

MEDIA RELEASE:

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QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST QUE CA?!**AUSTRALIANS ARE PAYING UP TO 155% MORE THAN FRENCH FOR LIFECHANGING PROSTHESES**

National not-for-profit health fund peak body, Members Health Fund Alliance, today released an urgent call to the Albanese Government to address the exorbitant cost of prostheses in Australia, with new data revealing that Australians are paying up to 155 per cent more for vital medical devices compared to overseas.

February 2025 data comparing Australian prostheses prices to France shows Australians are paying significantly more for essential items such as hip replacement components (up to 155 per cent more), coronary stents (up to 74 per cent more), and hearing implants (up to 39 per cent more).

This pricing disparity is occurring against the backdrop of a severe cost-of-living crisis, unfairly inflating the cost of surgery and driving up private health insurance premiums for millions of Australian households.

"It is simply unacceptable that Australians are being forced to pay such inflated prices for essential medical devices like prostheses. This isn't a luxury item; it's a necessity for tens of thousands of Australians" Matthew Koce, CEO of Members Health said.

"The absurdity of an Australian needing a hip replacement paying almost \$2,000 more for a component than their French counterpart or of iconic Australian company Cochlear charging Australians almost \$1,500 more for hearing implants than patients in France needs urgent government review" Mr Koce said.

Members Health asserts that outdated, manipulated, and broken regulations are the clear drivers of this unacceptable situation, pointing to successive government failures to address the issue effectively. Current reform efforts are falling drastically short, impacting only a small fraction of all prostheses.

Following the Albanese Government's re-election, Members Health is urging the Labor Government to prioritise comprehensive prostheses reform in its second term of government.

It is estimated that private health insurance consumers could save up to a billion dollars annually if prostheses prices in Australia were aligned with international standards.

To deliver tangible savings to consumers and establish a fairer system, Members Health is calling on the government to implement three critical reforms:

- **Establish Continuous Price Benchmarking:** Implement an ongoing process of comparing domestic and international prostheses prices, commencing with France. This benchmarking should extend to comparisons between Australian private and public hospitals, as well as international comparisons.
- **Legislate Mandatory Price Transparency:** Enact legislation mandating price transparency for prostheses, mirroring the successful model used for PBS-listed pharmaceuticals, to ensure public confidence in fair pricing.
- **Ban Under-the-Table Payments:** Explicitly prohibit and impose severe penalties for any under-the-table rebates, financial incentives, and kickbacks between device manufacturers and third parties, including hospitals and clinicians.

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Members Health emphasises that these straightforward reforms would immediately generate significant savings for Australian consumers.

"The Albanese Government have a golden opportunity in its second term to right this wrong. By implementing these three common-sense reforms, they can deliver real cost-of-living relief and ensure a fairer healthcare system for all Australians" Mr Koce said.

Members Health is the peak industry body for an alliance of 24 health funds that are not-for-profit or part of a member-owned group, regional or community based. They all share the common ethic of putting their members' health before profit. Our funds represent the interests of more than 5.4 million Australians.

Attachment A: sample comparing prostheses prices charged in France compared to Australia

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