

**Submission to Senate Community Affairs Committee:  
Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health  
Services**

I wish to express my concern with the Government's plan to reduce the number of Medicare sessions from a maximum of 18 rebated sessions per year to a mere 10 sessions per year.

I work in a private psychology clinic as both the clinic manager and a clinical psychologist. This position allows me to understand more broadly the types of clients accessing our clinic and the severity of the mental health issues that they face. Since the global financial crisis we have seen a number of families discontinue therapy at our clinic for financial reasons. I fear that a reduction in the number of Medicare subsidised sessions would only increase the severity of this problem.

The clinic at which I work is a specialist clinic for Asperger's Syndrome and Autism and as such our clients have enduring difficulties, not simplistic mental health issues that can be treated effectively within a maximum of 10 sessions. Given the enduring nature of autism spectrum disorders, many families require more than the 18 rebated sessions that are available to them, not less. The costs associated with raising a child with a disability are incredibly high and for many families, the 18 sessions are not seen as generous but necessary for them to cope with raising a child on the spectrum. I am concerned with the number of families who, given the reduction in the number of Medicare rebated sessions, would lose much needed support, management strategies and advice. As such I strongly urge the government to reconsider their proposed cuts to Medicare rebated sessions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.