



# CATHOLIC HEALTH Australia

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Catholic Health Australia congratulates new Ministers for Health and Indigenous Health and Aged Care**

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) congratulates Hon Greg Hunt MP and Hon Ken Wyatt MP, today appointed Minister for Health and Sport and Minister for Indigenous Health and Aged Care respectively.

CHA looks forward to working with Minister Hunt and continuing to work with Minister Wyatt and the Turnbull Government to ensure that all Australians have equitable access to timely, affordable and quality health and aged care services, regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location.

“Former Health Minister Sussan Ley demonstrated a sincere willingness to work constructively with key health organisations towards improving the nation’s health system,” said Suzanne Greenwood, Catholic Health Australia’s CEO.

“Ley initiated a number of crucial reviews during her time as Health Minister, and with advice from key stakeholders including that of Catholic Health Australia, the outcomes from these reviews will move health provision in Australia towards a system more focused on consumer needs and patient-centred care,” said Mrs Greenwood.

“It is important for the new Ministers to recognise that although Australians generally enjoy good health in comparison to most other countries, there are many groups that are still missing out, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, those who live in rural and remote areas, come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those who suffer from mental health or dental health conditions. Much remains to be done to improve the health outcomes and health equity of all Australians,” said Mrs Greenwood.

“Most people will encounter illness at some stage in their lives and particularly as they age. We have to ensure that when people do need the health system, it is effective, accessible and affordable. This needs to be done within a framework that recognises the pre-eminence of the wider social environment on determining health outcomes,” stated Mrs Greenwood.

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“Medicare must be sustainable if it is to survive into the future. The Medicare Benefits Schedule Review needs to continue its work in addressing low-value procedures and to ensure that items are appropriately remunerated. In some cases this will mean reducing or removing public subsidy. In others, it may mean increasing the fee,” said Mrs Greenwood.

“Many people seek to contribute to their health care needs through purchasing private health insurance. We have to ensure that private health insurance products are fit-for-purpose and understandable for consumers. If not, they should not be sold,” said Mrs Greenwood.

“We welcome the government’s intention to make sure the cover a consumer thinks they are purchasing is the cover they actually get,” Mrs Greenwood added. “If we want to see a turn-around in the number of people taking up private health insurance, then increased transparency around insurance products must be the first step towards restoring consumer confidence.”

“We look forward to working with Minister Hunt and the Turnbull Government as it seeks to reform this critical piece of the health system.”

CHA hopes that research and development work identified in the Government’s Aged Care Sector Committee’s Aged Care Roadmap will continue to be undertaken under the leadership of Minister for Indigenous Health and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt.

“The Aged Care Roadmap identifies the steps required to enable a phased transition to a consumer-driven, market-based and sustainable aged care service industry,” said Mrs Greenwood.

“The Roadmap’s recommendations for reform would present consumers with greater choice and control over where they live while receiving care and the services they receive, and service providers would have greater flexibility to respond to consumer needs and preferences.”

*Catholic Health Australia represents Australia’s largest non-government grouping of hospitals, aged and community care services, providing approximately 10 per cent of hospital and aged care services in Australia, including around 30 per cent of private hospital care as well as Approximately 5 per cent of public hospital care.*