

Dear Senate Inquiry,

I would like to address the following terms of reference for the senate inquiry on the Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services

Term of Reference (b iv): The impact of changes to the number of allied mental health treatment services for patients with mild or moderate mental illness under the Medicare Benefits Schedule

I have had first hand experience with Mental Health issues with family members and myself. Two years ago I suffered depression and anxiety issues and was referred by my GP to see a clinical psychologist. Without the support of the Medicare Benefits Schedule I would not have been able to afford to continue my treatment. I am a single mother of two small children and without treatment would not have been able to function in normal daily life activities. Mental Health issues affect everyone in the Community and it concerns me that we are not making the resources available to all Australians.

Term of Reference (e i): The two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists

Cutting the rebate for psychologists makes it unaffordable for the average person in the community. It is hard enough to take the first step to ask for help and to recognise you have a problem, but to add to the stress of whether you can afford the required treatment is unnecessary.

I also think we should not be putting the Clinical Psychologists under the same rebate/bracket as normal Psychologists. It is imperative we ensure we have reputable Doctors out there to treat the patients. We entrust so much into these people, give them so much of ourselves with divulging our most inner most personal despair that we need to ensure they are ethical and professional and trained to treat people at their weakest moment.

I urge the Senate to reconsider these changes and to ensure we allow every person the resources available when it comes to Mental Health. There are too many lives lost every day by every day people who don't know where to go for help or who to ask for help. And to add the extra burden on whether they can afford to pay for these services is wrong.

This affects our children to adults to elderly, if you ask anyone there is not one person that has not been affected by Mental Health.

Kind Regards