



# The Seniors Sentinel

## Rockhampton, Cap Coast, Gracemere & Mt Morgan

December, January, February 2025/26

Volume 143

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### Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9.00 am-3.00 pm.

Friday 9 am-12.30 pm

If you are calling into the office, please phone first to ensure there is someone in, this will save you a wasted trip. When phoning don't waste your call, leave your name and a short message and we will return your call as soon as possible. *Anita ,Migaa*

### Management Committee

#### Executives:

President- Lynn Hoskins  
Secretary- Joyce Messer  
Treasurer- Chris Forrest

#### Committee

Bette Price  
Esther Woollard  
Kaylene Oates  
Debra Dziewicki  
Pauline & Dennis Allsop  
Ralda Stainkey  
Office staff  
Managers- Anita Griffiths & Migaa Fargher  
Accountant - Prudential Business Solutions

#### “Seniors’ Christmas Bash”

The halls are decked, the lights all glow,  
Half the bulbs work — that’s how we roll.  
The punch got spiked (don’t ask by who),  
Now Ed’s in line for round two.  
Marge baked cookies hard as bricks,  
She calls them “crunchy festive picks.”  
The carols started nice and slow,  
Then someone shouted, “Ho-ho-NO!”  
We swapped our gifts- all socks again,  
(At least they fit our swollen shins.)  
We laughed so loud, the nurse came by,  
Said, “Keep it down - or share that pie!”  
So here’s to us, still full of cheer,  
Still misbehaving every year.  
We may forget what day it is—  
But Christmas fun? That’s still our biz!

*Join us for  
companionship,  
exercise & social activities.*

*“Life only comes around once so do what makes you  
happy and be with people who make you smile” ”*

**P** residents Pen

*It's hard to believe that the year has come to an end, and what a year it's been. We started the year with Migaa joining our team, bringing with her enthusiasm and energy.*

*This year has seen new activities, some have taken off others have not. We have joined with Talbot estate to hold activities, where we have been able to enjoy the company of their residents, many of whom are members or have been members.*

*Unfortunately our holidays have not been the success that we had hoped for and will be reviewed for next year, but our Seniors month Gatsby Ball was a huge success with 160 attendees.*

*Our biggest news is that after nearly 28 years Anita has decided it's time to hang up her hat and join us on the other side of the establishment. She will go on long service leave after this year's holiday period, and will retire in May. Keep an eye on next year's newsletters for what will be happening for Anita's last week and book early for our final celebration with her.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers for their time and commitment to our activities without you we wouldn't be able to hold as many as we do, to those who volunteer in the office thank you, and of course last but certainly not least to the committee, thank you for giving your time, support and help, and for standing up and taking the challenges that come with being a committee member, most run a mile at the thought of being on a committee, without you all we wouldn't be here.*

*Friendship isn't just about finding people who care; it's about showing up and caring back. It grows with trust, deepens with understanding and lasts when both sides choose to nurture it. The best friendships don't just happen; they're built with love, effort, trust and time.*

*Everyone have a wonderful Christmas and New Year, with family and friends and we look forward to seeing you all next year.*

Lynn Hoskins

and the management committee.



**M**anager's review,

Hello all,

It has certainly been another busy three months for the program. With Christmas just around the corner, it won't be long before we're welcoming a brand-new year.

Our "Gatsby Ball," held in celebration of Seniors Month, was a roaring success. We extend our sincere thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the evening run smoothly, and to the generous sponsors whose contributions ensured the event was truly memorable. Keep an eye on the next newsletter for details about our next exciting event.

A heartfelt thank you to all our instructors for offering such valuable sessions for our members-your time and dedication are greatly appreciated. The concluding and commencement dates for all activities and low-impact exercise sessions can be found on page 5.

Please note: the office will close on Friday, 12th December for the Christmas break and will reopen on 19th January.

Wishing you a safe, happy, and wonderful Christmas season with your family and friends.

Best wishes,  
Anita & Migaa

**A Merry Little Mix-Up**

I opened up the Christmas box  
And chaos tumbled out-  
The lights were in a tangled knot,  
The tree stand full of doubt.

The labels fell off all the gifts,  
So guessing games begin...  
If Grandpa gets the bubble bath,  
We'll simply call it *win*.

The cookies sprazd into one blob,  
The wreath won't fit the door—  
But laughter fills the house again,  
And who could ask for more?

