

HANDS OFF MEDICARE!

We get sick & we vote!

FACT SHEET 4

Medicare
undermined

Health care for all a thing of the past

The Howard government is destroying Medicare. The rhetoric is that Medicare is being maintained (or indeed enhanced) but don't be conned! The reality is something very different. Think about your health when you vote in the upcoming federal election. Do you want the risk of relying on a safety net? Vote for a politician who will really defend and extend Medicare.

Medicare Principle	Impact of Howard government policy
<p>✓ Universality All people have the same access to health care</p>	<p>✗ Doctors will be only provided with incentives to bulk bill pensioners, children and those living in certain geographical areas. Minister Abbott says bulk billing was never meant to be for all, that Medicare is not about "free trips to the doctor".</p>
<p>✓ Access Access to care is based on health needs not ability to pay</p>	<p>✗ Out of pocket health expenses have increased under the Howard government while universal bulk billing rates have plummeted. Increasingly your access to health care is being determined by your earning capacity. If you can't afford the co-payment to your doctor you either don't go at all or delay going, or go to a public hospital emergency department.</p>
<p>✓ Equity Funding is provided through the general taxation system including a Medicare levy based on income, and there is no or little cost at point of service</p>	<p>✗ The government is increasingly shifting the cost on to the "user" of health services. Tax cuts offered by the Howard government reinforce the belief that health care is an individual rather than collective responsibility paid for by everyone through the tax system. Out of pocket expenses have sky rocketed and are tipped to continue to do so given the inflationary effects of safety nets. The importance of this fundamental philosophical shift cannot be over emphasised.</p>
<p>✓ Efficiency Administrative costs and overheads are kept low: collecting funds through the taxation system (rather than individual payment at point of service), bulk billing and limited advertising</p>	<p>✗ The dual system of Medicare and multiple private health is confusing and inefficient. The yearly \$2.3 billion 30% rebate for private health insurance is an inefficient use of public funding that does not ease the pressure on the public health system. Administrative costs of private health insurance funds are around four times those for Medicare. Millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent advertising changes to Medicare.</p>
<p>✓ Simplicity No complicated insurance plans and easy claims process</p>	<p>✗ The multiple safety nets of <i>Medicare Plus</i>, especially its link to the Family Tax Package Part A arrangement make the system a logistical and administrative nightmare. The failure of past complicated health safety nets was the major reason for the implementation of Medicare.</p>



Speak out for the good of your health. Tell your friends how much Medicare means to you.



Let your Federal MP know how much you care! Visit www.aph.gov.au to find out your MP's contact details. Write a letter to your local newspaper.



For further information and campaign materials go to the QNU website (<http://www.qnu.org.au>) or contact the QNU on 07 3840 1444.



Join your union or community group to participate in the Hands Off Medicare campaign. To find out which union or community group you can join, visit www.qnu.org.au.

