



## Press Release

25<sup>th</sup> May 2016

### Greens Health Policy a Disaster for Public Health

The Greens plan to abolish the Private Health Insurance Rebate will have a disastrous impact on public hospitals and set health policy development back decades.

Private Healthcare Australia Chief Executive Dr Rachel David said the Green's ideological attack on the private health sector would have a negative impact on all Australians needing healthcare, both public and private.

"Any measure that places more people on our public hospital waiting lists is bad health policy," she said.

"Latest Government figures show that 13.4 million Australians have some form of private health insurance and by taking responsibility for their own health care they make a significant contribution to the community and reduce the pressure on public hospital waiting lists. Close to two out of three non-emergency surgeries are performed under private health cover.

"Almost half of all Australians with private health insurance have an annual income of less than \$50,000. They are not wealthy.

- More than one quarter of all people with Private Health Insurance (26.92%) have an annual income under \$30,000;
- More than three quarters of all people with PHI (77.14%) have an annual income under \$90,000;
- There are 250,000 pensioners with an annual income under \$30,000 with PHI; there are more than 125,000 retirees living off their superannuation with an annual income less than \$50,000 who have retained their PHI;
- Only 7.68% of people with PHI have annual incomes over \$150,000. (Source: ATO)

"If the Greens have any influence on healthcare policy, many Australians will be forced to drop or downgrade their health cover. Every Australian who pulls out of private health insurance will have to rely on the public hospital system and those who remain will have to pay higher premiums.

"If PHI levels fell to around pre-2000 levels, Australia would need at least 8% extra public hospital beds, plus more for population growth.

"There is no doubt the Greens plan to abolish the rebate will increase the cost of private health cover, force more Australians on to public hospital waiting lists, and will not deliver one better health outcome for Australian consumers," said Dr David.

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