



Minister for Health and Aged Care
Minister for Sport
THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP

Media Release

23 July 2016

Plibersek passes on Labor's health 'poisoned chalice'

Tanya Plibersek's decision to pass on the shadow health portfolio is a clear move to protect her reputation in light of the billions of dollars of cuts to Medicare, dental and the private health rebate during her time as Health Minister, including her decision to initiate the pause on Medicare indexation.

Ms Plibersek has long been touted as a future replacement for labor leader Bill Shorten and Labor's shadow health posting would prove a poisoned chalice to her ambitions.

In particular, the shadow health portfolio would tie Ms Plibersek to Mr Shorten's discredited 'Mediscare' lies, which have left her leader terminally damaged and open to a future challenge.

But Ms Plibersek deep down knows taking back the health portfolio would also shine a torch back on her dubious time as Health Minister in the Rudd-Gillard governments.

Ms Plibersek made no secret of her desire to make private health insurance more expensive for Australians, cutting about \$4 billion from the rebate and means-testing it:

"Every promise I made I paid for. How did I pay for it? I paid for it by targeting private health insurance."

- Tanya Plibersek – 4 April 2016 – Press Conference

Ms Plibersek also ripped over \$1 billion per year from Medicare for dental services, replacing it with a scheme that helped less than one-third of the patients Labor promised it would.

And who could forget Ms Plibersek infamously first introduced the pause on Medicare indexation, cutting over \$660 million from the budget and attacking doctors' wages to justify it:

"Health minister Tanya Plibersek... told The Australian newspaper that GPs could absorb the impact without having to opt out of bulk-billing – currently a record levels."

"Health minister Tanya Plibersek... stressed that spending on GP services under Medicare – despite the cuts – would still increase."

- Tanya Plibersek - May 15 2013 – Medical Recruitment

'Doctors earn enough money to bear the Federal Government's controversial freeze on MBS rebates, Health Minister Tanya Plibersek says.'

'Ms Plibersek dismissed concerns that the freeze — which will remove \$664 million from the MBS over four years — will pressure doctors to compromise care.'

"I understand that GPs have all sorts of expenses in running their surgeries and employing staff and so on, but the average billing from Medicare is more than \$350,000 a year."

- Tanya Plibersek - 22 May 2013 - Australian Doctor

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