



Senator Sue Boyce
Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 7, 2010

**PRIME MINISTER DRAGGED INTO HEALTH CARE IDENTIFIERS
MESS**

The Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has been forced to intervene in the increasingly frantic attempts by Health Minister Nicola Roxon to get the national e-health system up and running by the scheduled July 1 date, Liberal Senator Sue Boyce said today.

Senator Boyce said Mr Rudd had been forced to send his own representative to a teleconference of all stakeholders last Monday for the first time.

"I understand that over the past three weeks or so there has been any number of emergency teleconferences initiated by Minister's Roxon's Department with everybody from the Australian Medical Association to the Privacy Commissioner involved," Senator Boyce said.

"What is becoming obvious to stakeholders is that the apparently once cosy relationship between the Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) and the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) is fracturing," she said.

"As the scheduled implementation date, now only about eight weeks away, comes closer and closer, DoHA and NEHTA are bickering in front of other stakeholders, trying to shift the blame for what is obviously going to be a huge failure. Stakeholders are getting a bit weary of all this panic and indecision."

Senator Boyce said it was no surprise that the Prime Minister had sent along his own representative to try to get some coherence and some progress.

"At this late stage, medical software vendors are waiting for a letter from DoHA which is supposed to address their concerns and, it seems, this could mean the creation of a whole new set of Health Identifiers just for them," Senator Boyce said.

"It is obvious to everybody that the proposed Regulations for the Health Identifiers legislation are a hopeless mess and utterly incomprehensible. It's a shambles."

Senator Boyce said the necessary legislation was yet to be introduced into the Senate and Health Minister Roxon was refusing to say when that would happen.

"This continuing delay is evidence enough that Ms Roxon cannot resolve the crisis and provide some firm leadership for what should be – and must be – a cornerstone of health care reform."

Ends...

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