

THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM

CCHQ 2016



28 June 2016

Ms Kelly Banister
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Women's Health Network
PO Box 188
Drysdale VIC 3222

Dear Ms Banister

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. On behalf of the Coalition Members of Parliament and candidates I am pleased to respond to your survey.

Australia's future depends on how well we can continue to grow and shape our economy.

Only the Liberal and National Parties have an **economic plan** to do that and ensure Australia's future.

We have a clear plan to transition the economy from the mining and investment boom to a stronger and more diverse economy.

The key elements of our national economic plan for jobs and growth are:

- An Innovation and Science programme bringing Australian ideas to market. This means greater investment and more jobs and opportunities for our young people;
- A New Defence Industry plan that will secure an advanced defence manufacturing industry in Australia. This will create thousands of new hi-tech, higher paying jobs;
- Export Trade Deals that will generate more than 19,000 new export opportunities. These will create many more jobs for our urban and regional families;
- New Tax Incentives, which will include tax cuts for more small businesses. More than two million businesses can benefit, to deliver more growth and jobs; and
- A Strong New Economy with more than 200,000 jobs expected to be created.

Our national economic plan and management is already paying dividends. Last year our economy continued to grow creating almost 300,000 new jobs, many of them in small business.

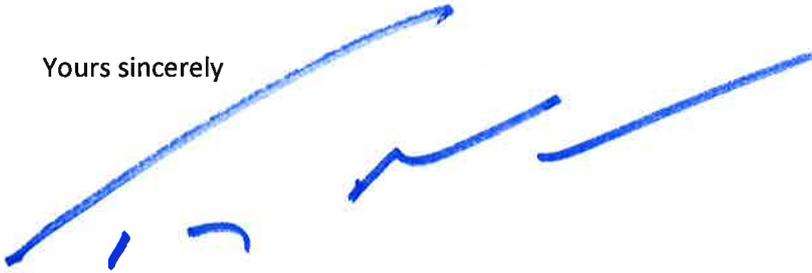
We cannot put economic growth and the jobs that come with it at risk with a return to Labor and their debt and deficits, high taxing, big spending ideas.

Only a Liberal and National Party Government can protect Australia's future.

Once announced, our policies will be available at www.liberal.org.au and www.nationals.org.au.

Thank you for communicating the Coalition's commitments to your members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several connected strokes that form the name 'Tony Nutt'.

Tony Nutt
National Campaign Director

COALITION RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK

The Turnbull Coalition is committed to ensuring all women can take advantage of opportunities for better health and health care.

We have a world class health system and need to ensure it is sustainable for our children and grandchildren. This is underpinned by strong Medicare, public hospital and private health care. The Turnbull Coalition is committed to this system which works well and is the envy of many other countries.

The Coalition is providing over \$71 billion in health funding this year, with funding increases every year. But the only way we can pay for health care into the future is by having a strong economy, jobs and growth. The Turnbull Coalition is the only party with a plan to pay for our future health needs.

Public hospitals

We are supporting the State and Territory Governments to provide public hospital care. The Turnbull Government funding for hospitals will exceed \$95 billion over 5 years, an increase of 23 per cent.

This funding includes an additional \$2.9 billion to States and Territories from 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 under an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in April 2016. The agreement links funding to quality patient care and safety, reduced avoidable readmissions and better coordinated primary care for people with complex and chronic conditions.

The new hospitals agreement preserves activity based funding and the national efficient price, with growth in Commonwealth funding capped at 6.5 per cent a year.

Medicare

The Coalition Government is increasing funding every year for Medicare. This year we are investing over \$22 billion in Medicare, over \$1 billion more than last year.

Under the Turnbull Government, bulk-billing rates are the highest they have ever been. GP bulk-billing is nearly 85 per cent compared to an average of 79 per cent under Labor. This means that more people than ever before are seeing a GP without having to pay anything.

We are committed to Medicare and need to ensure this system is there for our children and their children. That is why we are working to build a *Healthier Medicare* and maintain high quality care and treatment for all Australians.

The Turnbull Government is not privatising Medicare.

Medicare will never be privatised. Medicare will never be sold. Every element of Medicare services that is being delivered by Government today will be delivered by Government in the future.

Health Care Homes

The Coalition has announced changes to primary health care which are amongst the most significant reforms to Medicare since it was introduced.

Under our innovative Health Care Homes model of chronic care, the Coalition is putting patients with chronic and complex illnesses at the centre of care. GPs are being given the flexibility to work together with patients to coordinate and plan their care, to try and keep them at home and out of hospital.

