



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MINISTER FOR SPORT**

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Mayor Dr Felicity-ann Lewis
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL
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Dear Mayor

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 August 2014 regarding a number of motions (Strategic Motion 19, 60 and 73) related to Health policy submitted as part of the 20th National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA).

In recognition of the need for a whole of nation approach to health protection, including extreme weather events such as heatwaves, the Australian Government produced the National Health Emergency Response Arrangements (NatHealth Arrangements) which articulate the strategic arrangements and mechanisms for the coordination of the Australian health sector in response to emergencies of national consequence. Through these arrangements the health sector (incorporating state and territory health authorities and relevant Australian Government agencies) prepares for and manages the consequences of extreme weather events. More information on these arrangements is available on my Department's website at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-response-arrangement-nov11.

The Australian Government acknowledges that increasing physical activity levels requires a community-wide and evidence-based approach. The Government's preferred approach is to actively educate and encourage Australians to adopt and maintain behaviours that will support healthy lifestyles. Resources such as *Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines* offer suggestions for keeping active. These resources are available online and can be accessed at the following website www.health.gov.au/paguidelines.

Under the Medicare programme, the Government ensures that all Australians have access to free or low-cost medical and hospital care while being free to choose private health services. In relation to hospital treatment, Medicare provides access to free treatment and accommodation as a public patient in a public hospital.

As a private patient in a public or private hospital, Medicare pays 75 per cent of the Medicare Schedule Fee for services and procedures provided by the treating doctor. Charges for hospital accommodation and items such as theatre fees and medicines are not covered. If a patient has private health insurance, these costs are generally covered by the insurer.

I would like to thank you for drawing attention to such important issues.

Yours sincerely



13/10/14

PETER DUTTON