

# Foreword



I am pleased to introduce this supplement on research in primary health care.

In 2001, the Australian Government introduced the Primary Health Care Research Education and Development Program. One element of this is the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, which commenced in 2003 and is based at the Australian National University.

The Institute aims to draw together research capacity focusing on policy questions relevant to Australia's primary health care system with a view to establishing what works best and disseminating it to researchers, practitioners, policy makers and the community. Areas under consideration include:

- developments in federal/state relationships;
- different funding arrangements for new or existing services/models; and

- innovation in organisation and linkages within the primary health care sector.

This supplement reports the outcomes of the first round of the Institute's research. In particular, it addresses the important question of the long-term sustainability of primary health care.

The supplement is a valuable contribution to a better understanding of primary health care in Australia. It highlights some of the important political, institutional, economic and workforce factors that need to be considered in the development of primary health care policy to deliver sustainable system improvements.

**Tony Abbott**

Minister for Health and Ageing