

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 25th March 2019

Australian Pathology calls on Australians to *Protect Our Tests*

CANBERRA: Australian Pathology, representing private pathology providers, has announced its campaign to ensure pathology tests are protected from cuts kicks off today in more than 5000 pathology collection centres across Australia.

Chief Executive Officer of Australian Pathology, Liesel Wett, said;

“The sector has provided savings to the Government for many years but cannot continue to absorb funding cuts. We are asking all politicians to show their support for this vital medical service by pledging that they will not cut pathology funding.

“We want to make sure patients don’t miss out on life-saving tests. Australians should be confident that politicians of any party will protect funding for pathology tests and keep the sector sustainable,” Ms Wett said.

The Australian Medical Association’s position statement¹ on pathology supports appropriate funding for the sector, saying;

“Over two decades of stagnant government funding to both the private and public pathology sectors particularly threaten the sustainability of pathology practices providing comprehensive services, as well as investment in essential research and training. The ongoing erosion of pathology in the pursuit of necessary ‘efficiencies’ represents a risk to the whole health system.”

The long-term freeze on rebates for pathology tests has meant many areas of pathology are now underfunded and additional funding in these areas should be a priority.

This will mean all tests remain accessible to all Australians, and will ensure pathology testing in Australia keeps pace with developments elsewhere in the world, particularly in the areas of genomics and molecular pathology.

As part of the campaign patients will be invited to sign a paper petition when visiting a pathology collection centre. There is also an online petition at protectourtests.com.au and the facility to contact Members of Parliament and Senators about the issue.

“The *Protect Our Tests* campaign will ensure all Australians are aware of the need for continued funding, in order to maintain high bulk billing rates of over 99% for pathology services,” Ms Wett said.

“The expertise of pathologists for diagnosis and management of chronic and life threatening diseases is a vital part of our medical system. Underfunding could lead to patients having to pay, or a reduction in services. This means people might delay getting the tests they need, with more long term costs to the health system.”

Liesel Wett
CEO, Australian Pathology
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Australian Pathology is the peak body representing private pathology in Australia.

“We are more than willing to work with all sides of politics to ensure our pathology services continue to be world class, long into the future. We don’t want patient healthcare impacted by any cuts to funding.

“We are asking patients to protect their pathology tests, like they did in 2016 where almost 600,000 Australians told our politicians they would not support \$650 million worth of cuts to pathology services.”

“Our campaign ensures patients ask their local politicians and candidates to do just that, continue to fund the pathology services patients need.”

Politicians can pledge their support by contacting the campaign.

The campaign website can be found at www.protectourtests.com.au

END

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1. <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/pathology-2019>

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