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**VITAL ROLE OF DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING IN HEALTH CARE MUST
 BE RECOGNISED AND SUPPORTED**

AMA Position Statement on Diagnostic Imaging 2018

The AMA today released its first-ever comprehensive, overarching diagnostic imaging policy, which brings together in one document all the AMA’s existing policies on diagnostic imaging issues.

The *AMA Position Statement on Diagnostic Imaging 2018* underlines the AMA’s ongoing commitment to supporting doctors who provide diagnostic imaging services, as well as doctors who refer their patients to these services for diagnosis, monitoring, and specialist treatment.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said the vital role of diagnostic imaging to health care, as provided by Radiologists and other specialists, is too often undervalued, and this has to change.

“Diagnostic imaging plays a critical role in 21st century health care,” Dr Gannon said.

“It underpins and guides much of what we do in medicine.

“It is integral to diagnosis and screening, formulating treatment plans and monitoring responses, performing minimally invasive procedures, and interventional procedures.

“Investment in high quality diagnostic imaging services ultimately saves taxpayers from higher downstream costs in the acute care sector.

“It also greatly improves the patient’s health care experiences and outcomes.”

Dr Gannon said that the AMA has for some time been calling on the Federal Government to provide realistic reimbursements to patients through Medicare so that diagnostic imaging services remain affordable to people who need them.

“Many people delay or are deterred from accessing diagnostic services because of high upfront costs, which ultimately leads to even higher downstream costs,” Dr Gannon said.

The Position Statement also highlights the clinical and ethical importance of people living in regional, rural, and remote areas having access to comprehensive, local diagnostic services.

Additional Government funding, either through special grants or additional loadings, is urgently needed to ensure that regional Australians continue to receive these potentially life-saving services.

Dr Gannon said that patients who still have to travel to receive specialist services should be supported in a way that recognises the cost of travel, accommodation, and the impact on their family and work.

The Senate Community Affairs Committee report on diagnostic imaging equipment access, which was released last month, also highlights the financial pressure on patients who need to travel for these specialist services.

The AMA *Position Statement on Diagnostic Imaging 2018* also supports:

- Radiologists being able to determine the most clinically appropriate service for the diagnosis of a patient's condition;
- the importance of Radiologists supervising services provided in radiology practices;
- ongoing research to underpin evidence-based practice, and education to implement this practice;
- the current national accreditation scheme, which ensures all providers, practices, and sites offering diagnostic imaging services meet high standards of safety and quality; and
- funding through the existing fee-for-service model, which should be sufficient to cover the individual service as well as quality-related activities.

The AMA *Position Statement on Diagnostic Imaging 2018* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/diagnostic-imaging-2018>

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