

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of certain citizens of Australia,

Draws to the attention of the House a matter on the 2010-2011 Budget: specifically that accredited Mental Health Social Workers will no longer be able to provide services under the Medicare "Better Access to Mental Health Services" program.

- Accredited Mental Health Social Workers help individuals with mental health problems to resolve associated psychosocial issues and improve their quality of life. This may involve family as well as individual counselling, and group therapy.
- In 2008-09 these professionals delivered 121,540 services under the program, played a vital role in minimising hospital admissions and provided substantial savings to the health budget each year.
- Many Social workers have provided Medicare services "bulk billed" to low income individuals and families, facilitating accessibility and delivering services to areas of great need.

We therefore ask the House to amend the Budget and allow Accredited Mental Health Social Workers to continue providing valuable community service through the Medicare "Better Access to Mental Health Services" Program.