

I am writing with regards to the senate inquiry into Medicare funding for Psychologists. I am a registered 'non-endorsed' Psychologist who has studied for 4 years and done 2 years of training.

I work in a regional area, I am the only full time Psychologist that works with children with mental health issues, these issues often prevent the children from attending school, having friends, accessing leisure activities and greatly impact on the child's quality of life and their family. As a result of intervention, using objective measurement tools, these symptoms and their impact can be greatly reduced. And as a direct result of the service I can offer through Medicare it very often prevent that child and family presenting to government funded services such as CAMHS.

I urge the senate inquiry to understand the importance of Medicare funding in rural areas. Without it children may not access vital mental health treatment and early intervention.

I urge the inquiry to consider to continue the Medicare funding for Focused Psychological Strategies - under these services in rural areas it's not just the 'worried well' receiving support, it's families with children with Autism, Anxiety, Depression, Intellectual Disabilities and very often I treat children who have experienced violence, neglect and abuse.

I urge you to consider that there is no evidence that so called 'Clinical' psychologists provide a better service or better outcomes than Registered Psychologists, in fact the evidence I have seen shows the outcomes are equal (occasionally even slightly better) for clients who see a Registered Psychologist. So why then do our Clients receive a lesser rebate? I urge the inquiry to consider scrapping the two tiered system.

I urge the Inquiry to consider carefully the information it receives from organizations like the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Clinical Psychology College who are run by primarily by 'Clinical' Psychologists who sometimes have significant conflicts of interest and sometimes aim to self promote which could be considered to be at the expense of the clients and rest of the profession.

Please do not endorse that Clinical Psychologists are superior. Please do not endorse that only 'Clinical' Psychologists can see clients who have a dual diagnosis or severe symptom presentation – the result of this in rural areas will likely be that children with severe or dual diagnosis sit on wait lists at inundated government services, and children with moderate to mild symptoms get fast, effective, professional treatment. Rural client's do not get to pick and choose who they see often, so please do not allow clinical psychologist in cities to develop policies that are at the expense of rural clients. Almost all my clients have a dual diagnosis and the objective evaluations completed pre and post by the child's teacher / parent show significant symptom improvement on many occasions.

And lastly, there just isn't the workforce to support only clinical psychologists receiving rebates - 80% of Psych's on the frontline, helping people everyday are Registered

Psychologists, fail to fund our Client's access to this and government funded services will be further inundated, and possibly even crippled in rural areas.