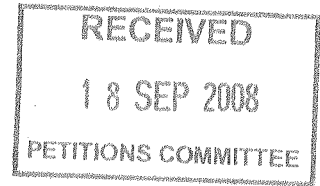




SENATOR THE HON JOE LUDWIG

Minister for Human Services
Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Senator for Queensland



C08/3900

Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair – Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 25 June 2008 to the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, on behalf of petitioners, about the waiting times at the Booragoon Medicare office and the establishment of a Medicare office in Belmont, Western Australia. As Medicare Australia falls within my responsibilities as Minister for Human Services, your letter has been forwarded to me for response.

Medicare Australia delivers a high level of service to the Australian people with public satisfaction levels consistently at 90 per cent and waiting times averaging three minutes and 40 seconds, and around 90 percent of people served in less than ten minutes. It is, however, always looking for ways to improve service to the public.

Medicare Australia is aware of longer than normal waiting times being experienced in the Booragoon Medicare office during 2008. Through its regular queue monitoring activity, Medicare Australia became aware of the service challenges in this office and is working with the Booragoon office manager to improve service levels.

This Government is committed to ensuring the public has access to important Government services through all channels including face-to-face where it is needed. The presence of a Medicare office in Belmont is under active consideration by the Government.

To complement the network of Medicare offices, Medicare Australia has developed a range of alternative ways of accessing its services with the aim of providing a more convenient service for the public. Electronic Medicare claiming is available in participating medical practices. Medicare benefits can also be claimed via the telephone, by calling 1300 360 460 for the cost of a local call at any time or day of the week. In addition, Medicare claims can be posted to GPO Box 9822 in your capital city.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to review and update the availability of Medicare services in response to changing demographics, emerging technology and customer demands and preferences.

Once again, thank you for writing. I trust my comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely

JOE LUDWIG
Minister for Human Services

10-09-08