

Submission to the Parliament of Australia
Re: The Health Legislation Amendment (Improved Medicare Integrity and Other Measures) Bill 2025

To the Honourable Members of Parliament,

I am writing as a Year 11 student deeply concerned about the future of Australia's healthcare system. While I may not yet have the right to vote, I represent a generation that will inherit the outcomes of the decisions made today. Healthcare is not merely a policy issue, but it is the base of a fair society. Today, I present my perspective on the Health Legislation Amendment (Improved Medicare Integrity and Other Measures) Bill 2025.

This bill proposes several amendments aimed at enhancing the integrity and administration of our healthcare system. Notably, it seeks to:

- Reduce the timeframe for making claims relating to bulk-billed Medicare and dental services from two years to one year.
- Update investigative powers in relation to Medicare fraud offences.
- Streamline pharmacy approval processes under the National Health Act 1953.
- Enable the Department of Health to manage and alleviate consequences of therapeutic goods shortages and support compliance activities related to unlawful therapeutic and vaping goods.

While these measures aim to improve efficiency and integrity, it is crucial to consider their potential impact on accessibility and equity within our healthcare system.

Concerns Regarding Accessibility and Equity

- Shortening the claim period may disproportionately affect vulnerable populations who might face challenges in meeting the new deadline, potentially leading to increased out-of-pocket expenses.
- While addressing fraud is essential, it is important to ensure that these powers do not create additional barriers for legitimate providers, which could inadvertently reduce the availability of services.
- Simplifying processes is beneficial, however, it must not compromise the quality and safety standards that protect public health.

As a student, I have observed families in my community struggling to balance education, work, and healthcare costs. Peers have shared experiences of their parents delaying medical appointments due to financial constraints. If reforms do not actively work to alleviate these burdens, they risk exacerbating the very inequalities that Medicare was designed to prevent.

I urge the Parliament to:

- Ensure that amendments do not compromise accessibility in pursuit of efficiency.
- Implement safeguards to protect vulnerable populations from potential negative impacts.
- Maintain rigorous quality and safety standards in all streamlined processes.

Our generation may not yet have seats in Parliament, but we are watching, learning, and preparing to take up the responsibility of shaping this nation's future. I ask you to legislate with fairness, and with the belief that every Australian deserves the right to fair and accessible healthcare.

Sincerely,
Nicole Kassimiotis
Year 11 Student