



Social Workers on the front line of mental health services for harder to reach groups

Social Workers are part of the solution to the issues raised by the release of the evaluation of the Better Access Review.

The release of the Review of the program has demonstrated the crucial and high quality clinical role that social workers play, as part of the Better Access program, in providing mental health services to a wide range of Australians with a range of mental health issues.

The Review demonstrates that the Better Access program is providing clinical services to people with a diagnosed mental health conditions.

Facts about social work mental health services in the Better Access program:

- 37% of social workers in the program work in regional and rural parts of Australia;
- 63% of social workers in the program bulk bill some or all of their clients;
- All social workers in the program have high levels of skills and experience to meet the needs of their clients ;
- Social Workers are responsible for only around 4% of the total costs of the program

Following the successful campaign to ensure that social workers remained part of the Better Access program, the AASW is looking forward to working with the Government on providing high quality mental health services to those Australians who require them, particularly those who struggle to access mainstream services.

AASW CEO Kandie Allen-Kelly said, “Social Workers are by far the most likely professional group in Better Access to be working with low income and disadvantaged Australians with mental health issues. Social workers are a key profession in delivering services to ‘harder to reach’ populations who cannot access more expensive services.”

AASW National President Professor Bob Lonne said, “The AASW welcomes the detailed review conducted by the Government on the Better Access program. The Review demonstrates the vital and skilled role that social workers play in working with people with mental health issues. The Review provides no evidence to justify the lower rebate offered to clients of social workers compared with psychologists, and I hope the Government will better recognize the skills and experience that social workers offer.”