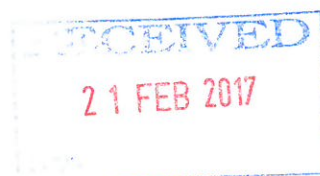




**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Sport**



Ref No: MC16-031219

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Minister for Employment
Minister for Women
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service
Senator for Western Australia
PO Box 1966
WEST PERTH WA 6872

09 FEB 2017

Dear Minister

I refer to your letter of 18 October 2016 to the then Minister for Health and Aged Care and Minister for Sport, on behalf of Dr Cheryl Koh who wrote to you on behalf of the Directors of Lockridge Medical Centre, regarding the viability of General Practice in Australia. I regret the delay in responding.

I believe deeply in the importance of Medicare. It is an integral component of Australia's successful health care system. The Australian Government has a commitment to ensuring that Medicare continues to play an important part in our health system.

I note Dr Koh's concerns in relation to the election commitment around rental rates for approved (specimen) collection centres. At the 2016-17 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook the Government agreed to defer this measure to 1 July 2017 to allow for further consultation to occur with the pathology sector and primary care providers. This consultation is ongoing and I have asked that Dr Koh's views be included.

I appreciate Dr Koh's concerns about the viability of GP practices, particularly that of the Lockridge Medical Centre. In relation to the pause on indexation, it is current Government policy that the pause will remain until 1 July 2020. I acknowledge many GPs and patients, such as Dr Koh, do not support the pause. I will continue listening to the opportunities and concerns of the medical community over the next few weeks as I shape the Health Budget for 2017-18 onwards.

Thank you for bringing Dr Koh's concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt