

# THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH MEDIA RELEASE

24 November 2005

## The Australian Centre for Health Research launched

An independent body dedicated to health policy research has been launched at a function attended by many of the industry's influential groups and personalities.

The centre has been seed-funded to date by Australian Unity which hosted the function in Melbourne.

The Australian Centre for Health Research has adopted the mission of contributing to a more efficient, effective and productive delivery of world leading health services in the country.

In his address, Executive Director, Mr Neil Batt AO acknowledged the many groups that contribute to current debate about health services and policies in Australia.

"All of these groups represent a particular aspect of the industry – the private hospitals, the public system, the consumer or the private health industry – and they all do this very well.

"What is missing and what the Centre intends to provide is a forum which brings all these components together to focus on the common interest of the health industry and the contribution of that industry to the common good.

"We need to lift the level of debate about health policy. What our system needs is a body committed to sound research and fact-based dialogue, a body that is representative of all elements of the industry and which is focused on advancing the effectiveness of health services in Australia, independent of personal, political or business agendas," he said.

The meeting heard that a great deal could be done to improve the operation of the health sector in Australia and that the Centre would encourage change by identifying, analysing and promoting issues and solutions to many of the challenges.

A list of potential research subjects was canvassed at the meeting (see list attached). It is intended to appoint a committee chaired by former federal health minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge, to make recommendations on the actual projects to be commissioned.

An announcement will be made shortly on who will sit on the Board and the Council of the Centre.

The Centre received generous support from guests at the function with substantial funds pledged by private health funds, private hospitals and a wide range of industry groups. (See attached)

For more information:

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## **Attending Organisations**

Australian Unity  
Australian Private Hospitals Association  
Burns Bridge Australia  
GMHBA  
Health Benefits Council of Victoria  
Health Insurance Restricted Membership Association of Australia  
Institute of Actuaries of Australia  
International Diabetes Institute  
Medibank Private  
MBF  
National Ageing Research Institute  
Navy Health  
Pharmacy Guild of Australia  
Ramsay Health Care  
Residential Aged Services  
Wright Business Marketing

## **The Australian Centre for Health Research - Possible Agendas in Health Care**

### **Financial sustainability and effectiveness of current approaches to health care delivery**

1. The sustainability of the levels of health expenditure
2. Do the present funding arrangements for health provide the optimum outcomes
3. Strategies for the future - provision of aged care
4. The need for equitability in health care delivery
5. Priorities in health care delivery
6. The management of dying
7. Should there be limits to accessibility of "high tech" health care

### **Ensuring Quality, Cost effective outcomes in Health care**

1. Identifying disparity of health outcomes
2. Effective utilisation of available data to establish and monitor health outcomes and the standard of health care delivery
3. Is there a need to collect additional data to establish and monitor health outcomes and the standard of health care delivery
4. Methods of preventing hospitalisation
5. An examination of the necessity and value of surgical interventions
6. An examination of the supply and utilisation of prosthetics
7. The efficiency of the present organisation of hospitals
8. The relationship between the provision of drugs and the optimum outcomes for patients particularly poly-pharmacy in the aged
9. An examination of ways by which drugs can prevent hospitalisation

## **Public v Private Health care**

1. Comparison of the efficiency of public and private hospitals
2. An examination of the principles behind and the practical benefits of State ownership of hospitals
3. Strategies to ensure an increase in young persons in the health insurance pool

## **Primary Health Care**

1. An examination of the present arrangements of GP services - note the issues paper by the General Practices Division Victoria (GPDV 2005)
2. The role and funding models for GP's and other health professionals to ensure effective preventative health care
3. The role and funding models for GP's and other health professionals to ensure quality chronic disease management

## **Health Workforce: roles and training.**

1. Do the roles and distribution of the current health care workforce best serve the Australian Community
2. Does the present training provision for the medical taskforce provide the best outcomes
3. Does the present training provisions of other health professionals provide the best outcomes
4. To what extent and who should be responsible for monitoring standards of health care professionals

## **Community understanding and education in health**

1. Is community expectation with respect to health care reasonable
2. If expectation is unrealistic how can this be changed
3. Getting through the maze or how an intelligent person can access useful health information
4. Medical information and internet access.

## **Mr Neil Batt AO - biography**

Neil Batt AO has been involved in the health industry for a number of years, in particular with the Health Benefits Council and AHIA. He is a Company Director and President of the International Diabetes Institute. He has previously had a business and political career including holding the positions of Deputy Premier of Tasmania and President of the Australian Labor Party