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**AMA ADVOCACY RESULTS IN BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR
 MEDICAL INDEMNITY STABILITY**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that two years of strong advocacy by the AMA has resulted in much-needed stability and future security for the medical indemnity sector, ensuring the ability of doctors to continue to practise the art and science of medicine.

Dr Bartone said that the introduction to Parliament last month of the *Medical and Midwife Indemnity Legislation Amendment Bill 2019* by Health Minister, Greg Hunt, will ensure that the AMA’s hard-won medical indemnity reforms of 2002 will continue to provide confidence for doctors, their patients, and insurers.

The Bill is expected to pass Parliament in the next sitting period, with bipartisan support.

“The last two years have seen a challenging but rewarding journey for the AMA in steering two indemnity reviews to a successful conclusion,” Dr Bartone said.

“The AMA has fought hard to maintain the stability of our medical indemnity system and preserve the underwriting from the Commonwealth, which we achieved well over a decade ago.

“In 2016, there was a sudden and substantial cut to medical indemnity schemes, followed by the announcement of the two reviews.

“Concerned about the Government’s ongoing commitment to these schemes, the AMA advocated forcefully at each and every consultation, meeting, roundtable, and re-draft of the schemes.

“On behalf of the entire profession, we have worked with indemnity insurers, other peak groups, the Department of Health, the Minister’s office, and the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, to name but a few.

“The AMA has spent considerable time and a significant amount of resources on this review because we know how critical a stable medical indemnity sector is to our ability to practise medicine and focus on what really matters - our patients.

“There will be no further cuts to the Commonwealth’s funding of these schemes, including but not limited to the High Cost Claims Scheme and the Premium Support Schemes.

“This should ensure that the premium stability we have enjoyed continues.

“There will now be a separate scheme for allied health practitioners, meaning they are no longer part of the Medical Indemnity Schemes.

“This is an important, and welcome, development for the medical profession.

“It returns us to a fundamental principle for these schemes that was there in the first place – they were designed for medical professionals.

“Improvements have also been made to the schemes, as well as additional monitoring and appeal processes for both indemnity insurers and practitioners.

“The AMA commends the Government for delivering on its promise to use the reviews to demonstrate an understanding of the link between Commonwealth support, affordable indemnity insurance, and cost-efficient stable health care provision.

“We also recognise the contribution of the medical indemnity industry in their collaborative work with the AMA in shaping these reforms.

“In an era of Medicare freezes, funding shortfalls, declining public hospital performance, and shrinking private health insurance membership, it is reassuring that the profession’s collaborative hard work has been successful in ensuring stability in this vital area,” Dr Bartone said.

There is more detail in the Second Reading Speech and the Explanatory Memorandum at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r6408

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