

Greens policy offers healthy ideals

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The Greens' call for emphatic health reforms in prevention, funding, chronic care and dental care, present rational options to improve a health system that is currently captive to old ways, the Consumers Health Forum said today.

"Most health analysts would agree that many of the reforms suggested by the Greens would produce better outcomes for those Australians most likely to suffer ill-health," the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said.

"An effective national prevention program, a single health funding agency that bridges divisions between hospital and community services, changes to Medicare to encourage team-based care for the chronically ill and a comprehensive dental scheme --- who can question these reforms as a path to a healthier Australia?

"We accept that there are significant behavioural and constitutional barriers to these reforms, but Australia needs to take another stride forward as it did with Medicare 35 years ago to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

"Obesity and chronic illness are now among the greatest challenges that our health system needs to counter. The remedies are well within our power.

"We fail ourselves through the current reluctance to confront the commercial and cultural influences that encourage obesity. We know that reorganisation of our community-based health services would prevent

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and treat chronic illness more effectively. And we have the means in a prosperous nation to end the misery that many thousands of Australians experience because they can't afford the dentist.

"Australia's leaders speak with pride about our health system, while hundreds of thousands can't get the health care they need.

"As the Greens health policy shows, there is much within our grasp to ensure that Australia has a truly universal health system," Ms Wells said.

ENDS

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