



## COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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Serving pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees.

*Consumer Protection Awards – 2002, 2003, 2004*

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **MEDICARE**

Australian seniors are old enough to remember Mr Howard's strident vilification of, at first Medibank, and later Medicare. We remember the vitriol and hatred with which Mr Howard referred to these very popular Australian Health Schemes.

We remember that Mr Howard referred to these health schemes as "frauds" and "rorts" and a number of other disparaging remarks clearly announcing his ideological hatred of them.

We most definitely remember that Mr Howard has in the past made a number of statements to the effect that he would "dismantle", "pull apart" and otherwise destroy Medibank and Medicare at the first opportunity afforded to him.

We seniors do not believe that Mr Howard has changed his mind and that he now supports Medicare – far from it. We believe that he has "maintained the hate" towards Medicare and we suspect that he has deceptively done, through the so called MedicarePLUS, that which he always meant to do: to assuage his hatred of the real Medicare.

The proof of our suspicions comes to light when we examine the detail of the massive confidence trick that is the Australian Government's so-called MedicarePLUS.

Mr Howard has evolved as a master of deception "par excellence" and this is seen with his protestations of support for Medicare when the truth appears to be the exact opposite. This is clearly seen when we remove the layers of camouflage which surround the MedicarePLUS pretender to the real Medicare and we find that the removal of the cap on medical fees is the centre of gravity of this great confidence trick.

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Removal of the cap together with a guarantee of reimbursement of 80% of the fee is disastrous to our Health Scheme. It can be seen that the inevitable surge for bigger and better fees will drive this concept close to, if not total oblivion - together with MedicarePLUS.

The question which arises here is what business in Australia is handed such an incredibly lucrative deal as to guarantee 80% reimbursement of any unlimited fee demand such a business might make?

The answer according to the Howard government appears to be the medical community and no other. It is unheard of - nor should it be! It does not take a financial genius to realise that if you allow doctors to charge by the concept of “the sky is the limit” and then guarantee payment by the taxpayer of 80% of that fee, then the health budget must eventually encounter insurmountable demands.

The Caretaker Minister for Health, Mr Abbot recently said that Australian Seniors are not fools. That they would see through any proposed alternative to the Howard government’s MedicarePLUS. Well that is rich – and arrogant – considering the gigantic confidence trick which Mr Abbott and the government he serves have perpetrated with their MedicarePLUS.

“Seniors are certainly not fools Mr Abbott – we have already seen through your Medicare Plus con trick and we have also seen through your wedge politics of separating Seniors from their younger counterparts.”

“Your plan to offer seniors what appears to be more than the rest of the community is an illusion and may marginally work for a time. But we are not oblivious to the fact that what you plan with MedicarePLUS is destructive and indeed we suspect that you and your leader have just exactly that destruction of Medicare in mind, after which we will not even have MedicarePLUS.”

Accordingly, seniors call for the reinstatement of a FULLY UNIVERSAL Medicare AND NO LESS!!

To achieve this we call on any incoming government to:

- Re-instate the medical fees cap
- Initiate negotiation with doctors’ representatives to achieve an acceptable level of remuneration through bulk billing.

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