

RADIOLOGY: SENATE INQUIRY DOESN'T GO FAR ENOUGH

Radiology practices have welcomed today's announcement of a Senate Inquiry into availability and accessibility of diagnostic imaging but have warned it does not go far enough.

ADIA President **Dr Christian Wriedt** said the inquiry was "well intentioned" but still fundamentally ignores the biggest problem facing Australian patients.

"It's all very well to talk about accessibility and availability, but if we're not talking about affordability then we're wasting our time," he said.

"Over the past 10 years, out-of-pocket costs for patients have doubled and that means, of all the primary care services, radiology is by far the hardest to access – with the **highest** upfront cost, the **highest** patient gaps and the **lowest** bulk billing rate.

"This inequality is undermining our system of primary care which doesn't work unless patients can access radiology.

"The only thing that will reduce what patients pay is if the Government reverses almost 20 years of inaction and invests properly in Medicare.

"ADIA welcomes the Senate Inquiry, but reforms to improve affordable access to radiology can't wait any longer. Why have a review that doesn't consider the biggest issue confronting patients – underfunding of Medicare rebates?

"It is time for politicians to stop using primary care services under Medicare as a political football. The 19-year freeze on patient rebates for radiology needs to end when the GP freeze ends next July.

"Both parties need to get serious if Medicare is to mean anything. The Coalition needs to govern, and Labor needs to be true to its commitment to Medicare."

Primary Care Services:

	Radiology	General practice	Pathology
Average upfront cost	\$217	\$78	\$50
Average gap	\$97	\$33	\$25
Bulk billing rate	77%	84%	88%

*Source: ADIA analysis of 2015-16 Medicare statistics

Media: Phil Martin, Michels Warren PR on 0418 817 876