



THE
AUSTRALIAN
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MEDIA RELEASE

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ELECTION CAMPAIGN SHOWS NO COMMITMENT TO MINIMISING CHRONIC PAIN

The Australian Pain Society (APS) is appalled at the lack of attention paid to chronic disease management – especially chronic pain - in this election campaign.

Chronic pain affects more than 5 million Australians, is associated with marked disability and has large financial implications for both individuals and society. The evidence is now overwhelming: medication alone – especially opiates – is not a long-term solution. For many people living with chronic pain, life quality only improves when they can access co-ordinated care from a range of health professionals including doctors, psychologists, physiotherapists, nurses and others.

Many chronic pain services are based in tertiary hospitals and have lengthy waits - more than two years in some states. Individuals living with chronic pain URGENTLY need better access to appropriate services in primary health, allowing them to receive treatments close to home. This would also assist in reducing avoidable strain on already stretched hospital systems.

President of the APS, Dr Geoffrey Speldewinde, strongly urges all candidates and parties in this current election campaign to prioritise:

- Adequate funding of community-based allied health services of sufficient duration to achieve patient benefit (current funding is capped at 5 sessions which is grossly inadequate for the management of chronic pain).
- Greater training for GPs in the recognition and management of chronic pain.
- Establishment of over 100 community-based pain management centres of excellence around Australia.
- Mandatory evaluation of therapeutic impact (i.e. using ePPOC - a national database of outcomes on the management of chronic pain).

The APS is Australia's leading national forum for a wide range of science-based health professionals (including doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists, clinical and laboratory researchers) trained in the recognition, research and management of all aspects of pain in Australia. The APS is well positioned and sufficiently resourced to provide support, education and advocacy for patients and clinicians.

For more detailed information please refer to our webpage: <https://www.apsoc.org.au>

For further comment, information or photos, please ring or email:

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