

## KEY THEMES

Low rebates, cost of living crisis, two-tier and the need for 20 Better Access sessions

Standard consult fees have increased dramatically due to the cost of providing services. The current Medicare rebate is woefully inadequate leaving vulnerable clients unable to afford care.

Consult fee	% of respondents	Variance on year prior
Less than \$100	3.38%	-40% ↓
\$101-120	3.73%	8.75% ↑
\$121-150	12.37%	-12.70% ↓
\$151-175	17.27%	-31.14% ↓
\$176-200	34.54%	14.30% ↑
\$201-225	20.07%	57.17% ↑
\$226	8.63%	-1.03% ↓

87%

of psychologists report **cost as top barrier** to accessing mental health services.

77%

of psychologists/practices reported an **increase in the cost of providing services.**

95%

of respondents believe the Federal Government should **retain the additional 10 Better Access Medicare sessions** offered during the pandemic - rather than reverting to only 10 in 2023.

The average standard consult fee in 2022 is \$176-\$200. The current rebate for the majority of clients is \$89.65 - half of what the average consult fee is.

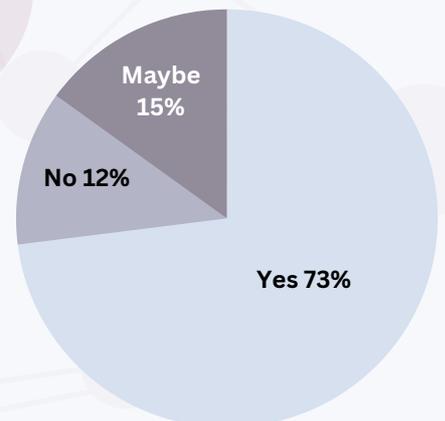
When asked if the government should extend the additional 10 Better Access sessions (rather than reverting to 10 only in 2023)

**95% of respondents said yes**

In 2021 77% of respondents reported an increased need for their services. In 2022 respondents report a further **63.5% increase.**

Increased demand for mental health services

Would you be able to bulk-bill more clients if the client rebate was raised to \$150 for a 50+ minute session?



## FEWER PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE BULK-BILLING

**2021** 37% of respondents reported that they never bulk-bill.



**2022** 49% of respondents reported that they never bulk-bill.



For those who can bulk-bill the majority can only bulk-bill less than 25% of clients.

We have concerns about the wellbeing of the psychology workforce.

**38% of respondents reported a worsening of their own mental health** compared with last year, which had significantly elevated levels of mental distress from pre-pandemic levels.

## WAITING TIMES REMAIN A CONCERN

27% of clients waiting longer than 2 months.

52.84% of clients waiting longer than 4-6 weeks.

*...as a person who completed a Master of Clinical Psychology - I cannot in good conscience, attain the clinical endorsement, as this discrimination severely harms and undermines the profession as a whole.*

**1/3**

33% of respondents are working more than the same time last year, putting the psychology workforce at risk of burnout and exhaustion.

**Q** 'In your opinion, what are the most important things government or funding bodies could do to support private practice psychologists or improve access for clients?'

- 1 Cease two-tier.
- 2 Raise the rebate to \$150.
- 3 Provisional psychologist rebate.
- 4 Extend additional 10 sessions.
- 5 Reduce the red tape/admin burden- including allowing self-referrals where appropriate and reducing the frequency of GP reviews.
- 6 Improve funding/accessibility for education to boost the psychology workforce.
- 7 Create item numbers/rebates for reports to referrers and assessments for clients.
- 8 The ability to provide longer sessions under Medicare where appropriate - 1.5-2 hours.
- 9 Reinstate the 4+2 pathway.

*I'm exhausted and/or considering leaving the profession.*