



**Tuesday, 25 March 2025**

**Transcript: AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen post-budget doorstop**

**DR DANIELLE McMULLEN:** I'm Dr Danielle McMullen, Federal President of the Australian Medical Association. Tonight, it was good to see what we've been promised printed in black and white. We've seen huge investments in Medicare and in general practice. At the AMA, we're particularly supportive of the workforce measures announced tonight and the women's health measures. Both come on the back of long-standing AMA advocacy and will help more doctors choose general practice as a career and help us to deliver even more excellent care to women across Australia.

Our support of this landmark investment in Medicare does come with a caveat, we do still need to modernise Medicare. Medicare was developed 40 years ago at a time when people had one or two simple problems to see the doctor, but now with an ageing population, more chronic disease, and every consultation with a GP being more complex, we are calling for a reform of the underlying structure of Medicare to make sure that no matter how long you need to spend with the GP, we've got the time for you, and that Medicare is paying its fair share. We also need stronger investments in nurses and allied health in general practice so that you can get the care from whoever you need under that one roof.

It was a missed opportunity tonight to protect the health of all Australians by introducing a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages. Australia is falling behind the rest of the world, and this much-needed measure, despite having the recommendation of a parliamentary committee, was not put in place and we do think that it is a way for the government to have generated much-needed revenue, while also protecting the health of Australians.

On private healthcare, we've all seen the insurers fighting with hospitals and catching patients in the middle. We clearly need a private health system authority for much-needed oversight over our private health sector to make sure that your private health insurance is still delivering value and we protect that critical balance of private and public healthcare that we value in Australia.

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And lastly, on public hospitals, we welcome the investment, the top-up investment in public hospitals announced tonight, but after the election we clearly need all sides of government to get urgently back to the table to negotiate an updated National Health Reform Agreement. Our public hospitals are in logjam, and patients are waiting too long in emergency departments, and too long for planned surgery, so all levels of government need to co-operate on a new agreement.

Tonight, we saw a budget, but there's an election around the corner, and the AMA's focus will be squarely on achieving the reforms we need to continue to have a strong health system in Australia.

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