



# *Advocacy for GP*

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# Why Advocate

- ▶ The Australian Healthcare system is a multibillion \$ industry
  - in 2019 it was estimated at about 10% of GDP
  - \$170 bn estimate in FY 2018
  - > 1M people working in the industry
  - General Practice – 7% of that pie
- ▶ It is a major cost and major political issue for Commonwealth
  - The battle for a slice of the pie = advocate or see your % shrink to fill someone else's plate

# Types of Advocacy

## ▶ Lobbying

- Aims to directly influence policy
- Direct discussion with MPs/Policy makers
  - Letter to local MP – talking to the Minister
  - Discussions with bureaucrats
    - AGPA very active on PCIG–Prof Michael Kidd

## ▶ Social Impact

- Aims to indirectly influence policy
- For example, increase number of AGPA members which will increase lobbying influence
  - Influence public opinion
  - Media interviews, articles, letters to editor, social media, discussions with stakeholders & patients

# The Message

- ▶ Three components of the primary healthcare system– all are essential
  - Ease of access for patients
    - Cost, appointment availability
  - Well trained GPs
    - Specialists like any other, 10 years to train, GP shortage in all areas, competing with other specialties for graduates
  - Infrastructure – General Practices
    - Privatised delivery with a mix of public and private funding
    - Mainly small businesses – investment in better systems is dependent on profitability/sustainability

# The Message (2)

- ▶ Our concern is for the continuation of a world class primary healthcare system for the benefit of all Australians
  - Beware the media and political spin of the ‘greedy doctor syndrome’ – at all times put patient care first
  - Explain that doctors and practices need to meet rising costs – if they don’t there won’t be any practices

# Lobbying Your Local MP

- ▶ Who is your local MP
  - Federal Electorate: [Australian Electoral Commission](#)
  - Federal Member: [Parliament of Australia](#)
    - Contact details, Party site
  - Margin: [Tally Room Archive](#)
- ▶ What are their interests – First speech
- ▶ Making an appointment
  - Write a letter, make an appointment
- ▶ Meeting with them
  - Topics & talking points – no need to ambush them

# Lobbying Your Local MP

1. **Connect** with the individual – build a relationship of mutual respect
  - a) They are more likely to help you if they think your relationship is genuine
  - b) Use anecdotes – politicians are socio-political people – they understand anecdotes
  
2. **Convince** them the issue is important and that you are an important constituent.
  - a) GPs are respected community members with influence – we can influence their future
  - b) Mention our reach – 5 to 10 000 patients is a lot in a standard electorate of ~ 100 000 voters
  - c) Mention the strength of our relationship with our patients – intimacy and meaning
  - d) Mention the goodwill the practice has built over the years it has been operating – ie 75 years vs their 3 years
  - e) Mention your monthly patient email/newsletter and how you are sharing your policy concerns with them.
  
3. **Commit** to checking back in with them. Ask for their personal contact details if not offered. “Can you let me know what the Minister/Shadow Minister said?”

# Media

- ▶ TV
- ▶ Radio/News
- ▶ Social Media



## Fears of post-pandemic 'tsunami of health problems'

Anastasia Tsirtsakis

14/05/2020 3:34:59 PM



General practice consultations and specialist check-ups for chronic disease remain down across the board amid coronavirus fear.



As many as one in 10 people are estimated to have put off cancer screening since the pandemic started.

'There's going to be a tsunami of health problems – it keeps me up at night.'

That is Dr Maria Boulton, GP and a director of the Australian General Practice Alliance. She says coronavirus fears have deterred patients from visiting their doctor at all, despite precautionary measures being taken and the Federal Government's