Because Christmas shines its brightest  
When things go "not quite right"-  
A little mess, a lot of joy,  
And magic every night.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>9-11 am Tai Chi with Lynn \$ 5.00 Botanical Gardens , on top of the hill on the grassed area in front of the Cenotaph . M/T (own cost ) at the kiosk. Contact the office on 49140065 for further information.</p>	<p>7.30-10 am (approx.) Golf Croquet Cost \$ 7.00 7.30am. &amp; Includes M/T. Botanical Gardens. Phone 49140065. Dance Health Lindy 9.30-11.30am. Cost \$5.00 Scout Hall 187 Honor St. Frenchville. Contact the office on 49140065 for further info.</p>	<p>Yoga session with Leesa 9-10 am Cost \$7.00 McNae's Martial Arts 6/35 Bridge St North Rocky. Phone the office on 49140065 for further information.  Monthly luncheons 1st Wednesday of the month.</p>	<p>9-12 Cards Gracemere/Board games 3rd April Cost \$5.00 Gracemere Bowls Club, 30 Brooks Street Gracemere. For further information please call the office on 49140065.</p>	<p>Yoga session with Leesa 9-10 am Cost \$7.00 McNae's Martial Arts 6/35 Bridge St North Rocky. Phone the office on 49140065 for further information.</p>
<p>9-10.30 am Line Dancing with Susan. Fred Fox Hall ( Rocky City Band Hall.) Cost \$7 per person. Call the Office on 49140065 information.</p>	<p>Chair Flex with Migaa. 1-2pm Cost \$5.00 The Hall-Talbot Estate Hall Lion Ck RD.</p>	<p>9.30-12.30 &amp; 1-3 pm Glass Mosaic with Sally. \$15.00 per session Unless further materials are required . For further information phone the office on 49140065.</p>	<p>60's Dance classes Commences 5th February. Cost \$5.00 Venue Fred Fox Hall (Rocky Brass Band)</p>	
	<p>12 noon-4 pm Cards \$5.00 afternoon tea included. Held in the Office 1/248 Quay St.</p>			
<p>9 am -12 noon Newsletter folding next date 26th February.</p>	<p>1.30-3.30 pm Ten Pin Bowling Cost \$10. Musgrave Street. Includes shoe hire and afternoon tea included. Contact the office on 49140065 for further information.</p>			<p>12 noon-4 pm. Cards \$5.00. afternoon tea included. Held in the office 1/248 Quay St. Contact the Office on 49140065.</p>
PLEASE CONSULT YOUR HEALTH PRACTITIONER BEFORE COMMENCING LOW IMPACT ACTIVITIES.				

### Cuppa & Chat

A monthly get-together to enjoy each other's company. This will be held the 4th Tuesday of every month.

Time: 9.30-10.30am

Cost: \$5

Dates:

\* 24th February, 24th March, 27th April

Please let us know if you will be attending for catering purposes.

### Digital assistance

Should you require assistance please contact the office on 49140065, to make a mutually suitable time.

### Did you know?

The first time you attend any of our low impact exercise sessions as well as some of our social activities there is no charge? Includes:

- ◆Line Dancing ◆Tai Chi ◆Dance Health ◆Yoga
- ◆Card sessions ◆Chair Flex

### Cardboard Cartons

Request's have commenced once again for cardboard rolls , and egg cartons with no coloured print as they are not suitable to create enrichments for the animals .

### Crockery

Wanted for glass mosaic sessions, either delivered to the office or can be picked up, thanking you.

# THANK YOU



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT.  
YOUR CONTRIBUTION HAS PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE, AND WE TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

## End recommencement dates

- \* Tai Chi- 15th December | 12th January  
Monday classes at Queens Park continue throughout the season
- \* Line Dancing
- \* Cards continues
- \* Glass Mosaic's-10thDecember | 14th January
- \* Croquet 9th December | 7th January 7.30am
- \* Dance Health Alliance | 20 February 9.30am
- \* Yoga- 12th December | 14th January
- \* Chair Flex-2nd December | 20th January
- \* Ten Pin Bowling

Office closed from Friday 12th December and reopens Monday 19th January.



Hospice care is about much more than bricks and mortar, it's about caring for our community

for generations to come.

At Fitzroy Community Hospice, onsite care is provided in a purpose-built, peaceful, home-like facility with private quiet spaces, tranquil gardens and picturesque westerly views.

Support services are available for patients, families and carers, including social and emotional support, pastoral care, and cultural support.

Care is provided at no charge to our community, and is available to people over the age of 18 with an advanced life-limiting condition, not just those with cancer.

