

Senate Select Committee Inquiry into Medicare

The "fairer Medicare" package will unfortunately not solve the escalating problems of health care service delivery and accessibility.

It will contribute to the perception of a developing two tier health care system.

The proposed changes will also not rescue bulk billing

- It is too little too late
- It increases GP red tape even more
- It offers too little to make bulk billing financially viable
- The major current primary problem is that of generalized doctor shortages

The government needs to address the problem of doctor shortages, which has arisen as a result of deliberate previous and existing policies. It is escalating.

The government needs to urgently address the issues relevant to future workforce planning and which are evident to those involved in undergraduate and postgraduate medical training. Some of these include:

- Inadequate undergraduate numbers for future need
- The declining relative appeal of general practice to graduates
- Concerns of current students re future involvement in existing private practice models
- The preferences for part time work due to family responsibilities or avoidance of burn out
- The declining numbers who expect to or are willing to work 50+ hours per week as previously relied on by the system
- Established doctors retiring or changing career in mid life owing to the pressures brought on by the negative changes noted
- The overwhelming deterrent effect of the medical indemnity crisis, which has not been adequately addressed.

Dr Catherine Regan
16/14 Telford Street
NEWCASTLE EAST NSW 2300