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## Labor's Budget reply: some steps in the right direction for patients

**The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association has welcomed Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's commitment that a Labor Government would improve access to some vital radiology services.**

In his Budget reply in Canberra tonight, Mr Shorten committed to invest in 20 more MRI licences at hospitals and imaging centres in regions and outer suburban areas.

"There are communities in Australia with inadequate access to MRI, which is the gold standard in the diagnosis of cancers and many other conditions," ADIA President **Dr Siavash Es'haghi** said.

"It is essential that all Australians have affordable access to the same level of first-class healthcare.

"The new MRI licences promised by Mr Shorten will help address this, and we welcome Labor's commitment.

"However, this is only part of the job that needs to be done on fixing Medicare.

"If Labor is truly committed to Medicare, it needs to announce that it will end the 20-year freeze on patient rebates for vital x-rays and scans.

"With average gaps for radiology services now at \$100 and close to \$200 for MRI, our politicians are creating a two-tiered health system – one for the haves, and one for the have nots. And we know that there are now 300,000 Australians every year are not getting the scans they've been referred by their GP or specialist because they simply don't have the money.

"So, while tonight's announcement of 20 new MRI licences is good news, much more needs to be done before patients can celebrate."

*ADIA represents radiology practices throughout Australia, both in the community and in hospitals. It promotes the ongoing development of quality accreditation standards and appropriate funding settings so that Australians can have affordable access to quality radiology services. This supports radiology's central role in the diagnosis, treatment and management of a broad range of conditions in every branch of medicine.*

**For interviews, please call Kristy McSweeney on 0415 740 722**