

APPENDIX A – Terms of Reference

Australia's health system is in need of reform to meet a range of long-term challenges, including access to services, the growing burden of chronic disease, population ageing, costs and inefficiencies generated by blame- and cost-shifting, and the escalating costs of new health technologies.

The Commonwealth Government will establish a National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission to provide advice on performance benchmarks and practical reforms to the Australian health system which could be implemented in both the short and long term, to address these challenges.

1. By April 2008, the Commission will provide advice on the framework for the next Australian Health Care Agreements (AHCAs), including robust performance benchmarks in areas such as (but not restricted to) elective surgery, aged and transition care, and quality of health care.
2. By June 2009, the Commission will report on a long-term health reform plan to provide sustainable improvements in the performance of the health system addressing the need to:
 - a. reduce inefficiencies generated by cost-shifting, blame-shifting and buck-passing;
 - b. better integrate and coordinate care across all aspects of the health sector, particularly between primary care and hospital services around key measurable outputs for health;
 - c. bring a greater focus on prevention to the health system;
 - d. better integrate acute services and aged care services, and improve the transition between hospital and aged care;
 - e. improve frontline care to better promote healthy lifestyles and prevent and intervene early in chronic illness;
 - f. improve the provision of health services in rural areas;
 - g. improve Indigenous health outcomes; and
 - h. provide a well qualified and sustainable health workforce into the future

The Commission's long-term health reform plan will maintain the principles of universality of Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and public hospital care.

The Commission will report to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing and, through her, to the Prime Minister, and to the Council of Australian Governments and the Australian Health Ministers' Conference.

The Commonwealth, in consultation with the states and territories from time to time, may provide additional terms of reference to the Commission.

The Commission will comprise a Chair, and between four to six part-time commissioners who will represent a wide range of experience and perspectives, but will not be representatives of any individual stakeholder groups.

The Commission will consult widely with consumers, health professionals, hospital administrators, state and territory governments and other interested stakeholders.

The Commission will address overlap and duplication including in regulation between the Commonwealth and states.

The Commission will provide the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing with regular progress reports.