



Why is my GP charging a fee now?

Your GP has one job, to care for you and your family. In Australia, this is mostly funded by the federal government, in the form of a Medicare rebate.

GPs mostly work in privately owned and operated practices. There are many costs, including staff wages and medical equipment. We all know that the cost of living has increased in recent years, and costs to medical practices are no different. In fact, medical equipment costs increase at more than twice the rate of inflation every year (1). Despite the increase in costs, which are being felt by everyone, the government has not increased the Medicare rebate enough to support your ongoing healthcare.

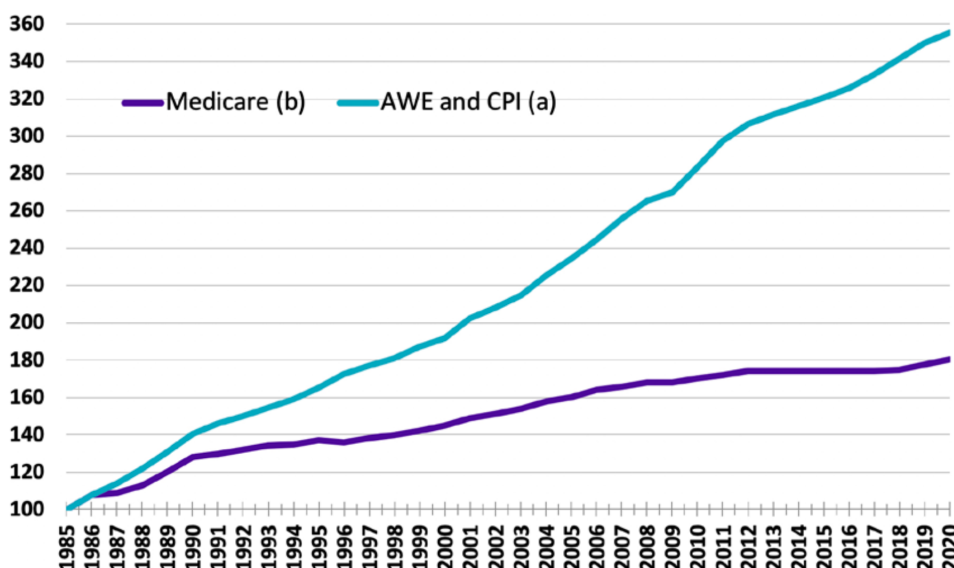
In reality, Medicare rebates have barely increased in the last 10 years. Labor started the Medicare “freeze” in 2013, and the Liberal coalition continued it. As a result, the current funding for General Practice is less than half of what it should be if it had kept up with real world costs.

The graph below shows the difference between rising costs of living (the top line) and the amount the government invests in *your* healthcare (bottom line). You will notice that these lines are moving further apart. **This is why your GP is now charging a fee.**

The problem is even greater. Due to government neglect of General Practice, less and less doctors are choosing to become GP's (2). If this trend continues then you may not even be able to see a GP in Australia in the future.

Figure 3: Why is there a gap?¹⁰

- (a) Index comprising of Average Weekly Earnings and Consumer Price Index (70:30).
- (b) Index of MBS rebates as determined by the Commonwealth Government.



*If you are as angry as we are that both sides of politics have neglected your healthcare needs so much – tell your local federal MP you want your **rebate restored, the freezes and the cuts reversed.***

References

- [1. https://www.privatehealthcareaustralia.org.au/morrison-government-must-act-now-to-stop-australia-tax-on-common-medical-devices-driving-up-health-insurance-premiums/](https://www.privatehealthcareaustralia.org.au/morrison-government-must-act-now-to-stop-australia-tax-on-common-medical-devices-driving-up-health-insurance-premiums/)
- [2. https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/professional/general-practice-training-applications-have-dipped](https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/professional/general-practice-training-applications-have-dipped)
- [3. https://www.ama.com.au/articles/ama-private-health-insurance-report-card-2021](https://www.ama.com.au/articles/ama-private-health-insurance-report-card-2021)