



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle



**15 April 2005**

## **GOVERNMENT UNPICKS MEDICARE SAFETY NET**

After only six months the Government is already unpicking the threads of its Medicare safety net.

This broken promise will hit the people of Newcastle hard.

Struggling families will now have to pay an extra \$300 a year in medical costs before they qualify for the safety net.

For people with health care cards who rely on this safety net it's a particularly cruel blow.

In Newcastle there are around 40,000 people holding concession cards who will be significantly affected by the Government's changes.

The safety net was only ever a band-aid solution to saving Medicare, but even keeping this in place is too much to ask of a Government that just doesn't understand the health needs of Australians.

For families with children, for people with chronic illnesses, and for people who experience major surgery, there can be a wide range of costs. Seeing your GP, going to a specialist, having X-Rays, blood tests or ultrasounds all add up. Why didn't the Government take this into account when it set up the safety net?

What also worries the people of Newcastle is that last month the Government allowed increases to their private health insurance premiums of up to 20% - that can add more than \$300 a year to many premiums.

Instead of reining in health costs and strengthening Medicare, the government is whipping the Medicare safety net out from under those who need it most.

The people of Newcastle can be assured that I will continue to hold this Government to account for its broken promises and its ongoing destruction of Medicare.

**For more information contact Sharon Grierson on 4926 1555**

Newcastle  
427 Hunter Street  
Newcastle NSW 2300  
Ph: 02-4926 1555 Fax: 02-4926 1895  
e-mail: Sharon.Grierson.MP@aph.gov.au



Canberra  
Suite R2 88  
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600  
Ph: 02-6277 4221 Fax: 02-6277 8461  
Web Page: [www.newcastle-alp.com](http://www.newcastle-alp.com)