



Australian  
Divisions of  
General Practice  
Ltd.

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **ADGP releases Federal Budget Submission 2003-04** ***Investing in the future through primary health care***

A strengthened general practice sector, an increase in GP numbers and a re-orientation of Australia's health system towards primary health care are the key features of the Federal Budget Submission 2003-04 from the Australian Divisions of General Practice, released today by ADGP Chair, Dr Rob Walters.

"ADGP's Federal Budget Submission 2003-04 focuses on increasing Australia's investment in primary health care to achieve a high quality and efficient health system that meets the needs of all Australians," Dr Walters said.

"There is no doubt that Australia's primary health care sector is ailing. GPs are struggling to meet the demands of their communities with inadequate resources. The value of the Medicare rebate has declined in real terms to the point where many GPs find it financially unviable to bulk bill. GP workforce shortages, endemic in rural and regional areas for many years, have now moved into the outer metropolitan regions of capital cities.

"ADGP's Budget Submission calls for a significant additional investment in Australia's primary health care sector and a re-orienting of our health system towards primary care. This must include an increase in the number of GPs and additional resources enabling GPs to work in primary care teams with practice nurses and allied health professionals," Dr Walters said.

ADGP's Budget Submission focuses on a number of strategies to support general practice and Divisions to improve access and quality of care. These include:

- an expansion of the Practice Nurse Program;
- increased linkages between GPs and aged care homes;
- support for a primary care early childhood agenda;
- a national allied health program run through Divisions;
- increased resourcing for Divisions to build capacity and engage in research;
- a national GP-hospital liaison program to link general practice with hospitals; and
- additional funding for GP patient rebates, particularly longer, more complex GP consultations.

"ADGP is also advocating for better coordination of health policy and funding across Commonwealth/State programs, including quarantined primary care funding through the Australian Health Care Agreements," Dr Walters said.

"ADGP strongly believes that all levels of government need to articulate a commitment to reducing cost-shifting and to increasing their investment in primary health care.

"ADGP's Federal Budget Submission 2003-04 articulates our vision for a health system that delivers high quality primary care to all Australians," Dr Walters said.

*For comment:*

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***Copies of ADGP's Federal Budget Submission can be obtained from ADGP on 02 6228 0800***