*The Fitzroy Community Hospice are offering an information session on Advanced Care planning for members on:*

**Date** Wednesday 4th March 11.30 am

**Venue** Rocky Sports Club

**Following this presentation we will enjoy lunch together.**

## Monthly Luncheons

Meeting at 11.30 for a midday lunch.

**4th February** Kalka Hotel

**4th March** Rocky Sports Club- see adjacent article.

**1st April** BBQ Talbot Estate

Please be sure to call and book your place a week prior to the dates. Thank you.

## Calendar 2026

North Rockhampton Rotary Branch

Are now available through the Office \$15 each.

## Over "60's "Sixties" dance lessons"

Come & join Col (member of 60 & Better and also the "Rocky Rockers") for dance lessons from the 60's!

Commencing Thursday 5th February

Time 9-10am

Cost \$5.00

Venue Rocky Brass Band Hall Gladstone Road. (cnr William St/Gladstone Road)

Please contact us to and let us know your attending.

**A** man lost his hand in a war and goes to a shop to purchase a prosthetic hand. He enters the shop and explains his situation, the salesman directs him to their selection and picks up the first prosthetic hand. "This is one of our highest quality prosthetic hands, will feel as close to having the touch in your fingers as you were prior the incident. It costs \$1,500". "No thank you, that is too expensive for me.", says the war vet, "Do you have anything cheaper?" The man nods his head and picks up the next prosthetic hand. "This one is almost as good as the other one, it has received multiple high reviews from our customers. It costs \$900". Again the man argues, "No thank you, that is too expensive still, do you have anything else?". The salesman nods his head and picks up the last prosthetic arm on the rack. "This is our cheapest prosthetic arm, it costs \$650, however we only have it in a green color". The vet again responds, "No thank you, that is still too expensive and I despise the color green." The salesman, out of options, tells the man, "Across the road there is an old man close to death selling his prosthetic hand, from the old man you can go and buy your third hand second hand first hand".

# Gracemere News

## Gracemere Lunch Bunch

Held every 2nd Monday of the month. Commencing at 10 am. Held at the Gracemere Golf Club.

- \* 9th February-Musical Bingo
- \* 9th March
- \* 13th April

Be sure to call the office to let us know if you are attending.

## Cards in Gracemere

Venue Gracemere Bowls Club.

Day Thursday's.

Time 9 am - Midday.

Cost \$5 and includes morning tea.

Come along and join a great group. For further information contact the office on 49140065 or Kevin (cards convener) on 49340776.

## Lesson in Employee Relationship

Fred Gibbs was in his early 60's, retired and had started a second career in catering. However, he just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 2, 3, 5 minutes late. However, he was a good worker, really clever, so the owner was in a quandary about how to deal with it. Finally, one day he called Steve into the office for a talk.

Fred, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a top class job, but you're being late so often is quite a worry.'

'Yes, I realise that, sir, and I am working on it.' replied Fred.

'I'm pleased to hear that, you are a team player. It's odd though, you're coming in late. I know you're retired from the Royal Navy. What did they say if you came in late there?'

'They said, "Good morning, Admiral".'

**Happy Holidays!**

*May your days be happy*

*And your bills be small.*

## No-bake condensed milk slice

### Ingredients

225g milk coffee biscuits

375g condensed milk

2 cups coconut

1/2 cup lemon juice

### Method

#### Step 1

Place a layer of biscuits in a slice pan.

#### Step 2

Mix together condensed milk, coconut and lemon juice.

#### Step 3

Pour mixture on top of biscuits. Add another layer of biscuits on top.

#### Step 4

Refrigerate and slice before serving



*I very quietly confided to my best friend that I was having an affair. She turned to me and asked, "Are you having it catered?"*

*And that, my friend, is the sad definition of "OLD"!*

## Healthy Aging:

### 7 Daily Habits That Make the Biggest Difference

Aging well isn't about perfection—it's about consistency. Small habits practiced daily can significantly improve energy, mobility, and independence.

### Key Habits

- \* **Move every day:** Even 10–15 minutes of walking improves circulation, balance, and heart health.
- \* **Stay hydrated:** Older adults often lose thirst signals; aim for regular water intake throughout the day.
- \* **Eat for strength:** Focus on protein (fish, eggs, yogurt), colorful vegetables, and whole grains.
- \* **Keep your brain active:** Reading, puzzles, or learning new skills strengthens cognitive function.
- \* **Protect sleep:** Aim for 7–8 hours; avoid screens 1 hour before bed.
- \* **Stay socially connected:** Isolation increases health risks as much as smoking.
- \* **Regular checkups:** Early detection prevents complications.

