



## **Dr Monique Ryan MP Calls for a Stronger, Bolder Australian CDC**

This week Monique Ryan MP is calling on the Albanese Government to deliver on its election pledge for a comprehensive Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC), warning that its legislation falls short of what Australians were promised during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Australians were promised a world-class Centre for Disease Control during the pandemic. What we’ve been given is a shell—underfunded, underspecified, and underwhelming,” said Dr Ryan. Dr Ryan criticised the Coalition’s opposition to the CDC, describing it as “wilfully ignorant.”

“At a pre-election debate, Senator Ruston blamed the U.S. CDC for America’s COVID death toll, ignoring the Trump administration’s sabotage of its own public health agency. Ivermectin and bleach were not CDC recommendations. They were Trump political theatre, and they cost lives,” said Dr Ryan.

The U.S. CDC is now being defunded and politicised under the Trump administration, and riddled with ‘quackery’ courtesy of Robert Kennedy Jnr. This development is frightening; for decades the U.S CDC has had a global role in worldwide disease surveillance, data collection and analysis, and in providing evidence-based advice to both government and non-government bodies. The Trump administration’s evisceration of the U.S. CDC has put enormous pressure on Australia to step up and build its own world-leading public health agency.

Dr Monique Ryan introduced today an amendment to expand the CDC’s remit to serious preventative health measures such as addressing the mental and physical health impacts of gambling addiction. This week, gambling harm has dominated public conversation. The government must respond to the urgency and scale of this issue.

In the next sitting period Dr Ryan will move further amendments to the CDC bill, to expand its scope and ensure it is equipped to meet Australia’s most pressing health challenges.

Among other things, the amendments would:

- Address chronic diseases (e.g. heart disease, cancer, diabetes) from day one.
- Ensure the CDC acts on preventative health strategies, such as addressing the mental health impact of gambling addiction and climate change.
- Mandate that the CDC address pandemic preparedness and the health effects of climate change from day one.
- Address injury prevention and occupational exposures from day one.
- Ensure the independence of the CDC through regular review and reporting.



“A job worth doing is worth doing well. Once again, the Albanese government is trying to shortchange Australians, and risk the health of this and future generations, by walking back from the Prime Minister’s 2019 commitment to a CDC that ‘would play a role in preventing health threats posed by chronic disease as well as infectious diseases.’

The Coalition are even worse, with their claims that our COVID-19 response was world leading. The many Australians who lost relatives during the pandemic know that was, sadly, not the case.

The decisions we make now about the scope, remit and funding of the CDC will shape our nation’s health for decades to come. To be bold, effective, and world-leading, our CDC must be independent, and it must be well-funded.”