

## **Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services**

### **A Submission to the Senate – 04 August 2011**

As a provisionally registered psychologist I was disheartened to hear about the reduction in number of sessions available for individuals under the Medicare rebate scheme. I am currently practicing as a provisional psychologist whilst completing a Masters Degree part time. I have seen firsthand the need for access to psychological services and the difference this makes in clients' lives. It is essential that the number of sessions is not reduced under this scheme in the name of equality. For often it is those who cannot afford psychological services who need them the most, and more often they require a greater number of sessions in order to deal with very complex inter- and intra-personal issues. The Medicare rebate scheme is a great equaliser in terms of improved mental health and overall wellbeing for many people in Australia. It deserves to stay in its unmodified state.

Furthermore, I am practising at a level beyond simply a 4-year degree qualification and completing a Masters Degree in Applied Psychology and therefore should be entitled to a rebate equal to that of a Clinical Psychologist once I graduate. I am undertaking study at postgraduate level at a highly reputable University in Australia. Through the Master of Applied Psychology program I am gaining essential skills in working with clients from a trans-theoretical framework which involves the highest level of discretion for effective implementation of evidence-based practice given a clients' individual needs, and would rival any Clinical Psychologists' skills set. I strongly recommend a revision of the rebate structure to create equality within the profession. In addition, a greater level of understanding and insight is required from our Clinical Psychology colleagues towards other specialisations within psychology.

Yours Sincerely,

A concerned Provisionally Registered Psychologist and Psychology Postgraduate Student