



## **THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP**

Minister for Health  
Minister for Sport

### **STATEMENT**

3 March 2015

#### **Government continues Medicare consultation**

The Abbott Government is committed to protecting Medicare for the long-term.

This includes maintaining high-quality care and treatment for all Australians, as well as ensuring bulk billing remains for concessional patients and the vulnerable.

We also want to deliver policies that value general practice and other health professions and the important role they play in preventative health and primary care in this country.

To achieve this, we must ensure we have a robust, efficient and sustainable Medicare system.

However, we are also a government that listens and we recognise we cannot introduce reforms to build a strong and sustainable Medicare without support from the public and Parliament.

That's why I promised to hit the pause button on the Government's proposed Medicare measures in order to consult further with health professionals, patients and members of Parliament.

Over the past six weeks I've been travelling the country meeting with hundreds of local doctors on the ground, as well as representatives from key medical, consumer and community groups.

I have taken on board a wide range of constructive views, ideas and concerns about the Government's proposed measures and Medicare reform more broadly.

A clear message is that Labor's policy of doing nothing is not an option.

I am therefore determined to continue consulting on short, medium and long-term options to ensure we can keep on supporting high quality care and treatment as efficiently as possible.

This is necessary, with Government expenditure on Medicare more than doubling from about \$8 billion to about \$20 billion over the past decade, despite the proportion

of Medicare spending covered by the Medicare Levy falling backwards from about 67% to 54% over the same period.

To ensure we protect Medicare for the long-term, the Government will be proceeding with its pause on indexation of Medicare rebates for GP and non-GP items while we work with stakeholders to develop future policies.

However, it is clear the proposal for an optional \$5 co-payment does not have broad support.

The measure, including the proposed \$5 reduction to the Medicare rebate, will therefore no longer proceed and has been taken off the table. I will have more to say about the Government's policy positions as my national consultations continue.

**ENDS**

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