# Dee River Oldies-Mt Morgan.

## News from Dee River Oldies

September saw our Dee River Oldies members board the bus to take us to Biloela. It was a good day out with lots to see along the way. We enjoyed a scrumptious morning tea at the Biloela Heritage Park and members were able to walk through and see the display of history, vehicles and machinery that was used long ago. Lunch was at the Anzac Club where we had our plates full with a delicious lunch.

On Wednesday 26 November 2025, the Dee River Oldies members enjoyed their Christmas Lunch at the Grand Hotel in Mount Morgan. It is always a special day, where members can catch up and have a meal.

There were plenty of raffle winners on the day. Yes, Christmas is just around the corner.

We have our last meeting for the year on Tuesday 9 December 2025. It starts at 2 pm and is held in St Mary's Hall, Gordon Street, Mount Morgan. (Behind the Anglican Church). This meeting is a week earlier than usual. There is no meeting in January, 2026.

After the Christmas holidays we start the year with a 'Welcome to 2026' Morning Tea. It is held on Wednesday 21 January, 2026 starting at 10 am. This is a week earlier than usual. So mark it on the calendar. The cost is \$5. Lucky door and raffle prizes on the day.

A very big thank you for all that have helped us through the year. It is appreciated.

Our thoughts are with the families of members that have passed during the year. Life certainly is a journey with some days just harder than others.

Wishing our members, families and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

See you in 2026.

Stay happy and healthy.

The Steering Committee

Dee River Oldies Group

Carol Glover 48381 995

Colleen Constable 0427 161 131

## Upcoming events

Monthly Meetings (Starting at 2 pm)

No meeting held in January 2026

\* Tuesday 17 February 2026

\* Tuesday 17 March 2026

Morning Teas (Starting at 10 am)

\* Wednesday 21 January 2026  
(This is one week earlier than usual)

\* Wednesday 25 February 2026

\* Wednesday 25 March 2026



*"You know you are a Senior when your back goes out more than you!"*

## The Senior Job Interview

A 75-year-old man applied for a part-time job.

The manager said, "Do you have any experience?"

The man said, "Yes... I've been retired for 20 years."

"Retired?" the manager asked. "How is that experience?"

The senior smiled.

"Son... retirement teaches you patience, budgeting, conflict resolution, time management, and how to nap anywhere.

I'm basically overqualified."

## Motion-Sensor Lights

Install inexpensive plug-in motion lights in:

- Hallways
- Bathrooms
- Closets
- Bedroom path to the kitchen

They prevent nighttime tripping and help you see without fumbling for switches.

## Computer Problems?

**For prompt reliable affordable service  
in YOUR Own Home.  
call Michael on 0499760523**



## New Support at Home Program-starting 1 November 2025

### What's Happening

More Australians want to stay in their own homes as they age.

The new Support at Home program is designed to make this easier, with more flexible and personalised care options.

### Why It's Changing

Demand for home care is much higher than supply:

- 120,000+ people are waiting for assessment
- 87,000 have approval but no package yet
- The new program will add 83,000 new places in its first year.

### What's New

8 levels of support (previously 4) for better matching to individual needs

Quarterly budgets to spend on:

- Clinical Care - nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy (fully funded)
- Independence Support - showering, dressing, hygiene, transport, social activities
- Everyday Living Assistance - cleaning, gardening, shopping help, meal delivery
- Unused funds can be saved (up to 10% or \$1,000 each quarter)

### Extra Short-Term Support

Program	What It Helps With	Funding Available
• Restorative Care	Regain independence after illness/injury	Up to \$12,000 for 16 weeks
• End-of-Life Care	Stay at home during final months	Up to \$25,000 for 12 weeks
• Assistive Technology & Home Modifications	Equipment or home changes	Up to \$15,000

### What You'll Pay

- Clinical care is free.
- You'll pay a share for other services, based on your income and assets:

Type of Support	Full Pensioners	Self-Funded Retirees (no Health Card)
• Independence Support (personal care, transport)	5%	50%
• Everyday Living (cleaning, meals, gardening)	17.5%	80%

**Lifetime cap: You'll never pay more than \$130,000 in aged care fees across your lifetime.**

### If You Already Have a Home Care Package

- You'll automatically move to Support at Home on 1 November 2025
- You'll keep the same funding you receive now
- If you were approved before 12 September 2024, your fees will stay the same or be lower
- If you currently pay no fees, that will continue

If you can't afford your fees, financial hardship help is available.

