
Dear Senate Committee,

I have been a fully-registered psychologist for just 16 months and am very disheartened by what I now see as an "uncaring (for peers) profession". My choice to take "Pathway 1" was based on being informed that either pathway led to the same outcome, along with the desire to be "out in the real world" instead of continuing at university. All documentation given at university stated that to become fully registered you could take either one of two pathways. No mention whatsoever of the impending insult/assault on those who chose "Pathway 1". And I am certain that at the time I was studying that at least some of my lecturers/head of department would have been aware of this. I am also certain that many of us would have not continued with our training had we had insight into what is now happening.

I recall being at a compulsory workshop during my undergraduate course (my study was external-based) where all students were handed out applications to join the Australian Psychological Society (APS), the lecturer informing us how good this would be for our career and insinuating that it would be mandatory once employed as a psychologist. It was never mentioned that a clinical masters degree would be better for our career (and mandatory if one didn't want to be discriminated against). Now it seems that our choice of Pathway determines our status and our potential income. Not to mention our ability to be a competent psychologist.

In hindsight had I known what was to become of "generalist" psychologists I would have still chosen "Pathway 1" as I am of the firm opinion that my two year internship was as valuable if not more so than a further two years of university training. Either pathway requires a minimum amount and depth of undertakings to become fully registered.

Why a two-tiered Medicare system for psychologists who all need to train for the same number of years? What's the difference between 4 + 2 and 6? Zero. It is extremely insulting to me let alone some of my colleagues who have been working in a clinical environment for 20-30+ years. Not only does Medicare discriminate but also Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) some of which will pay a "clinical" in excess of \$40 more for a one-hour session than a "generalist" for doing exactly the same thing - the job that we were all trained to do.

I was recently interested in attending a course run by Beyond Blue only to find out that registrants had to be "endorsed psychologists"...so now we are not even competent enough for professional development? That is outright discrimination.

As one hypothetical example, I would like to be able to understand how a 24 year old with a clinical masters degree can be considered more competent than a 40+ year old psychologist with 6 years training, a PhD, and 20+ years clinical experience. There are many, many of the latter out there who must be feeling totally violated by the APS and the Psychology Board.

In summary, I would like to call for the two-tiered Medicare system to be abolished immediately, and for endorsements to include "generalist" psychologists with adequate experience, otherwise also be abolished.

I have been a member of the APS since 2005 but will not be renewing my membership to a body that does not support, in fact insults, my substantial training and my chosen career.

Kind regards,

Ann Huntress