



MEDIA RELEASE

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Opposition Threatens to Obstruct Landmark Health Reform legislation

The federal opposition has indicated their unwillingness to support landmark legislation which will improve access for the Australian public to quality healthcare and a greater choice of providers by enabling nurse practitioners and eligible midwives to access the Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits Schemes. Related Bills will also guarantee access for eligible midwives to professional indemnity through a scheme underwritten by the commonwealth government.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) warn that this Bill is fundamentally important to ensuring that the Australian public has greater access and choice in the provision of healthcare. Failure to ensure the passage of this Bill through parliament must be interpreted by the Australian people as a political unwillingness to work together to ensure high quality, safe health care provision for all Australians now and into the future.

“Nurse practitioners and some midwives currently prescribe perfectly safely through state-based funding schemes. However the lack of access to PBS and MBS causes significant cost burden to their clients and under utilisation of this important healthcare resource. Access to PBS and MBS will enable the Australian community to benefit fully from utilisation of services offered by these highly qualified specialists.” said Professor Mary Chiarella, Chair of the ANMC.

The ANMC urges all parties to support the passage of this key health reform legislation through the parliament to demonstrate their commitment to high quality healthcare provision and choice for Australian healthcare consumers.

Minister Roxon has also indicated a commitment to resolving those issues of access to professional indemnity insurance for eligible midwives assisting women who chose to birth at home. These issues have arisen through the revised requirements for national registration and accreditation of health professionals. ANMC will also continue to pursue this dialogue to a positive outcome for consumers of maternity services in the interests of safe, quality healthcare for the Australian community.

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The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) is a peak national nursing and midwifery body established in 1992 to lead a national approach, with the state and territory nursing and midwifery regulatory authorities in evolving national standards for statutory nursing and midwifery regulation which are flexible, effective and responsive to the health care needs of the Australian population.
It is also the national body that assesses the qualifications of overseas nurses and midwives for migration purposes