

HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS

Position:

- FAMILY FIRST recognises that health is fundamental to a person's physical, psychological and social wellbeing;
- FAMILY FIRST believes the health of the nation starts with the health of each family;
- FAMILY FIRST believes every Australian is entitled to quality health services and is committed to providing opportunities for all families, particularly Indigenous, underprivileged, isolated and older Australians, as well as those in remote and rural centres, to receive appropriate medical care;
- FAMILY FIRST supports Medicare which is meant to ensure all Australians have access to necessary health services. But FAMILY FIRST is concerned that people in rural and regional areas do not have good access to Medicare funded services;
- FAMILY FIRST believes the Medicare safety net is a doubled edged sword. It provides some certainty to people facing high out-of-pocket medical expenses but it also gives greater priority to ensuring people have choice rather than ensuring all families can afford quality medical services. For example, it entrenches the policy of giving priority to choice of family doctor over the affordability of the doctor. There is also an increasing use of co-payments to shift costs to users;
- FAMILY FIRST wants to ensure that choice does not come at the expense of affordability. This issue is critical to ordinary Australians and their families who stand to be the big losers if the affordability of medical services becomes a second priority;
- FAMILY FIRST believes every Australian should have access to affordable dental health care and is concerned about long waiting lists across the country for dental treatment;

- FAMILY FIRST rejects harm minimisation as the primary strategy for combating substance abuse. FAMILY FIRST favours rehabilitation and prevention.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST calls for an urgent increase in medical school places to address the shortage of doctors, particularly in regional and rural Australia, and cope with our rapidly ageing population;
- FAMILY FIRST will support measures to improve the health conditions of Indigenous Australians, particularly in rural and remote areas;
- FAMILY FIRST will work to address substance misuse in Aboriginal communities with an emphasis on early intervention, as part of our broader policy on substance abuse;
- FAMILY FIRST will promote respect for all stages of human life and upholds the fundamental responsibility of members of the medical profession to safeguard human life;
- FAMILY FIRST supports increased funding to address mental health issues, which have been ignored for too long;
- FAMILY FIRST supports strategies that promote health from an early age, acknowledging the wide range of research that early childhood development is crucial to longer term health.