Submission to the Senate Inquiry.

I would like to give my disappointed opinion on the active discrimination against Generalist Psychologists in Australia.

I find it confusing that a profession who pride themselves on following research findings to guide practice and treatment, in this case are ignoring the evidence (Department of Health and Aging, (2011). Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and GPs through the MBS, viewed 18 July 2011).

I think this movement is about elitism of the profession and money as opposed to client well being. My concern is the more exclusive/elitist we are as a profession, the further away we are from the everyday people that utilise our service.

Another concern is living in a regional area which has two clinical psychologists available to a population of 160 000 is very impractical, and considering there is no evidence to support that they do a better job, majority of clients will consult a Generalist psychologist. Under the proposed scheme clients are set up to feel they’re getting a second rate service, which can interfere with the therapeutic alliance. As therapeutic alliance is the highest predictor of positive client outcomes, one wonders how this discrimination could possibly benefit clients.

I have been working in a Government Mental Health Service now for over nine years, daily seeing clients and families who have severe and complex mental illnesses. According to the proposed changes; I, as a Generalist psychologist who has completed 6 years of Psychology training with an additional degree in Education and post graduate qualifications in the specialised areas of Family Therapy and Child/Adolescent Counselling, would now only see mild cases as I am not a Clinical Psychologist. In my opinion this is not only a disservice to clients and their families but also a loss to the psychology profession of practical hands on field experience. I fear many generalist psychologist may leave to other professions instead of returning to university to study two more years of material they already know and have been practicing for many years.

Hoping for your serious consideration,
Allahna.