



The RACGP calls on the next Australian government to invest in quality and sustainable general practice services for the health of all Australians

Start strengthening general practice services by:

1. reinstating annual indexation of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) patient rebates immediately
2. introducing MBS patient rebates for non face-to-face services (for example, video consultations)
3. committing to properly fund quality and comprehensive general practice through implementation of the patient-centred medical home.

Because general practice:

- provides affordable healthcare to patients when and where they need it
- delivers early preventive care
- helps patients and carers manage chronic disease
- keeps patients out of hospitals.

General practice is the foundation of Australia's healthcare system

Nearly 90% of the Australian population see a GP each year

This year, GPs and their teams will deliver 140 million general practice services to Australians

Australian general practice is in crisis:



- MBS patient rebates for general practice services have been frozen
- research in primary healthcare is being dismantled
- GP training has been severely disrupted by sector change
- GP morale is at an all-time low
- patients are experiencing increasing out-of-pocket costs.

Quality and sustainable general practice means:



- accessible primary healthcare for people in cities, regions and rural areas
- responsive and comprehensive care catering to differing patient needs
- well-trained and supported GP registrars, GPs and general practice nurses
- ongoing research to support GPs to provide evidence-based care
- practices can afford to stay open to provide comprehensive services to their local population.

Why general practice?

The evidence is clear: accessible primary healthcare leads to significant improvements in preventive care, patient outcomes, patient satisfaction and reductions in healthcare costs.

General practice is the foundation of Australia's healthcare system and the solution to many of the problems we face. Sustained investment in general practice is desperately needed to address the challenges facing Australia's ageing population. Unless the next Australian government can deliver better support for general practice services healthcare costs will continue to spiral.

'Australia's fragmented health system points to the need to strengthen primary healthcare, particularly to better manage the large number of patients with multiple chronic conditions ...

Australia is fortunate to benefit from a long-established tradition of general practice doctors... this tradition provides Australia with a natural leader in the supervision and provision of primary care and a focal point through which care can be coordinated ...'

— OECD Review of health care quality: Australia 2015

What does the next Australian government need to do?

These actions represent the first steps the next Australian government can take to start the process of strengthening quality and sustainable general practice.

1. Immediately reinstate annual indexation of the MBS

The RACGP calls on the incoming Australian government to immediately reinstate annual indexation of the MBS patient rebates for general practice services, so that patient rebates keep pace with the cost of providing quality healthcare.

2. Introduce MBS patient rebates for non-face-to-face patient services

The RACGP calls on the incoming Australian government to introduce MBS patient rebates for non-face-to-face services to improve access to general practice and transform Australian primary healthcare for the 'digital age'.

3. Commit to properly fund quality and comprehensive general practice through implementation of the patient-centred medical home model (as outlined in the RACGP's *Vision for general practice and a sustainable healthcare system*)

The RACGP calls on the incoming Australian government to properly fund and implement the patient-centred medical home model, a model of primary healthcare. In a patient-centred medical home, patients have a stable and ongoing relationship with a general practice that provides continuous and comprehensive care throughout all life stages. This model is the most cost effective way to address the needs of patients, healthcare providers and funders.

Who is the RACGP?

The RACGP is Australia's largest general practice professional organisation and represents over 32,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice.

The RACGP is responsible for defining the discipline and the scope of the general practice profession. We set the standards and curriculum for quality general practice education and training, as well as standards for quality clinical practice.

The RACGP will work collaboratively with the next Australian government to improve the health of all Australians and build support for the most efficient part of the health sector.

