



# Sceptics question health reforms

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West Australians have become more sceptical about the Government's health reforms since Julia Gillard took the top job, a survey has shown.

The poll of more than 600 people on behalf of health insurer HBF and *The West Australian* showed that under Kevin Rudd's government last year 36 per cent of people believed the reforms would improve health services.

But by June the support level had fallen to 29 per cent, while 41 per cent of people were sceptical that it would improve WA's healthcare system.

More than half of respondents believed the plans, which include GP super clinics and a new network known as Medicare Locals, would only lead to more bureaucracy. People aged 25 to 44 were the most wary of the reforms.

Australian Medical Association WA president Dave Mountain said he was not surprised by the results, which reflected growing scepticism that the much-touted reforms would improve services.

"We've had a very protracted process since the health reform process was first mooted and lots of talks, but as time has gone on there is not a lot of evidence it's making a difference," he said.

"I'm not surprised many people think it will just add to the amount of bureaucracy because that's the concern we've raised about Medicare Locals."

But Acting Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the Gillard Government had achieved national agreement on health reform in February.

"The WA Government did not sign off on the original health agreement, so the West Australian community would not have benefitted from the Commonwealth's massive investment in more doctors, more beds and better health services," he said.

"That's why the agreement reached in February was so significant."

Mr Butler said the Gillard Government's national health reforms would injection \$352 million into WA up to 2014.

