



ISSUED: Thursday 31 March 2016

Greens' plan dire for Australia's health system

The Greens' plan to end the private health insurance rebate would have dire consequences for the Australian health system, eroding patient choice, adding to waiting times for surgeries and resulting in poor health outcomes for Australians.

Cutting the rebate to invest in the public system would actually put more pressure on public hospitals, warns Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) CEO Michael Roff.

"The benefits to the public system of the rebate are clear and the Greens need to check the latest figures to understand what is really happening in the hospital system.

"Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures released just a fortnight ago show private hospital admissions outstrip public - 4.0% v 3.2% growth between 2010-11 and 2014-15. This has relieved pressure on the public system that would struggle to cope without the private option.

"The Greens might be interested in more money for the public system, but the private system is interested in patient care. Our focus is on patients getting the right health care when they need it and the evidence shows positive patient outcomes through the rebate.

"Figures from the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority show that since the rebate was introduced private hospitals have treated an additional 12.4 million patients than they would have without it. If the rebate was removed and insurance membership dropped to pre-rebate levels the public system would be up for a bill of around \$8 billion per year to meet the additional demand on public hospitals – money that would need to be raised through increased taxes.

"The rebate is not a magic pudding, it is a sound policy making a real difference to patient access to care where and when they want it and is giving a significant boost to the Budget at the same time," Mr Roff said.

- ENDS -

Media contact: Frith Rayner, Director Communications and Marketing: 0413 971 999