

Dear Colleague,

The events of the last two years have made it very clear that, with very short notice, General Practice can be wiped out by the careening bus of ill-informed Government policy. It has also been evident that, when we act with a unified voice, General Practice can change Government policy – such as the proposed Level A/B change and “GP copayment”.

The Hunter General Practitioners Association was formed in 2014 to give a voice to local General Practice. We are not-for-profit, and independent of any other professional organisations and political parties. We have a core of volunteer GPs who have been working to oppose destructive health policies, as well as trying to engage the political parties in a consultative fashion.

We believe that we need to be reactive to changes that the Government attempts to impose on us – but we also believe it is a critical time to help shape the future of General Practice.

We can only do this by being both united in action and involved in strategic dialogues.

HGPA brings Hunter GPs together to form a proactive voice at the policy table.

We have nearly 250 members, including Dr Fiona Van Leeuwen (Chair), Dr Steve De Lyall (Vice-chair), and Dr David Smith (Treasurer/Secretary). Other management committee members include Dr Steven De Lyall, Dr Lee Fong, Dr John Goswell, Dr Megan Hamilton, Dr Marie-Anne Hockings, Dr Anna Kelly, Dr Nigel Humphries, Dr Colin Pearce, Dr Michael Swanson, and Dr Richard Terry.

- We have a website www.huntergpa.org, with a page dedicated to the current “[Rebate Freeze](#)” issue, as well as a “[News](#)” page to keep you up to date. Membership will join you up to the Hunter GP mailing group, which has provided invaluable feedback in our responses to health policy.
- We have provided submissions to the Senate Select Committee for Health, voicing our opposition to “Co-payment plan B” (downloadable under “Hunter GP resources” on our “[Co-payment page](#)”)
- Dr Fiona van Leeuwen, Dr Colin Pearce and Dr Richard Terry have given representations at public hearings of the Senate Select Committee on Health at Parliament House on the 5th of February 2015 (video and transcripts on our “[Co-payment](#)” page) and 11th March 2015.
- We have also provided feedback to the RACGP’s paper “*Working towards a sustainable healthcare system*”; we have joined the HNELHD working party and written to NEHTA re: discharge summary problems; we have spoken to the deputy opposition leader regarding the Border Force Act; we have submitted a detailed, 46 page report on Medical Deputising Services to the RACGP; we have initiated a review of GP referrals to local Emergency Departments; we are questioning the LHD on the shortcomings of the outpatient clinics; and our chair is now on the HNELHD clinical council.

In all of this, the MBS indexation freeze still presents a clear and present danger to our patients. Please display the enclosed poster in your consulting or waiting room to help raise public awareness of this.

We need your help to better inform us about what grassroots General Practice wants and needs to improve health care for our patients. Membership is free for the first year.

Don’t let General Practice be hit by “the Government bus”.

Get into the driver’s seat, and shape the future of healthcare.

Go to www.huntergpa.org → About → Membership, and join the local, independent group that is providing a voice for Hunter GPs.