

**To the Members of the Senate Community Affairs Committee:
Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services**

I am a clinical psychologist and wanted to say that I studied hard to become one. If you think, as is being mooted by members of the community, that non-clinical psychologists should be paid the same as clinical psychologists, then increase the amount of money paid to them so it equals the clinical psychologist Medicare rate. Why penalise me, by dropping the clinical psychologist Medicare rate down? Am I am being paid so unfairly, that I, and many of my colleagues, warrant that?

Further, in respect to a psychologist and a clinical psychologist being paid differently via Medicare, is this not the norm in society, i.e., the more you study the more you are remunerated. Should I be paid the same as a psychiatrist? Probably not, because they have studied much longer than I have. Should a counsellor (with a Tafe or college diploma) be paid the same as a psychologist or even a psychiatrist? Probably not, because the psychiatrist and psychologist have dedicated extra time and training, and so, in some measure, have earned the higher remuneration.

In the field of nursing there are also different levels of nursing. Is it reasonable that all nurses, irrespective of their training get the same remuneration? Well not according to the current awards. If this is accepted practice, why is it being mooted that the person on the higher remunerating – a clinical psychologist – have their remuneration decreased. It strikes me as going against a cultural norm to pay the same for different. If this is what this enquiry decides, at least do it by increasing the psychologist rate, not decreasing the clinical psychologists rate.

Sincerely yours,