

Council Meeting

27 April 2026

Notice of Motion No. 193

Advocacy for Medicare Rebates for Registered Counsellors and Psychotherapists

That Council resolve:

- A. To recognise a growing and demonstrated community need for accessible and affordable mental health support, and;
1. Note the increasing demand for accessible and affordable mental health services locally and across Australia.
 2. Recognise the important role of qualified counsellors and psychotherapists in supporting individuals experiencing mental health challenges, trauma, grief, relationship difficulties and other psychosocial issues.
 3. Note that registration with recognised national peak bodies the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) as fully qualified counsellors and psychotherapists requires practitioners to hold undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications, meet ongoing professional development requirements, have clinical supervision of their practice, and meet national professional standards.
 4. Note that under the current Medicare system and Mental Health Treatment Plan framework, Medicare rebates are available for services provided by certain allied health professionals including psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists, but generally do not extend to counsellors and psychotherapists who are registered members of PACFA or ACA.
 5. Recognise that excluding qualified counsellors and psychotherapists from Medicare rebates limits community access to timely and affordable mental health support and places additional pressure on the existing mental health workforce.
- B. Having regard to Resolution A above, to:
1. Write to the Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care:
 - i. Requesting a review the Medicare Benefits Schedule arrangements relating to mental health services.
 - ii. Advocating for the inclusion of appropriately qualified counsellors and psychotherapists who are registered members of PACFA or ACA as eligible providers under Medicare-supported Mental Health Treatment Plans; and

- iii. Requesting that the Commonwealth Government consider establishing appropriate qualification, registration and supervision standards to enable these practitioners to deliver Medicare-rebated counselling services.
2. Provide a copy of this resolution to the Prime Minister, the local Federal Member of Parliament, the Australian Local Government Association, the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA), and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA).
3. Receive a report to a future Council meeting (to be determined in consultation with the Mayor) outlining any response received from the Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, and detailing any actions undertaken as a result of this resolution.

Cr Lisa Cooper
Scott Ward