



Dr Monique Ryan makes submission to Treasurers Economic Reform Roundtable

Today, Dr Monique Ryan, Independent Federal Member for Kooyong made a submission to the Treasurer's Economic Reform Roundtable to be held in August. The submission calls for a national focus on health as the cornerstone of Australia's economic prosperity and resilience.

"The link between health and economic growth is clear," Dr Ryan said. "A healthy population is a productive population. Health spending is not a cost: it's an investment in our future."

"Our healthcare system is both a safeguard of wellbeing and a major economic driver," she said. "It accounts for nearly 10% of GDP and the broader care economy employs over two million Australians. We should treat it as the national asset it is."

She outlined five priority areas for reform: medical research, health sector regulation, workforce planning, private health insurance, and preventive dental care.

"Australia's medical research sector is world-class, but under-invested," Dr Ryan said. "We've seen a drop in R&D investment and missed opportunities for international collaboration. The Medical Research Future Fund holds billions of dollars in unspent dividends and untapped potential—funds that should be driving innovation and delivering returns of nearly \$4 for every \$1 invested."

Dr Ryan also called for urgent reform in health workforce planning.

"There is no national mechanism to identify workforce gaps or coordinate action across jurisdictions," she said. "We need an independent planning agency and streamlined registration processes to ensure we have the right people in the right places."

She raised concerns about barriers to practice placements for students, particularly those from rural areas or with caring responsibilities.

"We're losing future health professionals because they can't afford to complete their training. Financial support for placements must be extended across all disciplines."

On private health insurance, Dr Ryan questioned the value of the Commonwealth's \$8 billion annual contribution through rebates.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Rosie Leon-Thomas | rosie.leonthomas@aph.gov.au | 0455 657 546

25 July 2025

“There’s little evidence that private insurance is easing pressure on the public system. In fact, it’s competing for the same workforce and driving up costs. We must ask whether this funding could be better spent directly on public health services.”

Finally, Dr Ryan urged greater investment in preventive care, especially dental health.

“Preventive care returns \$14 for every dollar spent, yet we allocate less than 2% of our health budget to it,” she said. “Dental care is a clear example—too many Australians delay treatment due to cost, leading to more serious and expensive health issues.”

She proposed a phased expansion of government-funded dental services, starting with preventive care and access to private providers, while building workforce capacity.

“Our health system is under pressure, but we have the tools to strengthen it. Strategic investment and reform will deliver better outcomes for all Australians—and a stronger, more resilient economy.”

[Full submission can be found here.](#)