



Guaranteeing Medicare – strengthening primary care

The Government will strengthen primary health care with a \$1.1 billion commitment, building on a \$512 million investment for primary care in the 2018–19 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. Further investment of \$448.5 million will provide additional funding to practitioners to support more flexible care models and health outcomes. This is complemented by increased incentive payments of \$201.5 million to General Practice focused on quality of care and increased patient rebates of \$187.2 million for 176 GP services from 1 July 2019. Through the Stronger Rural Health Strategy, the Government is investing \$62.2 million for a new rural generalist training pathway and continuing to develop new incentive arrangements to attract more rural GPs. Five National Strategic Action Plans will be implemented for osteoporosis, kidney disease, rare diseases, heart disease and stroke, and children’s health. A new heart health check has been implemented. The Childhood Immunisation Education Campaign will be extended. The Government will also invest in national projects such as the Heart Kids Action Plan and the Paediatric Telecare Service.

Why is this important?

Primary care is the cornerstone of an effective and sustainable health system that ensures access to the highest quality health care. Additional funding will supplement Medicare to support individual-focused care and more flexible approaches to patient management. More local services will improve access to care and relieve pressure on our hospitals. National action plans will save and protect lives. There are still some areas with lower immunisation coverage and some children are receiving their vaccinations later than recommended. This complements the Government’s strong No Jab, No Pay policy.

Who will benefit?

Strengthening primary care will benefit all Australians. They will have access to new and improved health services and treatments. Improved vaccination rates not only save the lives of those who are vaccinated but also provide protection to some of our most vulnerable citizens who cannot be immunised – through herd immunity.

How much will this cost?

This will cost \$1.1 billion from 2018–19 to 2022–23.