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AMA CONGRATULATES COALITION ON ELECTION VICTORY

The AMA today congratulated Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the Coalition on their election victory.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that health policy was a key factor in the closeness of the election result, and the AMA looked forward to working with the Government in its second term on health policies that best serve the needs of the Australian population.

“While Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has conceded defeat, and the Prime Minister has claimed victory, the final seat count is still not known,” Dr Gannon said.

“The new Government is yet to be sworn in, and the Prime Minister is still working on the new Ministry, but it is now predicted the Coalition will form Government in its own right, albeit with the narrowest of majorities.

“The election result and the prominence of health issues in deciding votes mean that the Government will need to review its health platform. This is something that Prime Minister Turnbull has already admitted.

“The Government should immediately lift the freeze on Medicare patient rebates, scrap changes to bulk billing incentives for pathology and medical imaging, and increase public hospital funding.

“The AMA agrees that health funding must be sustainable well into the future, and this will require a sector-wide examination of approaches to prevention, public health, the ageing population, and the significant increase in the incidence of chronic and complex disease.

“This will require investing more, not less, in primary health care, and keeping people out of more expensive hospital care where possible. We need to find a way to sustainably fund the health system but, at the same time, we must protect the health of the most vulnerable in our community.”

Dr Gannon said the AMA wants the Health Minister to have a very strong voice in Cabinet to ensure that health policy is not dominated by the considerations of the Department of Treasury or Finance.

“The election result has sent a strong message to the Government that Australian voters take Medicare and health policy in general seriously,” Dr Gannon said.

“There must be a strong champion for health in Cabinet to drive policy that appeals to the electorate and medical and health professionals,” Dr Gannon said.

The AMA will seek meetings with the Prime Minister, the Health Minister, the Shadow Health Minister, and other Parliamentarians at the earliest opportunity.

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