Affairs Committee concluding that there are no grounds for the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists and recommendations the for single lower rate to be applied to all psychologists including clinical psychologists.*

*I am writing in the hope that I can assist you in further understanding the difference between a clinical psychologist and a generalist psychologist.*

*Firstly, a generalist psychologist is only required to complete four years of tertiary university studies and then complete two years on the job training as an intern psychologist. On the other hand a clinical psychologist must complete six years of tertiary university studies (minimum Masters of Clinical Psychology) of which 1000 contact hours are required with clients and in addition a thesis to be written. Furthermore, to become part of the APS College of Clinical Psychologists an additional 2 years of experience and 40 hours a clinical supervision must be completed. Once recognised as a clinical psychologist, there are ongoing requirements to attend advanced professional development workshops and training + continued clinical supervision for maintaining a high level of clinical knowledge and practice. As such, there is an enormous discrepancy in training and ongoing development between generalist psychologists and clinical psychologists.*

*I would also like to make you aware of Clinical Psychology being the only profession, apart from Psychiatry, whose entire accredited and integrated postgraduate training is specifically in the field of lifespan and advanced evidence-based psychopathology, assessment, diagnosis, case formulation, psychotherapy, evaluation and research across the full range of severity and complexity. Clinical psychologists are very well represented in proportion amongst the innovators of evidence-based therapies, NH&MRC Panels, other mental health research bodies and within mental health clinical leadership positions.*

*As such I ask that The Senate Community Affairs Committee reconsider the proposed removal of the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists and for the single lower rate to be applied to all psychologists including clinical psychologists.*

*The removal of the two-tiered Medicare rebate system is extremely troubling as it will heavily affect many of my clients (and many thousand other Australians) in terms of their mental state. I believe a single rebate system will lead to greater numbers of people living with depression and anxiety (along with many other mental health difficulties) unnecessarily as they will not be able to access the appropriate psychological support to treat their difficulties.*

*I ask that my views be considered in regards to any further possible discussions towards The Senate Community Affairs Committee concluding that there are no grounds for the two-tiered Medicare rebate system and that a single lower rate to be applied to all psychologists including clinical psychologists.*

*I am able to elaborate on any of the above if necessary.*

Kind regards,

Nesh Nikolic

Clinical Psychologist

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Member of the Australian Psychological Society

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