This initiative provides a 'home base' where patients with complex and chronic conditions can voluntarily enrol. The Health Care Home will then coordinate and tailor care to ensure patients receive integrated care across settings such as general practice and allied health to make it easier to navigate the system. Homes will assess and enrol patients according to their level of risk and deliver enhanced treatment and patient engagement, and will include general practices and Aboriginal Medical Services.

The Coalition will conduct trials for about 65,000 Australians in up to 200 primary care practices from 1 July 2017. In addition to \$21 million implementation funding, from 1 July 2017 a re-elected Turnbull Government will commit about \$100 million to help fund the coordinated care packages to support patients and their treatment.

The payment system for patients enrolled in a Health Care Home will also change, with the introduction of quarterly bundled payments to general practices. This change will provide clinicians with the flexibility to accommodate regional differences and individual patient needs.

Medicines

Only the Coalition has a plan to make medicines more available and cheaper and we have the track record to prove it.

In our first three years of Government, nearly 1,000 new medicines worth \$4.4 billion were approved for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Compare that to the 331 new medicines in Labor's last three years. Under the Coalition Government, all Australians have had access to three times as many new medicines – not just those who can afford to pay.

In 2014, the Coalition listed Bevacizumab (Avastin) for certain women with late-stage ovarian, fallopian or primary peritoneal cancer at a cost of \$63.5 million. Without PBS subsidy, this medicine would cost around \$40,000 per patient.

In 2015, we listed Pertuzumab (Perjeta), Trastuzumab (Herceptin) and Ado-trastuzumab (Kadcyla) for breast cancer at a cost of \$191 million combined. Without PBS subsidy these treatments would cost around \$82,000 per patient.

In 2016, the Coalition listed Pembrolizumab (Keytruda) for melanoma at a cost of \$57 million. Without PBS subsidy, this treatment would cost around \$150,000 per patient.

Each of these life-saving treatments can now be accessed for just \$38.30 for general patients and \$6.20 for concessional patients. Under the Coalition, the cost of many expensive combination medicines and patent-protected drugs on the PBS have been reduced – by as much as \$20.

The Coalition Government also introduced reforms to allow pharmacists to offer a discount of up to \$1 on PBS co-payments, reducing costs for many patients and helping to increase competition.

Unlike Labor, the Coalition has a plan for the PBS and we will continue to work closely with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to keep prices low. We have reformed the PBS to make sure patients have access to affordable medicines and ensure that subsidies are sustainable in the future.

Mental Health

The Coalition is investing in the mental health of all Australians to ensure a stronger economy through workforce participation with greater opportunity for better lives for Australians living with mental health challenges.

We are committed to reform that puts the needs of individuals at the centre of our mental health system and involves our newly established Primary Health Networks (PHNs) in planning, commissioning and integrating services at a regional level. The key elements of the reforms are:

- coordinated packages of care for people with severe and complex needs, and flexible support for mild and moderate needs;
- a new model of commissioning mental health services through PHNs that allow communities to decide on the services that best suit their needs;
- a new approach to suicide prevention, co-ordinated by PHNs;
- a new Digital Mental Health Gateway to optimise online support and navigation to clinical services; and
- better access to culturally sensitive mental health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In addition, the Turnbull Coalition's *Plan to Strengthen Mental Health Care in Australia* will invest an additional \$192 million in mental health reform. This package includes:

- \$26 million for 10 PHN lead sites (and an additional \$7 million for four PHN lead sites focussed on suicide prevention) to be champions of mental health reform. In 2016-17 the lead sites will establish regional service pathways, demonstrate models of stepped care (where the level of care is matched to severity of illness), and explore the use of digital technology to provide important support for individuals.

- \$24 million for 8 suicide prevention trial sites, with a total of 12 suicide prevention trial sites including 4 PHN lead sites. These trial sites will focus on community-based approaches to suicide prevention including education, service integration, effective post-discharge follow up and the application of digital technology.
- \$12 million for a new Suicide Prevention Research Fund and Best Practice Hub to support targeted research and evaluation, and support the PHNs in their role.
- Guaranteed funding for *headspace*.
- Guaranteed funding for six youth early psychosis services until 2019.
- \$20 million for an additional 10 *headspace* centres, bringing the total to 110, with a focus on additional services in rural and regional areas.
- \$30 million for 21st century digital technologies to support mental health reforms.
- \$2.5 million to Lifeline to trial a Crisis Text service.
- The independent National Mental Health Commission to oversee and report annually on the progress and implementation of important mental health reforms.

A Coalition Government understands the impact of depression, anxiety and poor mental health on both individuals and our productivity as a nation, is significant.

Our mental health reforms will result in better personalised support and care, greater opportunity and better lives for Australians.

