



# Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **7 BETTER WAYS TO SPEND \$7 BILLION - INDEPENDENT HEALTH BODY**

The Australian Healthcare Reform Alliance (AHCRA) today called on the Government to re-direct funding in the upcoming Budget from the \$7 billion private health insurance (PHI) rebate to establish an independent health body to oversee the future of the Australian health system.

AHCRA is a coalition of peak health organisations working together to create a better and fairer health system for Australia's future.

"Australia's health system has many strengths but one critical weakness is the capture of the health agenda by powerful and well-funded industry and provider groups. This contributes to the short sightedness which characterise many of our health policies and programs, as politicians react to pressure from vested interests to find short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions," Jennifer Doggett, AHCRA Chair, said today.

"AHCRA supported Labor's 2016 election policy to establish a Centre for Medicare and Healthcare System Innovation to trial, evaluate and implement new payment and service delivery models that aim to reduce health expenditure while improving the quality and safety of care.

"AHCRA calls on the Government in today's Budget to divert funding from the \$7b PHI rebate to establish a similar body, independent of government, which can identify and address the challenges facing our health system outside of the short term pressures of an election cycle.

"This body would have the capacity to develop, integrate and implement health care policy over a longer timeframe than the election cycle. It would undertake the development of national standards and performance measures; provide effective workforce planning and national regulatory regimes; develop consistent information and reporting metrics; implement seamless communication and information systems; and invest in appropriate facilities and technological resources to meet the long term needs of all Australians.

"It would include broad representation from consumers and citizens, policy experts, health professionals and those with practical business and economic expertise, and be guided by a set of new measures of accountability so that the real impact of any new decision-making process can be regularly and impartially assessed.

"A key focus of this body would be to prioritise representation from the groups most impacted by health care policies and programs, including Indigenous Australians, people with chronic illnesses and people living in rural and remote locations.

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“This new body would oversee the re-allocation of funding from PHI subsidies to areas where it would deliver greater value, such as mental health, primary health care, dental care, public health, Indigenous health and public specialist services.

“AHCRA calls on the Government to abolish the PHI rebate in today’s Budget and use the saved funds to establish an independent health body and meet other areas of greater need within the health system,” Ms Doggett said.

**For further information or comment:**

AHCRA Chair, Jennifer Doggett, 0403 325 980

*This proposal forms part of AHCRA’s ‘7 better ways to spend \$7 billion’ campaign. The aim of this campaign is to highlight the benefits of redirecting funding from the private health insurance rebate to areas of greater need in the health system. [www.healthreform.org.au](http://www.healthreform.org.au)*