

To the Senate Inquiry

I write this submission to advocate on behalf of the clients of psychologists, and psychologists, who are disadvantaged by the inequities of the two-tier Medicare rebate scheme on the following grounds.

- Registration as a psychologist requires six years of study / practical experience regardless of which route you take. In fact it could be argued that those who follow the 4 years study / 2 years practical experience are better qualified than those completing 6 years at university.
- It is inequitable and discriminates against the clients of 80% of Australia's psychologists by reducing the number of sessions clients have access to.
- It is inequitable and discriminates against 80% of Australia's psychologists through the two-tier rebate system.
- It promotes a perception amongst the general public that generalist psychologists are inferior to clinical psychologists through these inequities.
- There is no research to suggest clinical psychologists have achieved superior outcomes through the programme to justify their preferential treatment. The Department of Health and Ageing commissioned an independent and wide-reaching evaluation of the Better Access program, overseen by experts in the research and mental health fields, which began in January 2009 and was completed at the end of 2010. The research was conducted by Melbourne University and shows that, in reality, there are no differences between types of psychologists, ie. both generalist and clinical psychologists are working with equally afflicted clients; both types of psychologists are utilising the same approaches to helping their clients; and both types of psychologists are obtaining very positive outcomes.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these comments and I hope this inquiry results in *Better Access* to people who require psychological services.

Regards,

Rosanne DiVenuto
Psychologist