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MEDIA RELEASE

TONY ABBOTT - THE COALITION'S POLICY TO SUPPORT AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM

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The Coalition's *Policy to Support Australia's Health System* will tackle chronic diseases, provide faster access to newly approved medicines, invest in Australia's medical workforce and prepare the health system for the demographic changes ahead.

Click here to read our policy.

A healthier Australia means a stronger and more productive Australia.

The last Coalition government delivered a world class health system underpinned by a growing, strong economy. The Coalition has the experience to deliver real changes to our health system and to ensure those changes are sustainable into the long term.

The Coalition's *Policy to Support Australia's Health System* will:

- Deliver greater community involvement in the management and responsibility of local hospitals;
- Restore the independence of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) and restore integrity to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing process so that medicines can get to patients faster;
- Provide the Health Minister with authority to list medicines recommended by the PBAC that do not cost more than \$20 million in any of the first four years of its listing;
- Bring forward the proposed roll-out of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme;
- Develop a new National Diabetes Strategy as well as provide \$35 million to find a cure for Type One Diabetes;
- Restore the Private Health Insurance Rebate as soon as we responsibly can;
- Deliver a more efficient funding model for hospitals through activity-based funding

- Strengthen primary care by providing \$52.5 million to expand existing general practices for teaching and supervision and invest \$119 million to double the practice incentive payment for teaching in general practice;
- Provide 500 additional nursing and allied health scholarships for students and health professionals in areas of need as well as \$40 million for 400 medical internships;
- Review the Medicare Locals structure to ensure that funding is being spent to support frontline services.

Our approach to health will be careful, collegial and consultative. We will work with the states and territories in delivering a world class health system.

By contrast, Kevin Rudd's own former health minister described his approach to health reform as "cynical" and potentially "a disaster".

With demand for health services expected to grow, we want to direct more resources to the frontline and remove unnecessary bureaucracy. We believe this is possible as the Commonwealth now has 18 separate health agencies in addition to the Department of Health.

Our approach to direct more resources to the frontline is in stark contrast to the \$1.6 billion in cuts – some of which were retrospective – with which Labor hit our state hospitals.

By cutting waste, streamlining bureaucracy and providing strong and competent leadership, we can then provide much-needed resources to areas such as the provision of dental services to disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community.

The Coalition has a proud record of strong and capable leadership in health.

As part of the last Coalition government, we delivered a Medicare Safety Net, a four-fold increase in medical research funding, a strong private health insurance industry that took pressure off the public system, a Medicare dental scheme for those with a chronic disease and the largest investment in mental health in Australian history at the time.

The best guarantee for a strong and sustainable health system is proper management of the budget and the economy by a government that can live within its means. Only the Coalition has demonstrated it can deliver this.

The Coalition's *Policy to Support Australia's Health System* is part of our *Real Solutions Plan* to build a stronger Australia and a better future for all Australians.

Authorised by Brian Loughnane, Liberal Party of Australia, Cnr Blackall & Macquarie Streets, Barton ACT 2600