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MEDIA RELEASE

Psychologists have emergency workforce ready to roll

Australia's peak body for all psychologists, the Australian Association of Psychologists (AAPi), says it has an emergency workforce ready to roll in response to the current mental health crisis.

AAPi Executive Director Tegan Carrison said there are more than 5000 provisional psychologists ready to lend their expertise and care to a community crying out for mental health support.

"While the Victorian Government is calling in an emergency workforce to boost vaccination rates, we have our own emergency workforce equipped to deal with our ballooning mental health emergency.

"Today we're hearing that child and adolescent presentations to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne have increased by between 30 and 80 per cent compared with the previous year," Ms Carrison said.

"We need urgent government assistance. We are experiencing waiting times of six to nine months in many capital cities and up to two years in rural and remote communities. At the same time, GPs are reporting up to 50% of appointments are mental health-related and our crisis hotlines are experiencing unprecedented demand.

"Clearly the system is in crisis so we're asking for provisional psychologists to be allowed to provide Medicare rebated services."

"In addition, the client rebate for all psychology services across the board needs to be raised to \$150 so that private practices remain viable and the community can afford the support it so desperately needs, when they need it."

Currently the rebate for a registered psychologist is \$88.25 compared with a clinical psychologist's rebate of \$129.55. Registered psychologists make up 70% of all psychologists nationally; while clinical psychologists represent 30%.

"We have some solutions - we just need the Federal Government to listen," she said.

ENDS

Tegan Carrison is the Executive Director of the Australian Association of Psychologists Inc (AAPi), a not-for-profit peak body for psychologists in Australia.

About Australian Association of Psychologists Inc (AAPi)

The AAPi is a not-for-profit peak body for all psychologists that aims to preserve the rich diversity of psychological practice in Australia. Formed in 2010 by a group of passionate grassroots psychologists, the AAPi's primary goal is to address inequality in the profession and represent all psychologists and their clients equally to government and funding bodies. Its primary mission is to lobby for equitable access for the Australian public to professional psychological services funded under the current Medicare Better Access Scheme.