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MEDIA RELEASE

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SENATE REJECTS MLS THRESHOLD BILL

“The Senate’s rejection of the Medicare Levy Surcharge (MLS) Threshold Bill is a sensible decision which will ensure Australia’s balanced public/private health system is maintained,” AHIA CEO Hon. Dr Michael Armitage said today.

“It’s good news for Australian health care; for people on public waiting lists who won’t be affected by an influx of patients leaving the private system; and for low income earners and pensioners who retain their PHI membership as a last discretionary spend and won’t be facing unnecessary premium increases as a result of this Bill.

“Fortunately, Senators recognised the negative impact the proposal would have had on both the public and private health sectors and voted down the Bill at the second reading.

“Since the MLS plan was announced in the May 2008 Budget, health consumer groups, medical practitioners, other health care associations, and the private health insurance industry have warned that the proposed changes to the MLS would have increased pressure both on the public hospital system and on private health premiums, resulting in a decline in the quality of health care available to Australians”.