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FEDERAL ELECTION: AUSTRALIANS VOTE TO MAINTAIN MEDICARE

With the result of the federal election hanging in the balance, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) says it's apparent that the people of Australia have overwhelmingly voted to reject the Turnbull Government's ongoing attacks on Medicare and the stripping of billions of dollars in funding for public hospitals.

ANMF Federal Secretary Lee Thomas said the Australian people had sent a very strong message to whichever party formed Government: that Australians want to protect the country's successful system of universal healthcare; Medicare matters.

"It shows that our nation's health is a top priority for the people of Australia and that our political leaders must not dismiss their real concerns about the billions in funding stripped from public hospitals around the country. It should definitely show the Coalition Government that Australians will not accept the back door dismantling of Medicare," Ms Thomas said today.

"Voters have shown they want a fair and equitable health system, not one where you can only receive care if you can afford to pay for it.

"As frontline nurses and midwives, we know how important health is and that protecting Australia's world class health system needed to be at the forefront this election. We warned the community throughout the election campaign that higher out of pocket charges for GP visits would make it harder for low-income earners and struggling families to afford basic health checks and that health outcomes would worsen. Well it's clear that people were listening."

Ms Thomas thanked ANMF members and members of the community who worked on its **ICareandIVote** campaign – which identified four election issues for voters: restoring funding for public health; maintaining Medicare; protecting penalty rates, and reversing \$1.8 billion in cuts to aged care).

"Our members worked tirelessly throughout this long election campaign to talk to people about the inequities in health and aged care and how it will only get worse unless our political leaders commit to restoring the billions of dollars cruelly ripped from health and aged care budgets over the past three years," Ms Thomas said.

"In our election campaign, ANMF members told the Australian people if they don't care about Australia's health, then we can't care. They have shown just how much they care. With this support we now stand ready to work with our political leaders to ensure they deliver a fair and equitable health system now and into the future.

"The election shows that whichever party forms Government must put health and aged care at the centre of their policy agenda for the sake of all Australians."

For more information, go to the campaign's website www.ICareandIVote.com.au

The ANMF, with 250,000 members, is the professional and industrial voice for nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing in Australia.

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