



Psychotherapy & Counselling
Federation of Australia

30 May 2013

The Honourable Wayne Swan
Treasurer
Via email: ministerial@treasury.gov.au

Dear Treasurer

Reforms to self-education expense deductions

I wrote to you on 13 May with concerns about the proposal to cap work-related self-education expenses at \$2,000. I have attached a copy of my original letter for your reference.

I am writing again as it has become clear that since the proposal was adopted by the government as part of the budget package, there are objections to the policy from many different professions, who will all be seriously impacted if it is implemented. The key issue is that the policy fails to recognise the importance of continuing professional development for safe, ethical and competent practice in a range of professions that provide important services to the community.

I again urge you to reconsider this policy decision. PACFA's preference would be for the policy to be abandoned completely, but if the policy is to be retained, the cap needs to be set higher than \$2,000 level set in the budget. This would enable practitioners to access quality professional development and would support continuous improvement in their professional skills.

In my previous letter I suggested raising the cap to \$3,000. However, you should be aware that some practitioners do need to claim more than this amount, particularly those living outside the major metropolitan areas and those undertaking post-graduate study.

Counsellors or psychotherapists wishing to undertake post-graduate study would be discouraged from doing so without the capacity to claim these self-education expenses. The counselling and psychotherapy profession needs practitioners to undertake more post-graduate study as this is essential to improve clinical skills and specialist expertise in a range of areas of real importance to consumers of counselling and psychotherapy services.

I have attached some case studies showing indicative self-education expense claims for counsellors and psychotherapists. I hope this information will be useful to inform your final decision.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Brett'.

Maria Brett
Chief Executive Officer

Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia Inc
290 Park Street, Fitzroy North VIC 3068

T. 03 9486 3077 F. 03 9486 3933 E. admin@pacfa.org.au W. www.pacfa.org.au

CASE STUDY 1

Counsellor practising full-time in private practice in regional New South Wales.
Expenses are indicative, based on 1 year of professional development activities.

PD Activity	Cost
Attendance at a national industry conference in Melbourne	\$460
Travel and accommodation expenses for conference	\$820
Certificate-level training in a specialist area of practice, including travel	\$4,300
Total	\$5,580

CASE STUDY 2

Psychotherapist living in rural Queensland undertaking post-graduate studies.
Expenses are indicative, based on 1 year of professional development activities.

PD Activity	Cost
Masters degree (blended course involving off-campus and on-campus learning) in a specialist area of practice	\$12,865
Travel to University for on-campus modules	\$720
Professional Association PD events x 2 including travel	\$300
Total	\$13,885