

A submission regarding: **The Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services .**

**By Larissa Taylor, registered Psychologist**

I write regarding the consideration to remove the 'two tiered' system for Medicare rebates in receiving financial remuneration for Psychological services as stated in the following: *"The Senate Community Affairs Committee has concluded that there are no grounds for the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists and recommends the single lower rate for all psychologists including clinical psychologists....."*

As a member of the Clinical College of Psychologists, I strongly oppose any outcome that does not recognize Clinical Psychologists as having specialist skills over and above those psychologists who are not eligible for college membership.

The process to become eligible to practice as a 'Clinical Psychologist' requires justification of a wide range of professional development activities, supervision and practical experience working with a wide range of mental health presentations. It is this recognition in title and in added financial gain that encourages psychologists to extend their knowledge and hone their skills. I fear that without any financial incentive, this motivation will diminish.

Without recognition (which the 2-tiered system provides), 'Clinical Psychologists' are recognized at the same level as a psychologist who has only just finished university. Surely those who have worked to specialize their skills deserve to receive higher benefits than those who have been no less than 2 weeks out of their degree.

As stated previously, I am extremely worried that this 'generic' approach to medicare benefits for psychologists will discourage professionals from specializing their skills. In the end, it is the general public who will also lose out in this case.

Larissa Taylor