



# Health change brains named

BY PAUL SMITH

PRIME Minister Mr Kevin Rudd has named the 10 men and women tasked with devising the blueprint to transform Australia's ailing health care system.

The National Health and Hospital Reform Commission, a product of Labor's election pledges, will include two GPs: former AMA president Dr Mukesh Haikerwal and Professor Justin Beilby, dean of the University of Adelaide medical school.

The commission will be chaired by Dr Christine Bennett, the chief medical officer for health fund MBF Australia.

It has yet to receive its terms of reference but the commission will help set performance benchmarks for improved efficiency under the Australian Health Care Agreements, due to be signed off in June.

The commission will also devise ways to tackle the burden of chronic disease and

the ageing population.

Dr Haikerwal said commission members were expected to commit two days a week to their role, with the aim of producing an interim report by the end of the year and a full report within 18 months.

"Primarily this is about producing a seamless system," he said.

"I'm conscious coming from my daily life in general practice of how much we spend working round the system rather than making it work for us.

That has to change."

The commissioners come from various backgrounds — including policy experts, former politicians and academics — many of them having in the past pushed conflicting plans for reform.

## **The National Health and Hospital Reform Commission**

- Chairwoman: Dr Christine Bennett, chief medical officer at MBF Australia.
- Mr Rob Knowles, former

Victorian state health minister and former chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia.

- Mr Geoff Gallop, former premier of WA.
- Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, Melbourne GP and past-president of the AMA.
- Professor Stephen Duckett, health economist and former secretary of the Federal Health Department.
- Professor Ron Penny, emeritus professor of medicine, University of NSW.
- Ms Sabina Knight, senior lecturer, Centre for Remote Health and remote area nurse.
- Dr Sharon Willcox, director of consulting firm Health Policy Solutions.
- Professor Justin Beilby, executive dean of the University of Adelaide medical school.
- Ms Mary Ann O'Loughlin, director, The Allen Consulting Group and former senior policy adviser on social policy to former prime minister Mr Paul Keating.