



UNSW  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

A photograph of a modern building at night, likely a part of the UNSW campus. The building has a distinctive, illuminated, V-shaped or spire-like structure in the center, with other rectangular buildings visible in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a blue tint.

# Health Care Issues Priorities and Reforms in Australia

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# 1. Issues shared with other developed countries

- Significant part of the economy
- Increasing public expectations
- Higher pharmaceutical costs
- Higher technology costs
- Increasing chronic disease with ageing population

## 2. Issues specific to Australia

- Vertical fiscal imbalance –
  - Commonwealth Government collects most revenue
  - State Governments provide most services
- Uncapped fee for service medical services, largely paid by taxation
- Pharmaceutical scheme – affordable access with cost-effectiveness criteria

### 3. Priorities for Health Care Services in Australia

- Mental Health
- Cost containment and efficiency gains
- Health workforce education and training
- Casemix funding

## 4. Current Reforms

- Increased focus on prevention
- Better management and coordination of aged care services
- Increased mental health services, including focus on severely ill, prevention and early detection for young people
- Expansion of subsidies for diagnostic services
- Capping annual growth of pathology sector to 5% per year

# 5. Future Reforms

- Move to more treatment in private sector
- Teaching and research opportunities
- Activity based funding
- More joint replacements
- More chronic care services
- Local Hospital Networks (LHNs)

## 6. Future Issues

- Measurement of health quality outcomes
- Access variation
- Increasing role for Commonwealth Government
- Dental health
- Ehealth and personally controlled electronic health records
- Health workforce investment