



**unbound
minds**

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

1st June 2023

By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Unbound Minds would like to convey our sincere appreciation to the Senate Select Committee for starting this ground-breaking investigation into Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Australia. This investigation strikes a chord with our work, our fundamental principles and values and our ongoing dedication to supporting those affected by ADHD.

A considerable number of Australians suffer from ADHD. Despite its prevalence and the magnitude of its effects, misunderstanding and stigma have long plagued sufferers of ADHD. This has been exacerbated by inconsistent treatment methods, severely delayed diagnosis and a mental health system that is buckling under the pressure of practitioner burn-out and a lack of funding.

This inquiry offers a unique chance to address the complex problems that people with ADHD and their families encounter. We can all work together to create a culture that is more accepting and supportive of people with ADHD by looking at and comprehending the current obstacles to diagnosis, the sufficiency of support services, the functions of various governmental services, and other critical factors.

Our submission intends to offer opinions and suggestions about several Committee terms of reference. We aim to actively contribute to the creation of policies that will favourably impact the lives of persons afflicted by ADHD through a combination of research, lived experiences, and best practices.

- 1. Adequacy of access to ADHD diagnosis:**
 - a. Currently, the cost of undergoing an ADHD assessment is financially prohibitive for many people. The existing Medicare framework offers minimal support. The Government should expand the current Medicare rebate for psychology to capture ADHD assessments.
 - b. The Government should increase the number of Commonwealth Supported Places at universities to promote the increase of suitably qualified psychologists.

- 2. Adequacy of access to support after an ADHD assessment:**
 - a. The cost of accessing ongoing support after an ADHD assessment can also place undue financial pressure on already vulnerable people. The Government should increase the number of Medicare-covered psychology sessions from 10 to 20, increase the rebate for Registered Psychologists to \$150 and introduce a Medicare rebate for provisional psychologists.

- 3. Availability, training, and attitudes of treating practitioners:**
 - a. Combatting stigma through educational campaigns targeted at healthcare professionals can help create a more compassionate and understanding environment for patients.

- 4. Impact of gender bias in ADHD assessment, support services, and research:**
 - a. Gender bias, particularly the under-diagnosis of females, is a significant concern. The government should fund research, training and awareness campaigns into gender differences in ADHD and ensure that training programs incorporate the latest findings.

- 5. Access to and cost of ADHD medication:**
 - a. It is currently difficult to gain access to stimulant medication in a timely and cost-effective manner. We submit that stimulant medication should be prescribed by a treating GP in partnership with a psychologist who is capable of competently diagnosing ADHD.

- 6. The role of the National Disability Insurance Scheme:**
 - a. The NDIS should acknowledge ADHD as a primary disability, and there should be clarity in guidelines regarding eligibility criteria for individuals with ADHD.

- 7. Interaction between Commonwealth, state, and local government services:**
 - a. Developing an integrated model of care through the establishment of an intergovernmental task force is essential for ensuring that individuals with ADHD receive consistent and continuous support. This task force should focus on assessing current services, identifying gaps, and ensuring the seamless transition of care through different stages of life.

- 8. Commonwealth funding allocated to ADHD research:**
 - a. Investment in ADHD research should be prioritized to explore its causes, treatments, and long-term outcomes. This will ensure that policies and

practices are informed by the latest scientific findings.

9. Social and economic costs:

- a. A failure to provide adequate ADHD services has significant social and economic ramifications, including higher rates of unemployment, mental health issues, and strained relationships. A cost-benefit analysis should be conducted to elucidate the long-term benefits of investing in comprehensive ADHD services.

10. Viability of recommendations from the Australian ADHD Professionals Association (AAPA):

- a. The AAPA's recommendations provide an invaluable blueprint. A comprehensive review should be undertaken to evaluate their viability and integration into policy and practice.

11. International best practices:

- a. A comparative study of international best practices should be undertaken. The adoption of proven strategies from countries with exemplary ADHD services can significantly enhance the Australian model of care.

In conclusion, this inquiry represents a landmark opportunity to overhaul ADHD services in Australia. By adopting a collaborative, evidence-based, and compassionate approach, we can ensure that individuals with ADHD thrive in all aspects of life.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,



Justin Khoury
Chief Executive Officer
Unbound Minds