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Media Release: ASA welcomes new campaign to fix broken Medicare for patients

The Australasian Sonographers Association has today welcomed the campaign by the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association (ADIA) to urgently restore Government investment in patient rebates for essential radiology services.

The television campaign – **MEDICARE: IGNORE IT AND IT WILL GO AWAY** – was launched this week to highlight the Turnbull Government’s continued inaction on Medicare rebates for radiology patients.

More than nine million Australians access radiology each year, with 26 million radiology scans and services undertaken.

And yet patient rebates for these essential services remain stuck at 1998 levels after the Government broke its pre-election promise to end the 20-year freeze on radiology rebates when the GP rebate freeze ends in July.

“Diagnostic imaging is essential in the diagnosis, management and treatment of many health conditions, with ultrasound being the most commonly-accessed diagnostic imaging service,” said ASA President **Dr Jennifer Alphonse**.

“The services offered by our members are crucial for patients such as mothers who can be faced with significant out-of-pocket costs for essential ultrasounds needed during pregnancy.

“For ultrasound alone, the average out-of-pocket cost for patients has grown by 117% over the last thirteen years due to indexation being frozen.

“This disparity is forcing patients to choose between their health and their pocket, with potentially devastating long-term consequences.

“That’s not what Medicare is supposed to be. It is a system that is being failed by Government.

“We join ADIA and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists in calling on the Turnbull Government to honour its election promise to resume indexation for radiology services when the current GP rebate indexation freeze concludes.

“Without this, many disadvantaged and at-risk Australians will continue to experience poor health outcomes due to being unable to afford these essential services.”

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