



Guaranteeing Medicare – overview

The Government is increasing Medicare funding by \$6 billion over the forward estimates from \$19.5 billion in 2012–13, to \$25 billion in 2018–19, to \$31 billion in 2022–23. Funding of \$1.1 billion will support Australia’s doctors and a comprehensive primary care package will help tackle chronic disease and increase access to local health services, including a new heart health check under Medicare and increased patient rebates for 176 GP services from 1 July 2019. The Government will reduce out of pocket costs for patients by increasing the Medicare rebate for important diagnostic services, including ultrasound and x-ray imaging. This will support Australians’ access to bulk-billed diagnostic imaging services. We are investing \$151.9 million to expand the number of fully Medicare-eligible MRI machines to more than 50 newly funded units in the past 12 months. New Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) services for MRI of the breast will be introduced and new and amended Medicare-eligible services will support breast cancer, prostate cancer and brain surgery patients, people having x-rays and patients in private hospital emergency departments and intensive care units.

Why is this important?

The Government’s commitment to Medicare is rock solid.

Giving people more affordable access to universal health care is a key pillar of the Government’s long term health plan and will save lives. The right scans and tests are crucial for both patients and doctors when deciding the best treatment options. Primary care is the cornerstone of an effective health system that ensures people can access the services and care they need close to home. More services and better access to primary care – along with better support for doctors – will also help reduce pressures on hospitals.

The Medicare Guarantee Fund ensures this commitment to Medicare can be delivered. Established in 2017–18, it allocates \$36.6 billion in guaranteed funds for spending on the MBS and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in 2019–20.

Who will benefit?

All Australians benefit from access to Medicare. Guaranteeing Medicare will help ensure that they receive access to universal health care when and where they need it.

How much will this cost?

This will cost \$6 billion over the forward estimates.