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STABLE GOVERNMENT NEEDED TO DELIVER MEANINGFUL HEALTH REFORM

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today that Australia needs to see a stable Government emerge from yesterday’s close election result if meaningful health reform is to be achieved.

Dr Gannon said the clear message from the election was that health policy was a vote changer, and that Australians want access to high quality and affordable health services.

“The exit polls confirmed what the AMA had been hearing from its members in the lead-up to the election: people want confidence that they can see their doctor or get to a hospital when they or their loved ones need health advice or care,” Dr Gannon said.

“The AMA campaigned strongly on lifting the Medicare rebate freeze, funding public hospitals, and reversing cuts to pathology and diagnostic imaging incentives.

“Grassroots doctors across the country shared their concerns with their patients.

“Local family doctors had genuine fears about the livelihoods of their practices.

“The AMA and other health groups spent months urging the Government to change some of its health policies, especially the Medicare freeze.

“The Government’s refusal to change key policies allowed the Opposition to spread misinformation about the privatisation of Medicare.

“But we believe that people who voted because of health policy were influenced by credible information from trusted doctors and other health professionals who campaigned against the Medicare freeze.

“Whoever forms Government, the AMA stands ready to work cooperatively on the development and delivery of health policies that will best serve the needs of the Australian people.

“The election result is compelling evidence that people want a strong Medicare and a health system that promotes quality primary care, supports general practice, and properly funds public hospitals,” Dr Gannon said.

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