



## **The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**

Minister for Health

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Life transforming therapy for patients living with an irregular heartbeat**

The Liberal National Government will expand the availability of a lifesaving procedure that treats an irregular heartbeat with more than 18,500 Australian patients expected to benefit.

Cardiac ablation catheters, used for the treatment of atrial fibrillation (arrhythmia), will now be listed on the Government's Prostheses List.

The listing means that private health insurers will now be required to provide cover for this important procedure for the 13 million Australians with private health insurance.

Listing will also reduce waiting times for this procedure in public hospitals by up to two years.

Atrial fibrillation is an irregular heartbeat with symptoms ranging from palpitations, chest discomfort, dizziness and breathlessness that can lead over time to heart failure, stroke and other heart-related complications.

Cardiac ablation is a minimally invasive procedure that involves placing a long, thin tube (called a catheter) into a vein in the leg and pushing it up to the heart.

When the tube reaches the heart, it scars a specific area in the heart chamber that causes the abnormal electrical impulses, thereby restoring normal heart rhythm and function.

As the most common form of heart arrhythmia, atrial fibrillation affects around 460,000 Australians.

Listings are based on advice from the independent Prostheses List Advisory Committee.

The Medical Services Advisory Committee confirmed that the devices are both clinically effective and cost effective to use in privately insured hospital treatment.

The Prostheses List includes 11,000 medical devices with assigned benefits that private health insurers must pay when one of their members receives a listed device as part of surgical treatment in a hospital.

The Liberal National Government is committed to making medical devices more affordable for Australian patients through the public and private hospital systems.

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Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.