



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC HOSPITALS SAY REFORMS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER AS YOUNGER PEOPLE CONTINUE TO DRIFT AWAY FROM PRIVATE HEALTH

Catholic Health Australia, the largest group of not-for-profit hospitals, says reforms allowing younger Australians greater access to private hospital services could not come soon enough as latest Australian Prudential Regulation Authority figures show subdued uptake among young people.

CHA said while the latest APRA [data](#) was encouraging with policies including hospital cover growing by 34,801 people, the majority of that growth was driven by older Australians taking up private health insurance. Demand by younger Australians - those in the 20 to 49 age group – was muted.

In the October Budget the Commonwealth announced changes to rules that would allow young people to stay on their parents' insurance plans for longer. Children will be able to remain on their family cover until the age of 31, instead of the cut off at 25 as it is currently.

CHA is pushing the Government to make it mandatory for health funds to adopt this change.

But aside from the announcement on Budget night no further details have been given.

CHA spokesperson Stephanie Panchision said: "Allowing young people to remain on their parents' plan for longer could be the real shot in the arm for private hospitals. Our system should recognise that young people are living at home longer, getting married later, and starting families well into their 30s.

"We have been pushing for this rule change for some time and it was good to see the government recognise this in the Budget in October but we need to see more detail so that the health sector can prepare for this change.

"This policy change can't come soon enough as we need to stop the drift of young people away from private health insurance and, more importantly, encourage them to access private health care. Our health system needs a health private sector to take the burden off the public system."



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“COVID has seen hospital waiting times lengthen to levels not seen before. Private hospitals have a critical role to play in reducing that backlog.”

Note to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia’s largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 percent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.