

12 July 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
Re: Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services, Terms of Reference e) mental health workforce issues, including: (i) the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists

I am a Psychologist now working in Private Practice. As a 36+ year old single female I found I needed to retrain myself into a new profession to remain in gainful full time employment. I researched and decided upon an accredited course in Psychology with Curtin University in Western Australia. I commenced a full time course and gained qualifications in a Bachelor of Science (3 years full time) followed by an Honours degree (1 year full time) and then completed a Master Of Psychology (Counselling) (2 years full time). I am registered with the Australian Psychological Society, WA Board of Psychologists and now the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. I am fully insured as a Psychologist in private practice.

My question is: as a now 54 year old practicing, fully qualified, registered Psychologist, specialising in the areas of Anxiety and Mood Disorders, for which, again I repeat, I am fully trained and continue to complete regular Professional Development (PD) to update my skills and remain registered, and, I have now practiced as such for the past nearly 12 years: **What more do you want?**

Are six years of professional and registered training and ongoing PD's not enough? Please, please, consider this fact carefully. Perhaps even compare this with other qualified allied health professionals and the level of training and competency expected of these.

I implore you, do not run the risk of over qualifying any Psychologist out of the 'system' of mental health care. Further, please do not discriminate between equality trained and qualified Psychologists i.e., any and all 6 year trained Psychologists.

In our society, today, the Psychological profession is so desperately needed. Endorse it, promote it, make it readily available to all, now!

Sincerely yours

Karen J Abbott

B.Sc.(Hons).M.Psych

PSYCHOLOGIST