

MEDIA RELEASE:

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Senators Urged to Reject Rebate Cuts That Will Leave Older Australians Paying More for Health Cover

The Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee is due to release its report tomorrow on proposed changes to the [Private Health Insurance Rebate](#) that would reduce support for older Australians.

The Members Health Fund Alliance is calling on Senators from all parties and the crossbench to oppose the proposed changes, warning they would make health cover less affordable for millions of older Australians and place additional pressure on Australia's already stretched public hospital system.

Members Health CEO Matthew Koce said the legislation would reduce important support for older Australians at a time when healthcare needs and cost-of-living pressures are increasing.

"Australians have made it abundantly clear that they do not support these cuts."

"Members Health has received more than 7,400 emails from Australians expressing deep concern about the proposal. Analysis of our campaign responses found that 81.3% foresee tangible harm from the rebate change. This includes financial pressure, dropping or downgrading insurance cover, unfair treatment of older Australians, or increased pressure on public hospitals."

"These are not just statistics. They represent thousands of older Australians who are worried about how they will continue to afford the health cover they rely upon."

Mr Koce said the changes would disproportionately impact older Australians who have maintained private health insurance for decades.

"This reform will place a greater burden on older Australians at precisely the stage of life when they need healthcare most."

"Many of these Australians have maintained private health insurance throughout their working lives because they value the security, peace of mind and access to care it provides."

"They are now facing the prospect of paying hundreds of dollars more each year to retain the cover they have relied upon for many years."

Around three million privately insured Australians aged 65 and over would be affected by the proposed changes, with around 70 per cent living on incomes of \$55,000 or less. Parliamentary Budget Office analysis has estimated the changes would cost pensioners with private health insurance around \$1.6 billion, with about 1.5 million pensioners holding private health insurance.

"For pensioners, every dollar matters."

Putting members' health before profit

"These changes come at a time when many households are already struggling with rising living costs, higher energy bills and increasing healthcare expenses.

"We have heard from retirees, pensioners and older Australians who are worried they may no longer be able to afford the cover they have maintained for years."

"Many have told us they will need to make difficult choices to keep their insurance, including cutting back on everyday household spending and essential items."

Mr Koce said the consequences would extend well beyond those directly affected.

"Healthcare needs do not disappear when private health insurance becomes less affordable."

"If people are forced to downgrade or leave private cover altogether, more patients will turn to public hospitals for treatment, increasing pressure on waiting lists and public hospital services."

"At a time when governments are looking for ways to improve access to healthcare, this proposal risks moving in exactly the opposite direction."

The rebate was originally designed to encourage participation in private health insurance and support Australia's mixed public-private healthcare system.

Mr Koce said Senators now have an opportunity to protect affordable healthcare for older Australians.

"The Senate has an important decision to make. We urge Senators to listen to the thousands of Australians who have spoken out about the impact these changes will have on their lives and vote against the legislation."

"Older Australians should not be asked to pay more for healthcare at the very time they need it most.

"These Australians have worked hard, contributed throughout their lives and planned for their retirement. They deserve certainty, choice and affordable access to healthcare."

Members Health is the nation peak body for an alliance of more than 20 health insurers that are not-for-profit or part of a member-owned group, regional or community based. They all share the common ethos of putting their members' health before profit. Our funds represent the interests of more than 5.4 million Australians.

Putting members' health before profit



Older Australians could pay more for healthcare under proposed rebate cuts

The Members Health Fund Alliance is urging Senators to reject the proposed changes to the Private Health Insurance Rebate, which would make healthcare less affordable for millions of older Australians.

Older Australians deserve certainty, not higher costs.



Who will be affected?

Around 3 million privately insured Australians aged 65 and over would be affected, with 70% living on incomes of \$55,000 or less.

About 1.5 million pensioners hold private health insurance, and the changes could cost pensioners around \$1.6 billion (Parliamentary Budget Office).



What could change?

The proposed changes would reduce the Private Health Insurance Rebate, leading to:

- Higher out-of-pocket costs for older Australians
- Financial pressure and difficult choices
- More people turning to public hospitals, increasing pressure on waiting lists and hospital services.



Australians have spoken out

Members Health received more than **7,400** emails from Australians, with **81.3%** saying they foresee tangible harm from the rebate change.

"These are not just statistics. They represent thousands of older Australians who are worried about how they will afford the healthcare they rely on."

– Matthew Koce, CEO, Members Health



The call to Senators

Members Health is urging Senators from all parties and the crossbench to oppose the changes and protect affordable healthcare for older Australians.

"The Senate has an important decision to make. We urge Senators to vote against the legislation."

– Matthew Koce, CEO, Members Health



Affordable healthcare keeps older Australians healthy, independent and out of our overstretched public hospitals.



Protect the rebate



Support older Australians



Keep our mixed public-private healthcare system strong

Vote against the rebate cuts.

Putting members' health before profit

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