



Interview with Stephen Leeder, Director, Menzies Centre for Health Policy, regarding the Commonwealth's...

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Interview with Stephen Leeder, Director, **Menzies Centre for Health Policy**, regarding the Commonwealth's plans to build the new National Health and Hospital Network, what it means, and what the benefits will be. Leeder discusses the difficulty that the Fed Govt will have getting the legislation passed. He says that it will require a lot of political energy and a lot of good management. Leeder discusses the difficulty the Fed Govt will have getting states to hand over power. Leeder discusses the 'sweeteners' in the package, such as remarks by Kevin Rudd, Australian Prime Minister, that they will not be taking over all of the financing. Leeder discusses the element in the proposal that would see smaller areas looking after their own hospitals rather than huge hospital boards. He says that one of the aspects of the proposal is to give back power to communities. Leeder says that under the proposal the Fed Govt would not take a 'one size fits all' approach, which he thinks is necessary. Leeder says that he thinks that NSW will gain a lot from this move. However, he notes that it does depend on the flexibility of the Fed Govt to make certain that they can make change in line with national standards. Leeder predicts that it will take ten years before the changes will display their positive effects and settle down. He compares this to the implementation of Medicare and Medibank. Leeder says that he thinks that the Fed Govt's proposal is an even bigger deal than bringing in Medicare. Leeder discusses the inclusion of provisions for hospitals to engage and work more with their communities and in turn communities working with the hospitals. Leeder stresses that he is optimistic about the proposal.