

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017

## 2017 BUDGET: GOVERNMENT BREAKS RADIOLOGY PROMISE, IGNORES MAJOR HEALTH POLICY PROBLEMS

CANBERRA: The Federal Government's pre-budget health announcements (in today's *Australian Financial Review*) break a major pre-election promise and ignore a critical issue facing millions of Australian patients.

In June 2016, the Turnbull Government publicly promised to reverse 19 years of history and unfreeze Medicare rebates specifically to reduce patient costs for MRIs, x-rays, CT scans and ultrasounds.

The Government's promise would have cost just \$60 million a year for the next four years and was linked to a commitment to unfreeze Medicare rebates for GP visits.

**"The Coalition will ensure that diagnostic imaging indexation resumes when the current GP rebate indexation freeze concludes"** ('The Turnbull Coalition Team' Media Release, 5 June 2016: <https://www.liberal.org.au/latestnews/2016/06/05/coalition-plan-access-affordable-diagnostic-imaging-all-australians>)

However, today's revelations confirm a broken promise – Scott Morrison's budget will put life-saving radiology services further out of reach for millions of Australian patients.

ADIA President **Dr Christian Wriedt** said:

"Radiology saves lives – it's critical in diagnosing and monitoring treatment in every one of the top 35 cancers in Australia – but this Government apparently believes it's only for people who can afford it.

"The average gap for radiology patients is already \$100 and around 300,000 Australians are deciding to forgo vital diagnosis every year because they think it's too expensive. Their diseases will get worse with this delay.

"We had a commitment from this Government – a promise made in black and white, in their own language – and they've broken that promise to fix 19 years of inequality in our health system in favour of window dressing.

"The Prime Minister himself said in a media conference after announcing his commitment to radiology that '*We have to do more to reaffirm the faith of the Australian people in our commitment to health and to Medicare*'.

"So where is that commitment for radiology and the health of patients?"

(more)

# Press release



For more information and supporting facts, please visit the [ADIA web site](#).

*The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) represents the 500 radiology practices around the country providing the scans and services essential to patient care.*

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