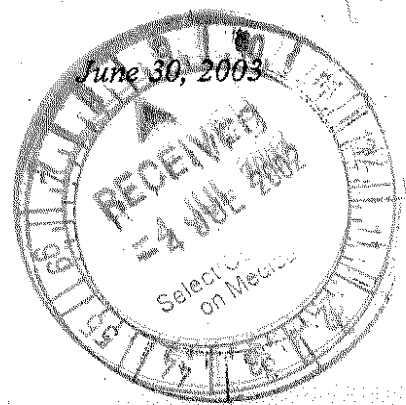


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From: The National Association of MUA Veterans

C/
MUA
406 - 408 King Street
Newcastle West
NSW 2302

To: The Select Committee on Medicare

We would like to take this opportunity to remind the members of the Select Committee that the Medicare scheme was designed to address the primary health care needs of all Australians regardless of their social status, religious beliefs, or economic circumstances. Furthermore, when compared with other OECD countries, the Medicare scheme has over the past twenty years, delivered efficient health outcomes to both the Australian patients and their government.

It is our view then, that the Howard government has the power and the responsibility to retain Medicare as a universal scheme that looks after the primary health needs of every Australian.

To meet its responsibilities the government will need to negotiate new guidelines with the medical profession. Those negotiations must involve the retention of bulk billing with a fee structure agreeable to both parties as well as a process through which general practitioners can be better dispersed throughout the country.

We would also welcome the reintroduction of a federally funded dental health service as a positive step in the quality of life of the less well off in the Australian community.

To fund these new arrangements it is proposed that the taxpayers' monies allocated to the private health funds be redirected to the operation of Medicare. Should these funds prove insufficient, it would then fall on the government to raise the Medicare levy to meet its obligations. A tax increase that most Australians would not find inconvenient.

To divide the patients as the government is proposing, between health care card holders and those who will have to produce a supplementary payment, will certainly unhinge the cornerstone on which the Medicare scheme is built. Moreover, by implementing this proposal the government will divest itself of its control on the cost of health delivery and as such, of its responsibilities to the Australian people. Such a situation could only bear negatively on the Australian community.

Yours sincerely,

W Bodenham

Bill Bodenham, President.