

**TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES**

This petition from Soroptimist International of Australia, comprising 82 clubs and 1500 members, located from Cairns, through Queensland, New South Wales, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia to Port Hedland, draws the attention of the House to this anomaly in Medicare, affecting all Australian women at menopause.

Currently the Government offers free bone densitometry to women at age 70. This is far too late for simple, inexpensive, mostly side effect free intervention for those who will develop osteoporosis.

Research by Prof B E Christopher Nordin, AO, Royal Adelaide Hospital, has demonstrated that, if a woman is scanned at the onset of menopause, her risk of developing osteoporosis can be identified and preventative treatment is easily managed.

The latest available costing from Access Economics in 2002 found that the direct cost of fractures due to osteoporosis was \$1.9billion, with the total cost estimated \$8billion. As the population ages, this can only escalate.

**We therefore ask the House to take all necessary steps to enable a Medicare number to be allocated so that bone densitometry is available to all Australian women at menopause.**