

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**24 May 2018**

### **Greg Hunt backs national pain action plan**

Chronic pain is a significant issue in Australia. Today, Painaustralia welcomed a new announcement by the Minister for Health Greg Hunt of funding for a national action plan on chronic pain management to improve quality of life for the millions of Australians living with pain, their families and carers.

Speaking at Painaustralia's AGM, Minister Hunt's announcement of a national action plan will put in place a clear roadmap to drive a reduction in chronic pain.

Following the announcement Painaustralia's Chairman Robert Regan said, "We are pleased to see the Government's leadership in addressing chronic pain as a national health priority – one of the leading causes of disability, absenteeism and forced early retirement in Australia."

"This will have a significant impact on the lives of millions of Australians who live with chronic pain every day."

Carol Bennett, CEO of Painaustralia said, "A national action plan is an important step towards enabling better awareness, and increased access to prevention and early intervention, treatment and support, and research and evaluation.

"These are the key components to ensuring quality of life and limiting the escalating social and economic costs of unmanaged pain.

"The bipartisan support demonstrated today by the Shadow Minister for Health Catherine King is also welcome.

"A truly national strategy will also require support and input from all state and territory governments as well, and we hope they will support this initiative."

One in five Australians lives with chronic pain (including adolescents and children) and one in three over the age of 65. Pain is also common to many chronic conditions and, if proactively addressed, can significantly reduce the burden of disease.

Chronic pain costs our economy more than \$34 billion per year including; health costs, social security benefits and lost productivity. Pain impacts the wellbeing and mental health of millions of Australians, disrupting families and weakening our communities.

Painaustralia looks forward to working with the Australian Government and our members and partners to progress this important work.

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