



STRONGER RURAL HEALTH STRATEGY

Rural Bulk billing incentives

Under the Stronger Rural Health Strategy, bulk billing incentives will be correctly targeted to ensure that metropolitan areas no longer have access to incentives intended for rural and remote areas. The geographic eligibility criteria that provide incentives for Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items are based on how the Australian population was distributed in 1991, and will now be updated.

Investments

The incentives will be based on an existing rural classification which draws on the latest Australian population and distribution statistics, rather than the current eligibility conditions which are based on data from the 1991 Census.

Eligibility criteria

The measure updates the geographic eligibility criteria for MBS items 10991, 64991 and 74991 from Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) 3–7 to Modified Monash Model (MMM) remoteness classification MMM 2–7.

These items are targeted to vulnerable patient groups, such as people with concession cards and children under 16 years of age in rural and remote areas. Doctors in these areas will have correct access to rural bulk billing incentives.

Affected areas

Under this initiative, around 2,100 additional doctors in rural communities will have access to the rural bulk billing MBS items. Areas that gain access to these items include:

- Jam Jerrup (Vic)
- Kiama (NSW)
- Russell Island (Qld)
- Yanchep (WA).

Areas losing access to these items have some of the highest concentration of doctors per person in Australia. Other areas that have experienced major city growth since 1991 will also lose access (i.e. population greater than 20,000). These include:

- Mandurah (WA)
- Mornington Peninsula (Vic)
- Canberra (ACT)
- Newcastle (NSW)
- Central Coast (NSW)
- Queanbeyan (NSW)
- Maitland (NSW)
- Sunshine Coast (Qld)
- Gawler (SA)

- Geelong (Vic)
- Melton (Vic)
- Pakenham (Vic)
- Ellenbrook (WA)
- Baldivis (WA).

Further information

Updates on progress of the reform and further information:

- Department of Health's website www.health.gov.au
- Department of Human Services www.humanservices.gov.au
- Modified Monash Model of geographical classification and locations www.doctorconnect.gov.au