

MEDIA RELEASE

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Medicare anniversary data proof that investing in Medicare reaps rewards

Early bulk billing data released today — on the 40th anniversary of Medicare — is encouraging proof of the value of investing in Australia's universal health scheme.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said the AMA had argued repeatedly through its [Modernise Medicare](#) campaign for improved indexation of all Medicare rebates and additional funding for primary care.

"We had a plan to Modernise Medicare and the government listened, making a significant downpayment of around \$6 billion for primary care — including bulk billing incentives and increasing rebates — in last year's budget," Professor Robson said.

"We advocated for additional funding because we knew it would make a difference. These early bulk billing statistics are encouraging signs that the investment is starting to deliver for many patients.

"The decision to triple the bulk billing incentive for most standard GP consultations means vulnerable people in our communities — particularly in rural and regional areas — are benefiting from Medicare being given some long overdue attention."

Professor Robson said while the investment in Medicare had delivered results and appears to have arrested the decline of bulk billing rates in general practice, further reform and investment was needed to ensure the system continued to support improved access and affordability for patients.

"Medicare is like a cherished family home that's in need of a renovation — it's still liveable, but 40 years on, the health needs of the community have changed significantly putting additional pressure on the scheme.

"The upcoming budget is a chance to double down on the success of the incentives and investment delivered last year and invest further in Medicare. We now have the early proof that investing in the right way in Medicare can deliver returns.

"There is more work to be done. This government has inherited years of neglect, and while it took some very significant steps in the last budget, Medicare has not kept up with the changing health environment, and more needs to be done, including through improved funding arrangements.

"We must adapt it to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, across the full spectrum care — both for general practice and non-GP specialist care.

"But today's figures remind us that on its 40th anniversary, Medicare is still a national treasure — it simply needs the attention and investment Australia's patients deserve."

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