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## MEDIA RELEASE

**PRESIDENT**  
Mr Richard Bowden  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
Hon Dr Michael Armitage

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### Greens Health Policy Ignores Benefits of Private Health Insurance Rebate

The Australian Greens' policy to abolish the Private Health Insurance Rebate will increase public hospital waiting lists and increase the cost of Private Health Fund membership.

Claims by Greens Leader Senator Bob Brown today that the Greens would *abolish the Rebate to fund a Denticare scheme, and at the same time reduce health system costs by \$2.3 billion*, defy logic and ignores the fact that Private Health Funds injected \$11.8 billion into Australia's health care system in the 12 months to March 2010.

The Greens health policy reads: "abolish the private health insurance rebate and redirect funds to the public health system, including public hospitals".

"This anti-private health policy will not deliver one better health outcome for Australians and will increase pressure on the already stressed public hospital system. Every Australian who pulls out of private health cover will be reliant on the public system and those who remain will have to pay higher premiums," said AHIA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Michael Armitage.

"It is a myth that private health cover is for the rich. The latest statistics from the Australian Tax Office and Australian Bureau of Statistics show that of the 11.5 million Australians who have Private Health Insurance: (9.9 million have hospital cover)

- 5.6 million Australians have an income less than \$50,000 per annum
- 3.4 million Australians have an income less than \$35,000 per annum.

The private hospital system currently performs 57% of all surgical procedures in Australia.

"Any health policy which proposes to abolish the Private Health Insurance Rebate will increase pressure on public hospitals by forcing people out of the private system," said Dr Armitage.

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