



# Media release

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Saturday 23 November 2024

## Experts warn 10 session psychology cap hurts patients

An unprecedented coalition of consumer advocacy and professional psychology bodies have united to warn the cap on Medicare-rebated psychology care is robbing millions of patients of the chance to improve their mental health. The nine peak agencies say it's time to give Australians access to the care they need and are urging Australians to sign their [16,000 strong petition](#).

Lived Experience Australia CEO Sharon Lawn said; "By the second half of each year, people reach breaking point as they have often used up their 10 Medicare-rebated sessions and find they cannot afford to continue care as a full fee-paying patient. These are vulnerable patients with complex issues and it is criminal to see them suffer without care in the second half of each year."

In 2022 the Federal Government halved Medicare-rebated psychology sessions from 20 to 10 and since then has failed to provide a care plan for people who need more extensive care.

Psychologists agree there is a cohort of patients, often with complex mental health issues or a history of trauma, who simply cannot improve their mental health with a 10 session cap.

Australian Clinical Psychology Association President Prof Caroline Hunt said peak professional psychology agencies had been in constant contact with politicians since 2022 in an effort to negotiate more care for patients with complex needs.

"We are working with consumer organisation Lived Experience Australia and seven other psychology associations in our coalition to let the government know the 10 session cap is hurting patients. We hope the public and all psychologists will support our [petition](#) and send a clear message that more care is required," Prof Hunt said.

"There are millions of people living with mental health issues, who need more care and cannot improve with a 10-session limit."

Australian Psychological Society President Dr Catriona Davis-McCabe said 1 in 5 Australians experience mental ill-health and it was time those with more complex conditions were able to access the care required from their treating psychologist.

"It is time for Government to increase the 10-session Medicare cap and let Australians access the psychology care they need," Dr Davis-McCabe said.

The Australian Association of Psychologists Inc. Executive Director Tegan Carrison said one of the greatest workplace stressors for her members was grappling with visits from patients who could not afford on-going care once their Medicare rebates dried up.

"It is unimaginable to think that in 2024 there are arbitrary care limits for patients rather than trusting psychologists to help patients get the care that is required to improve," Ms Carrison said. "I hope all

psychologists and their patients will sign the petition to send a clear message that the 10-session cap is hurting patients.”

## **A COALITION OF EXPERTS AND PATIENTS**

Mental health patients and psychology organisations have formed a united coalition of nine peak agencies and begun a petition to address the ongoing shortfall in Medicare-rebated psychology care available to Australians. The agencies, who hope other professionals will join them, say the 10-session Medicare rebate cap on psychology care robs people of essential care. The coalition is calling for more Medicare-rebated psychology sessions for those who need it.

### **Psychology Coalition Members**

- Consumer advocacy organisation Lived Experience Australia
- Australian Clinical Psychology Association
- Australian Psychological Society
- Institute of Clinical Psychologists
- Association of Counselling Psychologists
- Australian Association of Psychologists Inc
- Institute of Private Practicing Psychologists
- Australian Educational and Developmental Psychology Association
- Heads of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association

Sign the petition today <https://chnq.it/zTNJLn47Sx>

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