



National Association of  
Specialist Obstetricians & Gynaecologists

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## **Pregnant women voice their anger at cuts to Obstetrics Medicare funding**

Thousands of expectant mothers are calling on the Government to partially restore Medicare funding so a doctor of their choice can care for them and their babies.

The collective anger of these women and their families is demonstrated in the signing of hundreds of postcards and a 3000-strong petition, that will be delivered to Federal Parliament today by the peak body of specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The women patients are calling on the Government to restore the Extended Medicare Safety Net (EMSN) for Obstetrics to cover at least the average out of pocket expenses incurred when opting for a specialist to look after their pregnancy and birth. The EMSN used to cover 80% of their out of pocket costs for obstetric care but now it covers just 20%.

As a result of these cuts, more and more expectant mothers are being tipped out of the private health system and into overcrowded public hospital beds. This will be exacerbated by the means testing of the Private Health Insurance rebate.

The President of the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG), Dr Andrew Foote said there was growing evidence that, since the Government dramatically cut the EMSN for Obstetrics in the 2009/10 Budget, more pregnant women were being forced onto the public health system where there may be less continuity of care with more junior doctors.

“We know these are tough economic times but families are doing it tough too. Through these petitions and postcards our patients are making their voice heard,” Dr Foote said. “Our patients are not asking for the Government to cover all of their medical expenses but they do want a fair go. And the just thing for families is to have the average out-of-pocket expenses (about \$2,000) for a pregnant patient and her baby covered by the Government.”

We look forward to working with the Prime Minister and Minister Plibersek to ensure all women and their families have affordable access to high quality obstetric care regardless of where they live or what their socio economic background is,” said Dr Foote. ENDS

**For all Media Inquiries, please contact: Dr Andrew Foote. President of NASOG 0417 675 212.**

NB: Dr foote is a working obstetrician and may be with patients at the time of your call.

A copy of NASOG's Pre Budget submission can be downloaded from its website [www.nasog.com.au](http://www.nasog.com.au)

**About NASOG:** The **National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists** (NASOG) is a not for profit professional association representing specialist obstetricians and gynaecologists, the leading providers of specialist women's health services. Australia is recognised as one of the safest countries in the world to give birth or to be born. **NASOG** strongly endorses our **collaborative, proactive model of obstetric and midwifery care** for all women giving birth in Australia. The safety of this existing model of care is confirmed by research from Australia and around the world.