



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP**  
**Minister for Health**  
**Minister for Sport**

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Mr Nic Richardson  
Vice President and Secretary  
GP Deputising Association  
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Dear Mr Richardson

*Nic*

I refer to your letter of 31 March 2017 concerning the formation of the GP Deputising Association to support general practice in Australia. I regret the delay in responding.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring all Australians have appropriate access to high quality after-hours services and recognises the vital role of medical deputising services in supporting the delivery of comprehensive around-the-clock care to patients. This commitment extends to providing a strong after-hours sector that complements mainstream general practice.

I share your view that deputising and home visit services must be driven by patient benefit rather than financial interests. This includes understanding and promoting the benefits of patients maintaining access to comprehensive care through their regular GP.

The Government is currently investigating whether the various after-hours incentives, particularly those provided through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), improve access to high-value health care. This work includes a clinician-led examination by the MBS Review Taskforce to determine how after-hours Medicare rebates may be better aligned with clinical evidence and practice to promote the delivery integrated primary care to patients. Further information regarding this work is provided on my Department's website at [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mbsreviewtaskforce](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mbsreviewtaskforce).

I understand that you recently met with my adviser, Mr Michael Ryan, and encourage you to continue working with him. I wish the GP Deputising Association and its member organisations every success in promoting and providing the type of deputising services that contribute to better patient outcomes.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

  
Greg Hunt