



# Private Health Insurer Pandemic Commitment Monitoring

3 July 2026

## Background

Private patient access to health treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic was limited due to hospital and broader social restrictions put in place to limit the spread of the virus.

These restrictions led to fewer claims for benefits by people who continued to maintain their private health cover. Some of these claims were expected to materialise following the pandemic. In instances where these deferred claims for private health insurance benefits are not expected to be made at all, this constitutes a permanent saving for insurers.

In response, many private health insurers voluntarily committed not to benefit from the pandemic and to return permanent savings to their policyholders. Many insurers who did not make a public commitment nevertheless provided support to their policyholders.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, along with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, monitored private health insurers against their commitments and the support provided to policyholders.

We intend this to be its final pandemic commitment monitoring report.

## Industry permanent savings and givebacks

Table 1 shows total permanent claims savings and total givebacks provided to policyholders from the start of the pandemic to 31 December 2025. Definitions are provided below.

Table 1: Summary of private health insurers' permanent claims savings and givebacks to policyholders, March 2020 to 31 December 2025

Description	Amount
Cumulative estimated permanent claims savings to 31 December 2025	\$4,838 million
Cumulative givebacks paid to 31 December 2025	\$5,058 million
Givebacks as a per cent of estimated permanent claims savings	104.5%

A summary of private health insurers' permanent claims savings and givebacks to policyholders for each insurer is provided in **Appendix A**. The table outlines whether an insurer made a commitment, and if so, whether that commitment has been met as at 31 December 2025.

Table 2 summarises the different ways private health insurers have returned savings to policyholders. Definitions are provided below.

**Table 2: Summary of givebacks by private health insurers paid to 31 December 2025**

Description	Amount
Cashback to policyholders	\$2,948 million
Reduced premiums	\$1,838 million
Expanded benefits at no additional cost	\$163 million
Other	\$109 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,058 million</b>

**Definitions**

**Permanent Claims Savings**

While all insurers were able to develop their own definition of permanent claims savings, typical definitions are the estimated amount of net missing claims that are unlikely to return.

Cumulative estimated permanent claims savings to 31 December 2025 is the sum of the estimated permanent claims savings identified from the start of the pandemic to 31 December 2025.

**Givebacks**

Givebacks are actions which are intended to return the permanent claims savings to directly benefit members, for example (not exhaustive):

- cashbacks
- reduced premiums
- expanded benefits at no extra cost.

Cumulative givebacks to 31 December 2025 are the sum of givebacks from the start of the pandemic to 31 December 2025.

**Reduced premiums**

Reduced premiums include:

- deferring an approved increase in premiums to a date beyond the intended implementation on 1 April of the relevant year. We directed insurers to cease deferring premium increases from 1 April 2024.
- cancelled premium increases so the policyholder continues to pay a lower premium
- suspending or waiving premiums for a period in cases of financial hardship
- discounts on premiums
- seeking a lower annual premium increase than budgeted for, where the lower premium sought is attributed directly to supporting policyholders.

**Expanded benefits at no additional cost**

In response to the pandemic, many insurers have added additional benefits without pricing them into premiums, for example:

- provided private cover for the ‘lung and chest’ clinical category even if not required within the product tier
- provided telehealth or other services to policyholders
- rolled over unused general benefit annual limits.

**Further information and the reporting framework**

To ensure consistent reporting from health insurers, a [Monitoring Framework](#) for reporting pandemic commitments was developed in collaboration with the health insurance sector and other regulatory agencies (specifically, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority).

## Appendix A: Savings and Givebacks by Insurer

Table A provides the permanent claims savings, givebacks, and status for each insurer for the period March 2020 to 31 December 2025. Insurers giveback activities varied from year to year.

**Table A: Cumulative permanent claims savings and givebacks to policyholders by insurer, March 2020 to 31 December 2025**

Insurer	Permanent claims savings	Givebacks paid	Givebacks paid as a % of claims savings	Commitment met
<b>Insurers who made a commitment</b>	\$4,685.0m	\$4,918.9m	105.0%	
AIA Health Insurance	\$10.2m	\$10.4m	101.7%	Yes
BUPA Health Insurance	\$1,347.0m	\$1,347.1m	100.0%	Yes
CBHS Health Fund	\$81.0m	\$98.9m	122.2%	Yes
Defence Health	\$98.8m	\$98.8m	100.0%	Yes
Doctors' Health Fund	\$20.2m	\$24.2m	119.5%	Yes
GMHBA	\$147.9m	\$154.0m	104.1%	Yes
HBF Health	\$243.3m	\$257.5m	105.8%	Yes
Health Care Insurance	\$2.0m	\$3.4m	164.5%	Yes
Health Insurance Fund of Australia	\$10.4m	\$12.9m	123.8%	Yes
Health Partners	\$24.8m	\$28.3m	113.9%	Yes
Hospitals Contribution Fund of Australia	\$592.9m	\$592.9m	100.0%	Yes
Latrobe Health Services	\$17.1m	\$18.9m	110.8%	Yes
Medibank Private	\$1,657.8m	\$1,771.7m	106.9%	Yes
Mildura District Hospital Fund	\$20.2m	\$27.1m	134.2%	Yes
Navy Health	\$17.0m	\$17.0m	100.0%	Yes
NIB Health Funds	\$146.4m	\$169.9m	116.1%	Yes
Peoplecare Health	\$47.2m	\$47.2m	100.0%	Yes
Queensland Teachers' Union Health Fund ^	\$19.5m	\$55.1m	282.6%	Yes
St Luke's Medical and Hospital Benefits Association	\$10.1m	\$10.6m	104.8%	Yes
Teachers Federation Health	\$146.2m	\$147.1m	100.6%	Yes
Westfund	\$24.7m	\$25.9m	104.5%	Yes
<b>Insurers who did not make a commitment</b>	\$153.1m	\$138.7m	90.6%	
ACA Health Benefits Fund	\$6.9m	\$1.5m	21.4%	N/A
Australian Unity Health	\$114.5m	\$115.4m	100.7%	N/A
CBHS Corporate Health	-	-	-	N/A
Cessnock District Health Benefits Fund	\$0.6m	\$0.1m	23.5%	N/A
National Health Benefits Australia	\$9.8m	\$3.8m	38.7%	N/A
Phoenix Health Fund	\$1.8m	\$3.6m	199.6%	N/A
Police Health	-	-	-	N/A
Queensland Country Health Fund	\$14.6m	\$12.0m	82.1%	N/A
Reserve Bank Health Society	\$4.8m	\$2.3m	48.3%	N/A
<b>Industry</b>	\$4,838.0m	\$5,057.6m	104.5%	

^ Insurer merged with Teachers Federation Health on 1 July 2025.