

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Health groups call for leading in healthcare funding**

A wide range of health advocacy organisations have joined together today to call on the Government and Parliament to show leadership in relation to health funding, and ensure that decisions take into account the health of everyone in the community, particularly the most vulnerable.

“Good health is a fundamental building block to the well-being of individuals, communities and the economy. There is a need for considered and evidence based approaches to healthcare funding and services,” CEO of ACOSS, Dr Cassandra Goldie said today while launching the statement.

“Community organisations with a deep interest in health are growing increasingly alarmed about the significant changes that are being proposed in the area of health, without significant community discussion about the implications, particularly on those who are most vulnerable and most likely to be impacted by changes such as the proposed GP co-payment.

“Organisations who have signed up to today’s statement remain opposed to any form of GP co-payment, even one with exemptions as this does not go far enough to ensure that those who most need healthcare are not faced with cost barriers.

“Any changes in healthcare funding needs to protect those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Current proposals on the table do not adequately address the impacts on groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those with chronic illness, and older members of our community. We also know that those who are poorer are more likely to be sick. So, it is those who are least likely to be able to afford it who are going to be most impacted by measures such as new or increased co-payments.

“In addition to proposals such as the GP co-payment, and increases to the co-payment for PBS medicines, there are other adverse changes being made through the budget, such as the reduction of funding to health promotion and preventative health. It’s hard to see how this will help improve people’s health and take off pressure in the health system.

“There is strong evidence that supports investing in preventive health as the most long-term, cost effective and ethical approach to maintaining and improving Australia’s universal health care system. Investing in a healthy Australia takes strong leadership and a vision for a better future for all people and communities in Australia.

“The groups who have come together today stand ready to work with Government to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the health system. We call on the Government and the Parliament to focus on evidence, and not be tempted to introduce short term fixes to expenditure which will only cost more in the long term,” Dr Goldie concluded.

A copy of the statement and signatories can be found [here](#)