

**E & O (excepted)**

**EASTLEY:** The NSW Premier Kristina Keneally has welcomed today's announcement on funding for aged care but says her State bureaucrats need more time to analyse the proposal. Premier Keneally warns she won't sign up to the Prime Minister's national health plan if it puts her State at a disadvantage. She's speaking with AM's Sabra Lane.

**KENEALLY:** What we see is important is not just the new aged care beds, but they are absolutely required. Also the Commonwealth's commitment to provide funding for patients who are in hospital beds now, but should be in an aged care bed and also to expand those multi-purpose services which in rural and regional parts of the State are effectively aged care services.

So that sort of expansion, that sort of funding is very welcome. Combine that in with the additional beds. The Commonwealth has also indicated in their announcement today that they'll be taking over policy and funding for home and community care. That's services like Meals on Wheels and we'd like to see the detail of that; understand how that would work for example with younger people with a disability who also receive home and community care. How that integrates in with the aged care services the Commonwealth already provides.

We think that's a positive step forward, the home and community care, it's something that NSW has long called for, but again because of the complexity of these systems, because of the complexity of the funding arrangements, we do want to work with the Commonwealth and get the detail we need.

**LANE:** The Victorian Premier, John Brumby, released his own plan last week calling for 50/50 funding split between the Commonwealth and the State Governments – which plan do you support?

**KENEALLY:** Well it's not as simple as that. We think this option should be on the table but we would also encourage all States and the Commonwealth to come to COAG with an open and flexible mind.

The change that we all want, all First Ministers want change to the Health system, all First Ministers are united in that desire. But it must be the right change and we do continue to have hoped that we can reach agreement, come the COAG meeting.

Tonight I'll be chairing discussions with the other State and Territory leaders as we look at the information we've been

provided in the last few days and we work towards an agreement that works for all of Australia.

LANE: Premier, it's been reported that you told unions on Friday that NSW was prepared to scuttle the deal if it wasn't enough. Is this true?

KENEALLY: Well, NSW wants change but it must be the right change. We won't sign up to a plan that puts NSW taxpayers and NSW families at in a disadvantaged position.

Now, I have been consistently consulting with the unions, with clinicians, academics, consumers, who've all attended a working seminar NSW held a few weeks ago on health reform. All of these key stakeholders have identified the complexity of what we're undertaking; they've identified the necessity to have additional information and to do additional work before complete agreement can be reached.

LANE: Are you prepared to scuttle it if it's not good enough for NSW?

KENEALLY: I'm not going to sign up to a deal that puts NSW in a disadvantaged position.

LANE: Mike Rann says it's good enough for South Australia. Is there an element of politicking here with you and John Brumby? You're both going to State elections within the next 12 months.

KENEALLY: No, this is about the change required in the health system and we absolutely stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Prime Minister in recognising that our health system across the country requires fundamental change.

To continue as we've been going is not sustainable. There is now an historic opportunity with the Commonwealth willing to put their hand up to be part of the solution to work towards the right solution.

But change for the sake of change does no one any good. Change that brings improved health care now and a sustainable system into the future is the right change.

EASTLEY: The NSW Premier, Kristina Keneally speaking with Sabra Lane.

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