



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

## Tony Abbott MHR

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### **Private Health Insurance Ombudsman**

Mr John Powlay, the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman, passed away on 16 January 2007. He had held the position of the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman since November 2002.

As Ombudsman, Mr Powlay's role was to resolve consumer complaints about private health insurance and be the umpire in dispute resolution at all levels within the private health insurance industry. He was a passionate consumer advocate for the almost 10 million Australians with private health insurance, a respected industry figure known for his impartiality, and wise counsel to Government.

Mr Powlay contributed to the public sector over the past 23 years in the areas of social policy and the management of government services. Much of his public service career was spent in the then Department of Social Security, where he filled various management and policy roles between 1983 and 2000 and also spent time in the social policy agencies of the British Government.

Mr Powlay was appointed Senior Assistant Ombudsman in the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman in 2001 before being appointed the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman the following year.

Mr Powlay introduced the annual State of the Health Funds report, a consumer focused survey of health fund performance and choices. This achievement will provide a lasting legacy of his commitment to the needs of private health consumers.

On behalf of the Government, I extend my heartfelt sympathy to John's wife and four children.

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