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**STAGE IS SET FOR NEW ERA OF ‘BIG PICTURE’ MEANINGFUL
 HEALTH REFORM – BUT GOVERNMENT MUST INVEST HEAVILY**
AMA Pre-Budget Submission 2018-19

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said today that the culmination of key reviews, under the guidance of Health Minister Greg Hunt, provides the Government with a rare opportunity to embark on a new era of ‘big picture’ health reform – but it will need significant long-term investment.

Releasing the AMA’s Pre-Budget Submission 2018-19, Dr Gannon said the key for the Government is to look at all health policies as investments in a healthier and more productive population.

“The conditions are ripe for a new round of significant and meaningful health reform, underpinned by secure, stable, and sufficient long-term funding to ensure the best possible health outcomes for the Australian population,” Dr Gannon said.

“The next Budget provides the Government with the perfect opportunity to reveal its health reform vision, and articulate clearly how it will be funded.

“We have seen years of major reviews of some of the pillars of our world class health system.

“The review of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) is an ambitious project.

“Its methods and outcomes are becoming clearer. Its best chance of success is if the changes are evidence-based and clinician-led and approved.

“A new direction for private health insurance (PHI) has been determined following the PHI Review.

“We must maintain flexibility and put patients at the centre of the system, but recognise the fundamental importance of the private system to universal health care.

“The Medicare freeze will be lifted gradually over the next few years.

“There is now a greater focus on the core health issues that will form the health policy battleground at the next election.

“There is no doubt, as shown at the last Federal election, that health policy is a guaranteed vote winner ... or vote loser.

“Our Submission sets out a range of policies and recommendations that are practical, achievable, and affordable.

“They will make a difference. We urge the Government to adopt them in the Budget process.

“Health should never be considered an expensive line item in the Budget.

“It is an investment in the welfare, wellbeing, and productivity of the Australian people.

“Health is the best investment that governments can make,” Dr Gannon said.

The AMA Pre-Budget Submission 2018-19 covers:

- General Practice and Primary Care;
- Public Hospitals;
- Private Health Insurance;
- Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review;
- Preventive Health;
- Diagnostic Imaging;
- Pathology;
- Mental Health and the NDIS;
- Medical Care for Older Australians;
- My Health Record;
- Rural Health;
- Indigenous Health;
- Medical Workforce;
- Climate Change and Health; and
- Veterans’ Health.

The AMA Pre-Budget Submission 2018-19 is at <https://ama.com.au/ama-pre-budget-submission>

This Submission was lodged with Treasury ahead of the Friday, 15 December 2017 deadline.

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