

CHF says Taskforce recommendations are a ‘win’ for health consumers

Consumers Health Forum has welcomed the commitment of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce to put consumers and communities at the centre of primary care policy design and delivery.

CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny was the only independent member of the Taskforce representing consumers and advocated strongly for them to play an active role in any changes.

“Whatever reforms the government decides to introduce, it is essential that health consumers are involved in the design and implementation of any new policy or service,” she said.

“Consumers will be the litmus test of whether these proposed changes deliver better healthcare - everyday Australians will ultimately be the judge of how the reforms work in the ‘real world’.”

Dr Deveny also applauded the reforms that aim to provide wrap-around care for those who need it most.

“Although I’m sure many sectors of our community were looking for a ‘quick fix’ increase in the Medicare rebate for doctors, the Taskforce recommendations are aimed at long-term reform,” Dr Deveny said.

CHF has called on Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler to consider all funding options.

“Increasing access to bulk-billing GPs and reducing general healthcare costs is the number one issue for Australian health consumers,” Dr Deveny said.

She also said Minister Butler must back consumer-led activities with funding in the 2023 Federal Budget.

“We must ensure that health consumers are supported to actively contribute their expertise and lived experience to any committee or policy forum, providing education or training as needed,” she said.

Regarding the Taskforce’s other recommendations, CHF also supported:

- Increasing access to primary care through blended funding models and ensuring Australians on low incomes can better access primary care at no or low cost
- Providing wraparound care to people with chronic and complex health issues with voluntary patient registration
- Addressing rural and remote health inequities and investing in First Nation’s health
- Modernising My Health Record and making it easier for all Australians to manage their own health information by strengthening health literacy and navigation.

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