

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Community Affairs
P.O. BOX 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/ Madam

My understanding of the Clinical Psychologist/Psychologist tiered payment is similar to that in medicine to the Specialist/General Practitioner.

To be considered a clinical psychologist there is a requirement of three years post graduate training following a four year degree which is dedicated to the understanding of and the specific practice of clinical psychology. The emphasis is on the complexity of specifics in this area of function. Similar to that of post graduate training in obstetrics or ear nose and throat specialists. Both the general practitioner and psychologist are familiar with the areas of the specialities and are aware of and can deal with the less difficult complex cases.

In my specific instance I commenced working in psychology in 1972, initially as a psychologist until I completed my postgraduate clinical training and commenced work as a clinical psychologist in 1977 at a higher rate of pay for the federal government. Shortly thereafter I moved into the NSW state government system as psychologist in charge at a large psychiatric hospital, one of the requirements of this position was that of being a clinical psychologist. I was required to supervise psychologists, clinical psychologists and there was available the status of senior clinical psychologist on that staff. My understanding is that both governments even this long ago recognised there was benefit with the clinical qualifications and the knowledge and experience gained sufficient that they had a tiered salary structure recognising the upgrade of quality of work.

For example this recognition of clinical qualifications continues in the public sector. Currently I undertake work for the NSW Attorney General Department (...). They require you to be a clinical psychologist.

Unfortunately I can foresee a lack of motivation of many psychologists to upgrade their expertise if this structure is abandoned. I can also foresee many experienced people leaving private practice if not the profession.

Yours faithfully
RAYMOND DORLING
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST