

28th July

**The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600.**

To whom it may concern

Re: Committee of enquiry into the Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services.

I have been a Psychologist (4+2) for 12 years and have worked in a publicly funded mental health service for children and young people for all of that time. During this time I have had different roles in the organisation but they have all been involved with the treatment, diagnosis and assessment of severe and complex mental health problems in children and young people. I feel that I have achieved a high level of competence as an applied psychologist, and I strongly believe that it has been these practical experiences and ongoing quality supervision and professional development that has allowed me to develop into the professional I am today and not only what I was exposed to at university.

In the past 4 years I have also established a small private practice with one other psychologist which operates outside of hours and bulk bills. I have always taken the position that the Better Access Initiative was about providing access to clients who would not ordinarily be able to afford psychological services and my billing practice is consistent with this. In my experience so far in the private sector, I have seen a significant number of complex adults and young people that have benefited greatly from targeted, evidence based intervention that has had very little to do with the letters after my name, and more to do with my skills as an applied psychologist.

I have been supervising Masters of Clinical Psychology interns on their placements here with our service (approx 8 per year) for the past 4 years and both myself and the service have always received excellent feedback on the quality of experiences and supervision that the intern's have received over this time. I have also supervised a number of 4+2 psychologists outside the organisation for little or no money and have been proud to do this to further develop the profession.

Through this experience I have not seen a distinguishable difference between either of these groups and believe that ultimately their success has to do in the application of skills learnt rather than a particular orientation. The irony is that now, the very profession that has supported and encouraged me to provide supervision and training to students over this time is now saying that this will no longer be considered as acceptable because I don't hold a higher qualification. If I and my colleagues are no longer able to supervise then this

has huge implications for the future workforce given our level of support to local tertiary institutions.

Increasingly I feel that my contribution to the profession and my expertise have been devalued and disrespected by most of my Clinical colleagues and have felt continually disappointed at the short sightedness of the APS campaign which seems to be driven solely by financial motives. There appears to have been very little thinking about the implications for future workforce, clients and the profession if the proposed changes go ahead given the huge numbers of general psychologists employed. I am writing to you as a psychologist who has always worked hard to maintain high levels of professional practice in both the public and private sector and has demonstrated a strong commitment to advocating for my profession but who increasingly feels disillusioned by the future of this field. I just want the opportunity for my skills and ongoing contribution to the profession and clients to be recognised and not just dismissed .

Yours sincerely

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