



Inquiry into the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Treasurer

Redirected to: Minister for Health

Reference: Bulk billing rates and access to GPs

Hearing: 2 June 2026

In relation to: Bulk billing rates and access to GPs

Question received: 6 June 2026

Answer Due: 21 July 2026

1. The ACT has the lowest rate of bulk-billing in Australia, a factor noted by Eslake as contributing to our above-average spending on health services by ACT Government. The ACT Government agreed to work with the Commonwealth Government to increase bulk billing GP appointments by at least 160,000 per year in the supply and confidence agreement with the Greens.
 - a. What was the rate of bulk billing appointments in the ACT in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026? (by calendar or financial year, whichever is convenient)
 - b. What is the modelled rate of bulk billing appointments in the ACT in 2027, 2028 and 2029?
 - c. What is the ACT Government's plan to deliver the additional 160,000 bulk bill appointments each year?
 - d. How does the ACT's rate of bulk billing compare to the national average now?
 - e. How do out-of-pocket costs for Canberrans compare to the national average now, and are out-of-pocket costs rising and if so, by how much?

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- a. Bulk-billing data is collected and published online by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA). The average bulk-billing rate for non-referred GP appointments in the ACT was:
 - 2023-24: 52.85%
 - 2024-25: 53.8%
- b. Bulk-billing data and statistics are managed by the Australian Government. The ACT Government does not model bulk-billing rates as it does not administer or regulate Medicare or primary care.
- c. The Australian Government is responsible for policy settings in primary care, including setting the Medicare rebate. The ACT Government continues to advocate to the Commonwealth Government on the need to improve access to bulk billing in the ACT. The Commonwealth Government recently provided funding for three new bulk-billing clinics in the ACT and tripled the bulk-billing practice incentive in November 2025. According to DHDA, as at 31 March 2026 there were 19 fully bulk billing practices in the ACT. This is a significant increase since the tripling of the bulk-billing incentive.

Additionally, through the *Supporting our Health Workforce – Improving Affordability and Access to GPs* 2025-26 ACT Budget initiative, the ACT Government is investing \$1.5 million in the Supporting Access to GPs for Children Grant Program. The program will support primary care providers to expand access to bulk-billed services for children under 16, complementing broader Australian Government measures aimed at improving bulk-billing access. Through the 2025-26 ACT Budget, the ACT Government has also implemented a permanent payroll tax exemption for income earned by GPs for bulk-billed services.

The ACT Government will continue to monitor bulk-billing rates and work with the Commonwealth Government to advocate for increased access to bulk-billing.

- d. Bulk-billing statistics are publicly available on the DHDA website. These statistics show that in Q3 2025-26, the bulk billing rate in the ACT was 54.2%, compared to a national average of 82%.
- e. Bulk-billing statistics, including out-of-pocket costs, are publicly available through DHDA. These statistics show that in Q3 2025-26, the average out-of-pocket cost for non-referred GP services was \$68.72 in the ACT, compared to a national average of \$61.22. Compared to the same quarter in 2024-25, the national average out-of-pocket cost has risen by \$8.81, compared to the ACT average out of pocket cost rising by \$6.33.

Sources:

- [Medicare quarterly statistics – State and territory \(March quarter 2025-26\) | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)
- [National GP Bulk Billing Snapshot – January to March 2026 | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)

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Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Stephen-Smith', with a stylized initial 'R' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Date:

29/7/26

By the Minister for Health, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA