

[REDACTED]

I am a registered psychologist.

Prior to December 2021 I had a thriving solo private practice [REDACTED] My main areas of practice were assessments of children and adults for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Impairments; people receiving services under the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Abuse, D.V.A clients, survivors of childhood sexual abuse, and people with PTSD and C-PTSD. [REDACTED]

My caseload was in excess of 130 clients per week and I had a large waitlist. The majority of my clients had severe mental health problems and many had suicide ideation.

I did not close my practice when COVID-19 began, indeed, I maintained a full caseload of face to face counselling employing social distancing and recommended hygiene procedures as I considered I was providing an essential service to this community.

I did not contract COVID-19 during that period, nor have I contracted it since.

I was ordered to cease practising in December 2021 because I refused to have the COVID-19 vaccination, having a medical history of an anaphylactic reaction to the influenza vaccination.

Closing my practice caused a lot of mental anguish for my clients and I could not place many of them with other psychologists because either they were not qualified in my areas of expertise or they did not have capacity.

When I was allowed to resume practice utilising Telehealth, I could not offer my services to many clients as it is not a suitable modality for many mental health presentations. My income dropped [REDACTED]

Even though I could now resume my practice face to face I have chosen not to, as (a) it is very expensive to set up a private practice specialising in assessments and EMDR and (b) I am now too old [REDACTED]

I would have continued in my original practice for at least another 5 years if I had not been ordered to cease practicing. Psychologists in private practice are in very high demand across Australia, psychologists with my expertise are few and far between in the regional area where I reside. I am still receiving in excess of 20 referrals per month which I have to decline.

I would recommend that in any future pandemic essential services should include private psychology practices and they should remain open and operational. There was no reason for me to have to close my practice and lose my income and economic independence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]