

Submission to Senate Committee

RE: Administration of Australian Health Providers Registration

I am a registered psychologist with more than 20 years of experience both in private practice, in the community sector, and in teaching counseling and psychotherapy skills at Australian universities and training institutes where I also supervise students both in their professional development and research projects.

I wish to voice my concern about the current registration structure for psychologists in the hope that a more equitable and fair framework for the community and the majority of psychologists will be implemented in the near future. My concern is about the justification and effect of the two-tier rebate scheme on the provision of psychological services to those most in need.

The current two-tier scheme creates discriminatory bias towards psychologists registered as 'clinical' and against psychologists registered as 'Generalist' and will therefore greatly reduce the accessibility of psychological support for many people in need of that support in the community.

The assumption under this scheme is that training length is different for 'clinical' and generalist psychologists when in fact this is not the case. I have had 10 years of university training to achieve my PhD. and resent the implication that I am not as effective in my work as someone who has the right to the name 'clinical' simply because they belong to an APS college of that name. I believe my work has been 'clinical' for all my years in private practice and in the community sector.

I am also appalled that no 'grandfather clause' was in place to effect a transition to a new structure for those like myself, with significant training and many years of experience, who are working demonstrably effectively in the Mental Health Sector, before imposing it arbitrarily.

I would therefore argue along with the AAPi and all my 'unendorsed' and 'generalist' colleagues that The Federal Government should immediately discontinue the two-tier rebate scheme and replace it with a single rebate for consultations referred by a GP to all registered psychologists under a Mental Health Care Plan. There is no credible evidence to justify a "Clinical/ Endorsed" practitioner's client being paid a higher rebate than a "Generalist/ Unendorsed" practitioner's client, in fact the Better Access Evaluation Report 2011 demonstrated exactly the opposite.

I trust that serious consideration will be given to this issue...

Sincerely,