

MEDIA RELEASE

Peak body for not-for-profit, member owned and community based health insurers welcomes appointment of Greg Hunt MP as Minister for Health

hirmaa, the peak body for not-for-profit, member owned and community based health insurers has welcomed Prime Minister Turnbull's appointment of Greg Hunt as Federal Health Minister.

hirmaa CEO, Matthew Koce described Mr Hunt as consistently one of the best performers in the Federal Cabinet and an excellent choice for Health Minister.

"The community should have the highest confidence in Mr Hunt. As a Minister he has always shown exceptional leadership and judgment, said Mr Koce.

"The health portfolio is incredibly complex and carries with it enormous responsibility, so naturally we are pleased that the Prime Minister has appointed an experienced and proven Minister to this very challenging role."

"Mr Hunt has an outstanding track record for listening to and engaging with diverse stakeholder groups, and the not-for-profit private health insurance sector very much looks forward to working with the new Minister to achieve tangible outcomes that benefit and enhance people's lives."

"Sustainably managing the \$63 billion the health budget, in the face of growing public hospital waiting lists, is an enormous challenge that will require innovative thinking and I am sure we will see Mr Hunt bring the same enthusiasm, passion and energy to the health portfolio that we saw him bring to his previous Ministerial roles."

"Despite annual Australian Government spending on health growing to around \$63.5 billion, public hospital waiting lists are still blowing out. Sadly, in some States, patients can wait for well over a year to receive elective surgery for painful and debilitating conditions."

"Waiting lists in the public system would be even worse if it were not for the more than 13 Million Australians with private health insurance. Thanks to private health insurance, over 40% of all procedures now occur in private hospitals, including 2 out of 3 procedures involving elective surgery. This is significantly reducing pressure on the public health system, freeing it up for those that need it most."

"Private health leverages over \$19 billion dollars in health benefits so if we are to further improve the financial sustainability of the health system, private health will necessarily have a major role to play."

"The private health insurance sector is keen to continue working with the Federal Government to help improve value for consumers, such as addressing rampant overcharging by the large multinational medical device companies, improving transparency and accountability throughout the entire health system to empower consumer choice and competition and eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic red tape that is adding to health costs."

hirmaa is the national peak body for 20 not-for-profit, member owned and community based health insurers. Private health insurers deliver close to \$19 billion dollars in benefits each year with the not-for-profit funds returning around 90 cents in the premium dollar as benefits to their policyholders.

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