

MEDIA RELEASE

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Leading health thinker to run new Grattan program

Grattan Institute is delighted to announce the establishment of a program in health policy, to be run by one of Australia's leading thinkers in the field, Stephen Duckett.

Stephen Duckett, a former Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health (now Health and Ageing), has a reputation for creativity, innovation and excellence both in the theory and the delivery of health policy.

An economist, he has held health care leadership positions in Australia and Canada, and is currently a professor in the Schools of Public Health at La Trobe University and the University of Alberta.

As director of Acute Health Services in the Victorian Health Department in the early 1990s, Professor Duckett transformed relationships between hospitals and the Department through the introduction of casemix (activity-based) funding. This was the first introduction of casemix funding outside the United States, and the first in a capped, publicly funded system.

"He is the ideal person to lead our health program," said Grattan CEO John Daley. "Few people in Australia or anywhere know as much about health policy as Stephen Duckett."

John Daley said the creation of a health program was an essential step for Australia's leading domestic policy think tank.

"With an ageing population and health care costs at 10 per cent of GDP and rising, health will occupy the minds of policy makers and the public for decades to come."

"Yet given its size and importance, there is relatively little policy research in the area. There is a huge opportunity for Grattan Institute to make a contribution to health policy by providing independent, rigorous and practical solutions."

Professor Duckett said he was excited to work at Grattan Institute, which was "well-positioned to make a thoughtful and independent contribution to the policy debate."

He said his program would examine the cost to society of poor health care investments – including waste in the system – and consider ways to improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of Australian health care.

"Health policy is my passion, but it must have a strong analytical and evidence base. Grattan Institute is the ideal place in which to build that base."

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