



**Wagin Argus**  
**19-May-2011**  
**Page: 3**  
**General News**  
**Market: Wagin WA**  
**Circulation: 743**  
**Type: Regional**  
**Size: 159.13 sq.cms**  
**Frequency: --W----**

## Residents urged to fight health rebate change

HOSPITAL Benefit Fund (HBF) managing director Rob Bransby has called on HBF members in the Great Southern to speak up against the federal government's proposal to means test the 30 per cent rebate on private health insurance.

Means testing the rebate, which currently goes to almost all Australians with health insurance, is being proposed by the government with legislation likely to hit the Federal Parliament as part of the federal budget.

A new report by independent financial analysts Deloitte has shown means testing the rebate would significantly push up the price of private health insurance.

Mr Bransby said he was specifically calling on HBF members in the Albany region to raise the matter with their local

politicians.

"We have many thousands of members in the Great Southern region who are going to be either directly or indirectly affected by this proposed change," Mr Bransby said.

"I'd particularly like to draw our members' attention to a report published by independent financial analysts, Deloitte, on behalf of the Australian Health Insurance Association.

"The report highlights that the measure will ultimately push up premiums for everyone with health cover, whether or not they were directly affected by the means test, and will place a significant additional burden on the public health system. HBF estimates that about 70,000 HBF members would be immediately affected by the means test, including

many in the Great Southern with those losing their rebate facing premium increases of more than 40 per cent."

Mr Bransby said the Deloitte report showed the measure would also hurt every Australian family and individual with health cover.

"The Deloitte report shows that premiums would rise by an additional 10 per cent over five years as a direct result," Mr Bransby said.

"It completely torpedoes the government's claim that this will only affect the wealthy.

"It's vulnerable groups like pensioners and families that will end up paying the price of this legislative change."

HBF was one of the strongest opponents of the means test proposal when it was first announced by the Rudd government in 2009 and

subsequently rejected in the Senate. This time HBF's managing director is appealing to Great Southern health fund members to make their views known through HBF's Save Your Rebate campaign website at [saveyourrebate.com](http://saveyourrebate.com)

"As a not-for-profit fund we aren't interested in politics but given the projected impact of this change on our members we have no choice but to oppose the government on this," Mr Bransby said.

"We recognise the government has some hard decisions to make but we've always argued that penalising those who take responsibility for their health and who do most to take the pressure off the public system is bad policy."