Suicide Prevention

The Coalition is committed to suicide prevention.

We are working to better understand the social and economic factors that have contributed to recent increases, and to empower each of our communities to respond locally.

As part of our mental health reforms, we have committed to a new National Suicide Prevention Strategy to address the current fragmented approach to suicide prevention.

The Strategy will include funding for national suicide prevention leadership and support activities, including anti-stigma and awareness campaigns plus crisis support services.

The Strategy involves our PHNs commissioning community based suicide prevention activities. This will focus on integrating services at the local level including effective post-discharge follow up and the need to refocus efforts to prevent suicide in Indigenous communities.

Four of our PHN lead sites located in Queensland (Brisbane North), New South Wales (North Coast), Victoria (North Western Melbourne) and Western Australia (Perth South), will be focussed on new collaborative approaches to community based suicide prevention.

In addition to these four sites, the Coalition will provide an additional \$24 million over three years to fund a further eight regional trial sites in identified priority areas, including at least two remote Indigenous regions, Tasmania and regional South Australia.

With key national partners – such as the Black Dog Institute, *beyondblue*, *headspace* and other stakeholders – these trials will bring the best evidence-based strategies, models and digital technologies together to better target people at risk of suicide and ensure a more integrated, regionally-based approach.

We will also provide \$3 million over three years to support the consistent evaluation of the 12 regional suicide prevention trials around Australia and to assess their impact.

The Coalition is committed to reducing suicide rates through regional trials, research and building the evidence base to develop flexible models that address regional needs and work in our local communities. Experts have told us this is the only way we can make an impact.

New ways to deliver health services

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) have been established nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes.

Flexible funding is provided to enable PHNs to respond to identified national priorities as determined by the Government, and to respond to PHN specific priorities by purchasing and commissioning required services. Where specific issues related to women's health are identified as a priority in a PHN region, PHNs will have a role in working with general practitioners and other health professionals, to help them improve the coordination and integration of primary health care services for women.

Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage

The Turnbull Coalition is committed to closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, including women's health, with funding and programmes to address chronic disease. The Coalition has prioritised investment in clinical health services, alongside investments to address the social determinants of health such as school education, employment and housing.

In addition, the Coalition has initiated the *Better Start to Life* approach which includes funding to expand the *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Service* and *Australian Nurse Family Partnership*.

Rural and Remote Women's Health

The challenges for women living in rural and remote communities are different from women living in our cities, due to a range of factors including poorer access to services and lower socio-economic status. The Rural Health Outreach Fund provides a flexible funding pool to help improve access to medical specialists and general practitioners including female GPs and allied and other health providers.

Specific investments for women's health

The Turnbull Coalition is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all women in Australia. We are implementing policies and programmes to ensure our health system is more responsive to women, including:

- *Healthier Medicare* reforms and Health Care Homes in general practice to support women living with multiple complex and chronic illnesses;
- mental health reforms to ensure Australian women have access to high quality mental health services, advice and resources when and where they need them, and women with severe and complex mental illness can access integrated care packages tailored to their individual needs;
- \$34.1 million in 2015-16 for the Rural Health Outreach Fund;
- support and funding for a range of family planning organisations and national bodies to promote women's choice and access to sexual and reproductive health services, including Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australian (PANDA), Miscarriage Stillbirth and Newborn Death Support (Sands Australia), SIDS and Kids Australia and the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline and web service;
- endorsing the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy to address the protection, promotion, support and monitoring of breastfeeding in the community, and funding for a national toll-free 24-hour breastfeeding helpline;
- \$1.4 billion over three years from 2015-16 to provide Indigenous specific primary health care under the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme;
- \$54 million from 2015-16 to 2017-18 for the expansion of the New Directions: Mothers and Babies Service;
- \$40 million from 2015-16 to 2017-18 for the expansion of the Australian New Family Partnership programme;
- free vaccinations for eligible women at various stages of life, including during pregnancy, under the National Immunisation Programme;
- screening programmes for breast, bowel and cervical cancers to support early detection, effective management and follow-up treatment;
- \$55.7 million in 2013-14 over four years to expand the BreastScreen Australia programme for women aged 70-74 years to participate in breast screening;
- \$3 million for two new Medicare listings for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the breast and MRI-guided biopsies to help women with occult and suspected breast cancer;
- \$18.5 million to the McGrath Foundation 2013-2017 for 57 breast care nurses under the McGrath Breast Care Nurses Initiative, most of whom will be located in regional and rural communities;
- funding for the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to advance the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee women; and
- Girls – Make Your Move campaign to encourage participation in physical activity among young women and girls aged 12-19 years by promoting physical activity and sport as fun.