



Senator Sue Boyce
Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

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**GOVERNMENT BUNGLING ON E-HEALTH
INTRODUCTION**

The Rudd Government's electronic health system had a snowball's chance in hell of being ready by its announced introduction date of July 1, Liberal Senator Sue Boyce, said today.

"This system which is supposed to be a state-of-the-art nationally integrated system to provide all Australians with their own identifier number is crippled by inept management, hopeless dithering and a complete lack of any political leadership," Senator Boyce said.

The system is also supposed to provide identifier numbers to all health care providers.

Senator Boyce, a member of the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, said evidence she had been provided on February 10 during Estimates about the state of the e-health network had been wildly and falsely optimistic.

"I was assured then by a senior Health Department bureaucrat that trials of the e-health system were already underway yet only days ago a Health Department spokeswoman was quoted as saying that work is yet to begin on the system," Senator Boyce said.

"I have written to the Health Minister, Nicola Roxon, asking her to explain why what I was told on February 10 in the Senate hearings appears in retrospect to have been so wrong and so utterly misleading, given the statement by the Health Department spokeswoman published recently," she said.

Senator Boyce said the hopeless management of the e-health system by the Rudd Government was underlined by the fact that the legislation to establish the system had not even been introduced to the Senate.

"The fact that we are only ten weeks or so away from the July 1 implementation date and the Rudd Government hasn't even got around to having the legislation required to establish the system introduced, speaks volumes about how badly the whole process has been mismanaged," Senator Boyce said.

"This is another example of how the Rudd Government handles the implementation of its grand schemes – big promises, massive spin and then hopeless bungling. Clearly, there is a pattern of failure across the board," Senator Boyce said.

"I would not be surprised, given how long it will take to get the system eventually bedded down, that we will go to the election with – at best – a patched-together and incomplete system," she said.

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Media contact: Russell Grenning on 0448 193 903 or (07) 3862 4244