

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

24 April 2024

### **Low usage of Better Access psychology sessions is of serious concern for older age groups**

In response to the Dementia Awareness Survey released by AIHW today, peak psychology body the Australian Association of Psychologists (AAPi) says low usage of Better Access psychology sessions is of serious concern for older age groups.

AAPi Director Carly Dober said with rates of dementia expected to keep rising that providing access to mental health services was crucial for older people.

"Aged care psychology is almost non-existent yet people impacted by dementia, along with their family and carers, need adequate and ongoing psychological support," she said.

Older Australians are often at risk of being unable to afford mental health care due to retirement, their pensions not stretching far enough in this cost-of-living crisis, social isolation, or grey divorce leaving many elderly women homeless or financially destitute. We need to ensure this important sector of our community can access a psychologist whenever needed."

Ms Dober said the most identified ways to reduce the risk of developing dementia included being physically, cognitively (continually learning new things;) and socially active, along with cutting down alcohol consumption and preventing head injuries.

### **About AAPi**

*AAPi is a not-for-profit peak body for psychologists that aims to preserve the rich diversity of psychological practice in Australia. Formed in 2010 by a group of passionate grassroots psychologists, 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 such as Medicare Better Access Scheme and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.*

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