

## Quotable quotes – Rudd “health reforms” (quotes in date order)

*Overall, the spaghetti-like chart for the scheme could have been devised by Barry Jones: little wonder it hasn't been released. The bottom line: everyone will still have someone else to blame .... Claims that the plan is a way of strengthening the states' finances seem bizarre.*

*Prof Henry Ergas, Economics Professor, Harvard & Monash University  
Prof Henry Ergas, Health FAQs for the confused, The Australian, 5/3/10*

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Perhaps such gallows humour is out of place in discussing health-care reforms. But if one did not laugh at the absurdity of Rudd's "fix", the only alternative would be to cry at the shamefully cynical political opportunism with which this retrograde package of non-solutions is presented as the universal panacea for a healthcare system already in extremis.

Tony Morris, QC, Former Queensland Royal Commissioner into Bundaberg Hospital  
Tony Morris QC, The hospital cure: more spin doctors, The Australian, 5/3/10

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The so-called \$50 billion reform package is largely spin, derived by summing the higher federal government share of specific service payments over 15 years, and ignoring the fact that it is already paying that money through the distribution of the GST. The projected gain of \$15 billion to the states and territories may be an overstatement too, because shortening waiting times for elective surgery — as the government is promising — will require more admissions and more money, of which the states will have to find at least 40%. The same basic problem, redefined.

Prof John Deeble – architect of Medicare, 9/3/10  
(Ref: Viewpoint - Reforming Australian Healthcare, The first instalment, John S Deeble eMJA-Rapid online publication 9/3/10)

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The recently announced and much trumpeted “healthcare reform” package is a ‘tax–grab’ sandwich with a dab of casemix to give it a health flavour .... It appears that another opportunity to implement constructive improvements to our healthcare system has been strangled in the rush to snatch one third of the states’ GST

Stephen Milgate, Executive Director, ADF 20/3/10  
ADF media release, GST snatch not much to do with healthcare improvement, 20/3/2010

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Ladies and gentlemen, this would be the biggest change to the Australian health and hospital system since the introduction of Medicare. And the profession right across the country is getting in behind what we are saying. We are backed by the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Nursing Federation, the Australian Health and Hospitals Association, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, the Australian Medical Students Association, Catholic

Health Australia, the Australian General Practice Network, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

Kevin Rudd, 22/3/10

Federal Leaders Health Debate – National Press Club, Canberra

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There's not going to be one extra penny going to Victorian hospitals for the next four years ..... This plan is not necessarily going to help us one little bit ..... Just shifting percentages across the board isn't necessarily going to stop the blame game.

Dr Harry Hemley, President AMA Victoria

ABC National Radio Interview, 8/4/10

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Reserve Bank Board member, Roger Corbett has attacked Kevin Rudd's hospital reform plan as "bizarre" and a "formula for disaster"..... It's not going to resolve anything. In fact it's conceivably going to significantly worsen the situation.

Roger Corbett, former Woolworths Chief Executive and Chairman of the Westmead Children's Hospital Board and Board member of the Reserve Bank of Australia  
Interview with Seven News, Sunday 6.00 pm, 11/4/10

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Let me be plain: I do not believe the Commonwealth plan has the right measures to improve our hospitals and improve our healthcare system .... The Commonwealth is proposing to pay for its increased contribution to hospitals by taking the States' and the Territories' GST revenue and re-labelling it as their own revenue . . . . The chart shows that in the absence of re-badging our GST, the Commonwealth's proposal would only increase its share of recurrent hospital funding by 1 percentage point - from 41 per cent to 42 per cent .... This adds negligible new money to the system.

John Brumby, Vic Premier,

National Press Club, Putting Patients first, 14/4/2010

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Despite claims to the contrary, Rudd is deliberately playing the blame game. In claiming to have a solution to hospital and health policy and using the vastly superior taxing powers of the commonwealth he can use the blame game as a ruse to buy votes. When the commonwealth runs everything that ruse will disappear.

It is all very well to throw around billions of dollars, but they are taxpayer dollars no matter how the states and commonwealth distribute them.

Gary Johns, 15/4/10 former Labor Special Minister for State in the Keating Government,

Federal Labor Parliamentarian and member for Petrie 1987-1996 PhD Qld University in Political Science, Fullbright Professional Award for studies in Aust/US relations, MA Monash Economics, A/Prof Public policy institute, Australian Catholic University  
(Ref: Brumby stands up to PM on health, [The Australian](#), 15/4/10)

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What is in the current Commonwealth proposal does not solve the blame game. In many respects, it only adds to it.

Ken Baxter, Senior public servant, former Head of NSW & Vic Premier's Department  
ABC Radio National, Dissent grows as more health plan released, 15/4/10