



ANZACATA Responds to NDIS Review: Calls for Fair Recognition of Art Therapy in Pricing Reform

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The Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association (ANZACATA) welcomes the Duckett Review's recognition of art therapy as an evidence-based therapeutic support that can significantly benefit NDIS participants.

Importantly, the Review affirms ANZACATA as the peak membership body and regulatory authority for qualified art therapists in Australia, reinforcing the high professional standards and training required of its members.

However, ANZACATA expresses deep concern over the recommendation to reduce the maximum payment rate for art therapy to align with that of counselling.

"Art therapy is a distinct allied health profession requiring a master's qualification and rigorous clinical training," said ANZACATA CEO Dr Kate Dempsey. "While we respect all therapeutic disciplines, art therapy involves specialised techniques, materials, and clinical approaches that warrant appropriate recognition in pricing."

The current rate of \$193.99 reflects the true cost of delivering quality art therapy, including postgraduate training, clinical supervision, and therapeutic-grade materials. The proposed reduction to \$156.16 undermines this and creates inconsistency across the allied health sector—particularly when psychology is funded at \$232.99 and occupational therapy at \$193.99.

While the Review notes differences between art therapy and other allied health professions—citing the lack of national regulation—ANZACATA maintains a robust self-regulatory framework. This includes master's-level qualifications, clinical standards, and ongoing supervision.

The Review also questions the fairness of existing allied health rates but concedes it lacked time to assess them. Using these rates as a benchmark without proper evaluation weakens the rationale for reducing art therapy pricing and risks reinforcing inequities.

Although the Review rightly acknowledges that art therapy is not recreational but a structured, goal-oriented intervention supporting psychosocial functioning and emotional wellbeing, the proposed pricing fails to reflect the complexity, qualifications, and standards involved.

ANZACATA is particularly concerned that the recommendation:

- Threatens the viability of practices, especially in rural and remote areas
- May deter highly trained therapists from working within the NDIS
- Risks reducing access to quality therapy for participants with complex needs

"We support evidence-based funding and accountability," Dr Dempsey added. "But pricing must reflect the unique value and sustainability of the profession. We urge the NDIA to reconsider and consult with the sector to develop a fairer model."

ANZACATA remains committed to working with NDIS participants, the NDIA, and other stakeholders to ensure art therapy remains accessible, appropriately funded, and recognised as a vital allied health service.

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