



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**EXTENDED MEDICARE SAFETY NET MEASURE**

Today the Government's Medicare Safety Net changes passed the Senate. The Rudd Government knows that patients rely on the Safety Net.

However, in recent years the Medicare Safety Net has enabled some specialists to charge exorbitant fees – which have resulted in million dollar incomes being paid by taxpayers through Medicare.

The Government is no longer prepared to provide a blank cheque to specialist doctors to allow them to increase their fees and take advantage of a program designed to reduce costs for patients.

This was a policy which is unsustainable in its current form – and we are making structural reforms to put expenditure in this area onto a sustainable footing for the future.

We are maintaining EMSN benefits for all existing procedures – to ensure cancer sufferers and those with serious illness, who the Medicare Safety Net was originally designed to assist, continue to benefit fully from the safety net.

I am pleased that this sensible measure passed with the support of the Opposition.

The Government has agreed that a cap on the benefits for the injection of a therapeutic substance into the eye will not be implemented.

In recent years there have been significant advances in therapies to treat macular degeneration, which can hold dramatic results for patients – including saving sight.

I'd like to acknowledge the important role the Macular Degeneration Foundation has played in securing these changes.

**For all media enquires contact the Ministers office: 02 6277 7220**