



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
MEDIA RELEASE

25 November 2009

Minister Consults on Private Health Reform

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, today hosted a consultation at Parliament House in Canberra to discuss the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission final report with private health insurers and private hospitals.

It was the 76th consultation across the country to road-test the Commission's proposed reforms.

Promoting personal 'wellness' and combating chronic disease are priorities of the Rudd Government. The social and economic burden of chronic disease is unacceptably high.

The Government encourages private health insurance providers to continue to extend their products by including positive preventative health treatments such as those to quit smoking, lose weight or manage stress.

Figures released last week show that private health insurance membership continues to rise - and as Australians increasingly seek to improve their health and stay well preventative health measures make attractive additions to policies.

At today's consultation, Minister Roxon outlined the Commission's recommendations and discussed with the private health sector their priorities to improve the nation's health system – including the proposed modifications to Medicare that the Commission called Denticare and Medicare Select.

Denticare proposes that all Australians have universal access to preventative and restorative dental care and dentures regardless of their ability to pay. People would have their choice of either a public or private insurer and, in both cases, Denticare would meet the costs incurred. Dental services are a large and growing part of private health insurance.

All Australians are able to send in their comments and contribute to the national debate on our health system via the yourHealth.gov.au website.

Media Contact: Minister Roxon's Office 02 6277 7220