



Media Release

BOB McMULLAN MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FRASER

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BULK BILLING RATES STILL TOO LOW

Despite a small increase, bulk billing figures for the electorate of Fraser are still the lowest in the country, causing a crisis in accessing health care for many Canberra families, Member for Fraser Bob McMullan said today.

“Bulk billing figures for the last 12 months have just been released. They show my electorate of Fraser sitting on 40%, which is a decline of 29.1% since 1996 when the figure was 69.1%. The figure at this time last year was 35.9% so there has been a small increase, but Fraser residents are still disadvantaged compared to other Australians.

“For families without access to bulk billing medical costs are continuing to soar with the Medicare payment barely covering half the upfront fee most doctors charge.

“As usual these impacts are felt most by the young and the elderly, those who are most vulnerable in our community.

“The Government has to address this issue with more than its usual quick-fix bandaid solutions.

“In 1996, the average rate of bulk billing was steady at 80% nationally. In 2005 the bulk billing rate has struggled to reach 74% even after a substantial cash injection.

“I congratulate those residents of Fraser who have been involved in setting up the West Belconnen Health Co-operative to enable those who live in West Belconnen to have access to bulk-billing doctors and other health professionals within this area. These people have seen the gap in services being offered to the community and have addressed it with this grass roots initiative.

“After ten long years of the Howard Government, bulk billing is less available. This year’s slight improvement does not make up for the Government’s long-term continued neglect of this area.”

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