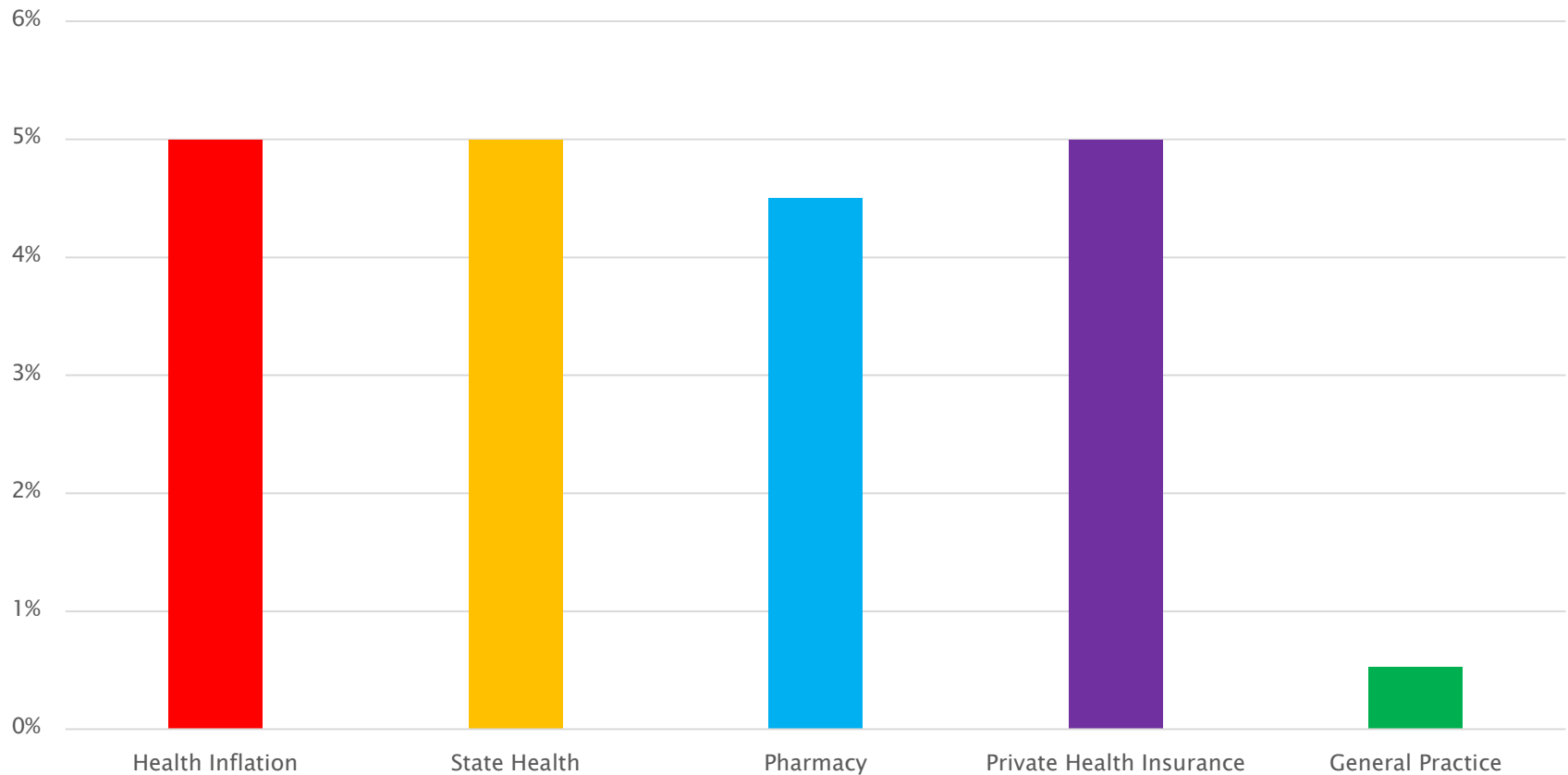


# Strategy & Actions

- ▶ Direct lobbying by Members and GP Owners
- ▶ Federal Election Statement prepared
  - On the website Resources page
  - Based on a submission made to Min Hunt and Shadow Min Butler
- ▶ Letter template prepared to send to MPs and Candidates
  - Aim is to meet and discuss issues.
  - Contains a link to the election statement
- ▶ Preparing a surgery poster
  - Ready by end of week, available on website broadcast via social media.
- ▶ Slide pack and video on the website.

# Why is Your Health being undervalued?

Average annual increase in funding from Federal Government 2010-19



# Why is Your Health being undervalued?

## ▶ Messages

- The Federal Government has given up on supporting your access to General Practice care.
- From 2010 – 2019 health inflation was about 5% per year.
- State health, pharmacy funding and private health insurance all increased by about 5%.
- Your Medicare rebate increased by only 0.5% per year. The Federal Government has also reneged on a 2019 election promise to invest \$450m in General Practice.
- Make sure your GP is supported this Federal Election.
- Consider which Government will support your GP to support your community.

# What can we all do?

- ▶ Discussion