

1 November 2023

## Rural doctors welcome more affordable care for patients

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) says that increases to the bulk billing incentive, which have just come into effect, will be great news for rural patients.

RDAA President Dr RT Lewandowski said that this initiative will help the most vulnerable Australians, particularly those in rural and remote communities.

“From 1 November, the bulk-billing incentive payment has been tripled for eligible patients,” Dr Lewandowski said.

“Patients in rural and remote areas have the highest rates of bulk billing, so this increase will be a great boost for GP practices in these areas, many of which have been financially struggling for years as Medicare rebates have not kept pace with the increasing costs of running a practice.

“RDAA was a key driver for getting rebate rates scaled for rurality, meaning that as you go into more rural and remote areas, the payment levels increase.

“With this new increase in the base rate for the bulk billing incentive, GP practices caring for these vulnerable communities will receive a huge boost.”

As a result of higher costs associated with the increased services provided in rural general practices, coupled with the high rates of bulk billing, these practices also have the highest out-of-pocket expenses for those patients who are not eligible for bulk billing.

“The bulk billing support increase will better support practices financially, and reduce the need to pass on costs to the patient in order to continue to meet their overheads,” Dr RT Lewandowski said.

“We welcome the reform that has been implemented by Minister Butler and the Labor Government since their election in 2022, and look forward to seeing these changes make a real difference to the ability of rural and remote patients to access care, the viability of practices caring for these patients, and ultimately improve health outcomes in these communities.”



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A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here](#).

**Interviews are available with:**

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