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## **MRI “arms race” masking the real issue facing patients**

**Today’s commitment by the Coalition Government to 30 new MRI licences – which ups the Opposition’s promise of 20 – is masking the real issue facing millions of Australian patients.**

The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association President **Dr Siavash Es’haghi** said MRI had become “a political football”.

“MRI is amazing technology that needs to be readily available to specialists and GPs throughout Australia to diagnose and treat conditions for their patients. It is the ‘gold standard’ in radiology; however, it is often the most expensive for patients.

“But in Australia we restrict access to it and, at every election, we see the major parties exchange MRI licences for votes.

**“Medicare rebates for scans are 20 years behind where they should be for Australian patients, who are facing out-of-pocket costs averaging \$100 for radiology services.**

“It is therefore extremely disappointing that our politicians are not dealing with the fact that many Australians can’t access or afford the scans they need to determine that they need an MRI. The Coalition promised in writing to reverse the freeze on patient rebates prior to the last election – a clear promise that was about making all scans on Medicare more accessible and affordable and one that it has not kept.

“Already there are 300,000 Australians who are forgoing treatment every year because of cost. So, if you can’t afford access to services like x-rays and ultrasounds, announcements around more MRI licences is going to do nothing to reduce your hip-pocket pain.

**“This MRI arms race between Labor and the Coalition is just political window dressing.”**

Dr Es’haghi said there should also be a transparent process in place to ensure that all Australians can access MRI services, not just those in politically important electorates.

*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. READ ABOUT ADIA’S ONGOING CAMPAIGN TO END THE FREEZE ON MEDICARE REBATES [HERE](#).*

**For interviews, please call Phil Martin on 0418 817 876**