



## **Next government must make bold healthcare reforms amid cost-of-living crisis**

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is urging the returned Labor government to seize the first 100 days of its second term to make healthcare more affordable, accessible, and consumer-focused.

Australians on the weekend have clearly voted for reform and investment into healthcare. As Australians grapple with the rising cost of living, long wait times, and a complex health system, CHF stresses that urgent action is needed to ensure people can afford the care they require, when and how they need it.

The government was re-elected on a promise of healthcare reform and investment. Now we want to see these promises delivered. Importantly the voices and needs of healthcare consumers must be involved as the government's election promises are rolled out," Consumers Health Forum CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny said.

CHF is calling on the Albanese Government to prioritise:

- **Delivering More Bulk Billing:** Work with consumers and GPs to meet the government's goal of 90% of GP visits bulk billed by 2030.
- **Cheaper Medicines:** Publicise the upcoming \$25 PBS co-payment cap to help consumers plan for and benefit from lower medicine costs, and Introduce a system to ensure automatic application of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Safety Net pricing.
- **Getting urgent care clinics right:** Expansion of the network must coincide with an independent review which seeks the views of consumers and their experiences of the current clinics to ensure services meet expectations.
- **Prioritising Preventative Health Investment:** Fund CHF to roll out the *Understanding Medicare – Understanding Your Health* program and support the Coalition for Preventative Health Funding to move toward the 5% target of total health expenditure by 2030.

- **Creating a universal dental scheme:** Work towards universal access to dental care starting with a Seniors Dental Scheme and a Low-Income Dental Scheme linked to concession cards, increasing funding for public dental services, and appointing a Commonwealth Chief Dental/Oral Health Officer. Oral health should be treated as a core component of overall healthcare.

“People want care they can both afford and access. Access is just as important as cost, and for those in rural and regional areas, it can be the bigger challenge,” Dr Deveny said.

CHF is also urging the federal government to work closely with consumers when delivering these reforms.

“We’re not calling for another round of consultation. We’re asking for shared responsibility - reform that includes the voices of those who use and pay for the system. These voices should be heard clearly,” Dr Deveny said.

“The next 100 days are a real opportunity. That means working together, across government, clinical and industry groups, departments, communities and trusted peaks like CHF, to reshape a system that better reflects what matters most to the people it’s meant to serve.”

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