



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

## Tony Abbott MHR

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### Private health cover

Almost 8.8 million Australians, or 43.1 per cent, are now covered by private health insurance. The September 2005 quarter figures show an increase of 58,000 on the previous quarter, according to statistics released today by the Private Health Insurance Administration Council.

This rise is the highest quarterly increase in five years and the largest increase in any quarter since the introduction of Lifetime Health Cover by the government in July 2000.

As well, a record 8.51 million people, or 41.8 per cent of Australians, now have private ancillary cover, an increase of 78,000 people. Overall, a record 10.06 million people are now covered by either private hospital or ancillary health insurance policies.

The Commonwealth Government's higher rebates make private health insurance more affordable for older Australians. An additional 15, 800 people aged 65 and over took out private health insurance in the September quarter. In April 2005, the rebate was increased from 30 to 40 per cent for people aged 70 years and over and from 30 to 35 per cent for those aged 65-69 years.

In the September quarter a record 629,000 privately insured patients were treated: 463,000 in private hospitals, 84,000 in public hospitals and 82,000 in day hospitals. Privately insured patients have contributed a record \$375 million to public hospitals in the year to September 2005.

**For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.**