

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

**ABN 37 008 426 793**

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website: <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**Transcript:** AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon with Stephanie Dalzell, Radio National, *AM*, 21 August 2017

**Subject:** Private Health Insurance

---

**SABRA LANE:** It's been a major bugbear for many consumers, and now doctors are claiming the time has come for the Government to act now to secure better deals for those with private health insurance. The issue's been under review, with a report due by year's end, but the Australian Medical Association believes enough is known about rip-offs with so-called junk health plans that it's calling for changes to the law now to ensure all policies have a minimum level of cover.

Stephanie Dalzell reports.

**STEPHANIE DALZELL:** The head of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Michael Gannon, has run out of patience with private health insurers.

**MICHAEL GANNON:** We've seen a proliferation of junk policies which are worth nothing more than the paper they're written on and are purely designed so that people avoid the tax penalty.

**STEPHANIE DALZELL:** The AMA is pushing a plan to streamline thousands of private health insurance policies into simple gold, silver, and bronze categories so people know what they're paying for.

**MICHAEL GANNON:** There are people who have carefully, dutifully, responsibly put aside money for private health insurance – over many years in many cases – and then, when they get sick, they find they're not covered. So, policies for Australians over the age of 60 that exclude them from having their hips or knees fixed or having their eyes fixed are silly. Policies that literally will enable a single man to access maternity care but exclude him from something else that he might need are, again, so ridiculous it would be funny if it wasn't so serious.

**STEPHANIE DALZELL:** The plan is already being considered by a Federal Government advisory committee, which includes doctors and private health insurers. It's due to report by the end of the year, but Dr Gannon doesn't want to wait for that. He wants the law changed now so that all policies have to have a minimum standard.

**MICHAEL GANNON:** The Government has the power to legislate to make sure that they are worthwhile for the people who take them out.

---

21 August 2017

**CONTACT:** John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761  
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/ama\\_media](http://twitter.com/ama_media)  
 Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>  
 Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>  
 Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>