

Submission to Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services.

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From:

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Submission re two-tier system.

Re Terms of reference:

- (iii) the impact of changes to the Medicare rebates and the two-tiered rebate structure for clinical assessment and preparation of a care plan by GPs, and**
- (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;**
- (d) services available for people with severe mental illness and the coordination of those services;**
- (e) mental health workforce issues, including:**
 - (i) the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists,**

My submission is to urge for:

- (i) The retention of the two tier system in which the specialisation of Clinical Psychology to be clearly recognised.
- (ii) The annual number of rebated sessions to be retained.

My reasons are:

- (i) Clinical Psychology is on the only profession, apart from Psychiatry, whose complete post-graduate training is in the area of mental health. If you look at my qualifications, you will see I hold a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology. This elevated my professional expertise considerably, not only in theoretical ways but also in research and practical experience.
- (ii) By recognising this speciality, the legislation would assist in the vital need to high quality mental health care to the many in our society with complex and severe mental health presentations.
- (iii) Sometimes for comprehensive treatment, more than 30 sessions a year are needed.
- (iv) This is not a time to cut back on expert psychological care. Effective treatment save costs to society as those whose health is restored, or at least improved, can contribute to the workforce and community rather than be a cost to the taxpayer.