

Australian Medical Association Limited

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**BUDGET MUST PROVIDE ‘STIMULUS PACKAGE’ FOR HEALTH
AMA Federal Budget Submission 2010-11**

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said today that the May Federal Budget must provide a significant ‘stimulus package’ for the Australian health system.

Releasing the AMA’s Federal Budget Submission, Dr Pesce said the health system is in desperate need of strategic investment across the whole range of programs and services – from primary care to hospitals to mental health and Indigenous health.

Dr Pesce said the AMA has identified the elements of the health system in most urgent need of reform and is offering the Government real solutions to real problems.

“Health should be a priority for the Government in an election year Budget,” Dr Pesce said.

“We need to improve productivity in the health system, place a greater focus on people and their health needs, and improve the safety and quality of health care.

“First, there must be funding for the Prime Minister’s promise to fix our hospitals, and there must be funding for the reforms necessary to fix other areas of our ailing health system.

“The AMA has identified key sectors that need immediate attention. These include Indigenous health, mental health, general practice, sub-acute care, long term care for people with serious disabilities, medical training, rural and remote health, and e-Health.

“The AMA is calling for the Commonwealth to be the single public funder for public hospitals and the Budget must reflect the processes and funding necessary for this major reform.

“Our proposal involves retaining local governance arrangements for the hospitals.

“The Commonwealth should also be the single public funder for primary care and aged care.

“In our submission, we are also calling on the Government to use the Budget to support GP Practice Nurses, preventative health, Medicare Easyclaim, temporary resident international medical graduates, and pre-vocational and specialist medical training through the new Health Workforce Australia Agency.

“The AMA Budget Submission provides the Government with a plan to fix our hospitals and set the health system up for the current and future growing demand for quality accessible health services.

“Our plan is simple, it is immediate, it is affordable, it is practical, it is common sense – and it should be funded in this year’s Budget,” Dr Pesce said.

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CONTACT: John Flannery
Peter Jean

02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
02 6270 5464 / 0427 209 753