

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Australian psychologists reject claims of high gap fees**

The Australian Psychological Society rejects recent allegations that psychologists are charging high out of pocket fees for Medicare services.

"We have just received over 1,200 responses to a survey of psychologists registered to provide the new Medicare mental health items and found that two-thirds of clinical psychologists and nearly half of registered psychologists are bulk-billing patients in financial need," Executive Director, Professor Lyn Littlefield said.

"Even more striking was the fact that clinical psychologists were charging an average fee of \$133. This is only \$4 over the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fee. For registered psychologists the average was \$102 which is also only \$14 over the schedule fee for their services. Further encouraging figures showed that regional and rural registered psychologists were charging their clients less than their metropolitan equivalents: on average \$94 creating a gap of only \$6.

"What's more, 24% of clinical psychologists and 22% of registered psychologists are providing Medicare funded services in regional and rural areas."

"The results of this very large survey clearly refute the unsubstantiated claims recently reported in the media and strongly support what we have come to believe - that many members of the community with a significant mental health need are now able to access the services of psychologists," she said.

"The overwhelming uptake of psychological services since the new Medicare items were introduced is clear evidence of the previously unmet need for psychological assistance in our community. The evidence from our large survey shows that Australian psychologists are responding to meet that need in a very responsible way."

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*The APS is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 15,700 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to peoples' lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.*

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