

## Budget backs radiographers and highlights importance of medical imaging

A Budget measure that will ensure critical radiology services are delivered to the highest standards has been described as both 'sensible and responsible' by the peak body representing private medical imaging practices across Australia.

The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) has welcomed last night's announcement of a Medicare Benefits Schedule requirement that all x-rays, fluoroscopies and angiograms are performed by a qualified radiographer.

"ADIA agrees with the Federal Health Minister that Medicare eligible x-rays must be performed by radiographers or other health professionals with equivalent qualifications," said President of ADIA, Dr Sue Ulreich.

"It is essential that x-rays are carried out by appropriately qualified professionals who have the training to produce high quality medical images with as low a dose of radiation as possible," Dr Ulreich said.

Dr Ulreich described the budget measure requiring minimum qualifications as "sensible and responsible".

Dr Ulreich said that while there remains an urgent need for indexation of Medicare rebates for diagnostic and medical imaging services, "the measures announced last night were fair and well-targeted."

Medicare rebates for diagnostic imaging services have not been indexed for 14 years and are 20 to 30 per cent below actual private practice costs.

"The sickest members of the community pay the most, with gap payments made by patients now exceeding \$300 million a year. The chronic underfunding of radiology and the need for indexation of Medicare rebates for medical imaging must be addressed in next year's Budget," Dr Ulreich said.

ADIA represents private diagnostic imaging practices in Australia. They diagnose and treat 50,000 patients every day and operate 80% of the comprehensive practices providing services to patients in rural and regional Australia. ADIA members are both for-profit and charitable and operate practices in the community and in public and private hospitals in Australia.

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