



# News Release

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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## Divisions welcome new funding for primary care

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP), Australia's peak body representing the Divisions of General Practice, has welcomed the Government's commitment to more funding for primary care as part of its deal with the four Independent Senators to pass the MedicarePlus safety net legislation.

ADGP Chair Dr Rob Walters said today that the additional \$427.5 million for MedicarePlus negotiated by Senators Lees, Harris, Murphy and Harradine under the extended package provides much needed additional support for patients across Australia, particularly those with chronic and complex illnesses and serious dental problems.

"The additional funding will provide greater support for GPs to work in primary care teams, giving patients better access to a range of allied health professionals who work with the GP on care plans for patients with complex conditions," Dr Walters says.

"The lower thresholds for safety net eligibility will also assist people who have high health care needs.

"We are particularly pleased to see the inclusion of dental services conducted for and on behalf of GPs as part of this package," says Dr Walters. "GPs are often faced with patients who are suffering worsening health problems directly due to their inability to receive affordable and timely dental care."

"This issue was raised by the major GP organisations with Minister Abbott last week, and we are pleased to see that our concerns have been recognised in the extended package, said Dr Walters.

ADGP is keen to work with the allied health and dental organisations to develop appropriate processes to deliver this funding in the most effective way, to the patients who need it most.

"We are keen to see recognition of the critical role that Divisions will play in the implementation of these items. Divisions have significant experience in purchasing allied health services on behalf of general practice patients through programs such as MAHS and the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care allied health pilots, and we want to ensure that this experience and the local knowledge of Divisions is not wasted," said Dr Walters.

ADGP is also pleased to see recognition in the extended package for regional areas classified as RRMA3 under the Rural, Remote and Other Metropolitan Areas classification.

"RRMA3 areas have been largely ignored in the various rural workforce programs and the outer metropolitan workforce initiative, despite suffering similar workforce problems to more rural areas. Providing these areas with access to the Rural Locum Relief Program and Rural Other Medical Practitioners Programs is a definite step in the right direction, said Dr Walters.

"We must ensure, however, that resources are not merely redirected from current programs, and that any implementation plan for the additional programs takes into account existing initiatives."

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