### Find Out More

➔ Website: [myagedcare.gov.au/](https://myagedcare.gov.au/) ➔ Call: 1800 200 422 (Mon-Fri) ➔ Email: [supportathome@health.gov.au](mailto:supportathome@health.gov.au)

## Whats happening at Bauhinia House?

### Weekly Activities:

Tuesday Hoy – 9:45 am to 12:00 pm

Fun and friendly games with great prizes for winners, raffle tickets, and tea, coffee, and refreshments provided.

2nd Tuesday – Meeting at 1:00 pm

Wednesday NRPL Indoor Social Bowls- 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

2nd Wednesday- General Meeting (NRPL) from 12:30 pm

Friday Lunches – January to March 2026  
Join us for our Friday functions, running from 9:30 am to around 1:00 pm. Enjoy a lovely morning tea, a delicious two-course lunch, fun entertainment, and lucky door prizes-a great day out with good company!

Phone 49282320

### Rockhampton 60 & Better Program Inc.

#### Philosophy

Rockhampton 60 & Better Program Inc. deems:

The right of people to dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality; the right of people to be valued as individuals; The right of people to access services on a non-discriminatory basis; The right of the community to have accountable and responsive services; The right of people to make choices in their own lives.

#### DISCLAIMER:

The Rockhampton 60 & Better Program Inc. Management committee reserves the right to edit all articles as necessary. While all care has been taken in the preparation of this material, no responsibility is accepted by the publisher i.e. Rockhampton 60 & Better Program Inc., its staff or volunteers, for any errors omissions or inaccuracies. The material contained in this newsletter has been prepared to provide general information only. It is not intended to be relied upon or be a substitute for legal, health or any other professional advice. No responsibility can be accepted by Rockhampton 60 & Better Program Inc. for any known or unknown consequences that may result from reliance on any information provided in this publication.

Candlꝑ glow with gꝑntlꝑ chꝑꝑꝑ,  
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### Pilbeam Theatre

Saturday 6th December

- Magic, Dreams and Wishes!

Dance Star Ballet students | 2.30pm

*Enjoy dazzling performances in jazz, tap, lyrical, cabaret, hip hop, acro, novelty and more - each dance choreographed especially for this event.*

Monday 8th December

- Home for Christmas- Darren Coggan| 11am

Friday 12 December & ,Saturday 13 December| 7pm

- Carols by Candle Light

Contact: 4927 4111

### Wanted

Any novels you no longer require would be much appreciated. Please come in and look through the collection, any books taken do not need to be returned. Share them around. Thank you!

## Rocky Rockers

Rock & Roll Dance Club



### Lessons

Tuesday night at the South Rockhampton Uniting Church Hall

134 Campbell Street Rockhampton.

Beginners 6.30-7.30pm

Intermediate 7.30-8.30pm

Cost \$5 members/ \$7 non-members

Children under 15 free

First lesson Free

Facebook:Rocky Rockers Dance Club

Phone: President (Lisa) 0419 140 001

Email: rockyrockersinc@outlook.com

## Carols on the Lawn

300 Campbell St (between William & Derby Sts.)

Saturday 13th December

Commencing at 5 pm

Featuring: \*Sausage Sizzle\*Jazz Carols Feast of Harvest Band  
\*Children's Carols including free glowstick\*Pipes & Drums-  
Highlanders Pipe Band\*Christmas Lantern Parade\*telling of the  
Christmas story\*Beautiful Christmas display in the Church\*  
Community Carols led by U3A choir\*Vocal soloists\*Stay for a free  
Supper on the lawn.

# Finlayson & McKenzie Funeral Directors

*“Meeting your needs with quality  
and compassion”*

### QUICK PRE-ARRANGED FUNERAL PLAN

- Quick and Easy to do
- In your own time
- In the comfort of your own home
- All information is kept in strict confidence

Once your information has been stored, a letter of confirmation will be sent to the address provided. This is completely FREE to pre-arrange and feel at ease, knowing that your wishes are organised.

### Pre- Arranged Funeral Plan for:

First Names:.....  
 Surname:.....  
 Address:.....  
 Town:.....Postcode:.....  
 Phone:.....  
 Martial Status:.....  
 Date of Birth:..... Place of Birth:.....  
 Normal Doctor:.....

### Next of Kin Details

Names:.....  
 Address:.....  
 Town:.....Postcode:.....  
 Phone :.....  
 Relationship:.....  
 Other Details .....

.....

Funeral Plan with:.....  
 Life Insurance with:.....

### Please Tick your preferred choices

Direct Cremation (no service)  
 Cremation Service     Private     Public  
 Venue:  Church     Chapel     Our Chapel  
 Other .....

Viewing:  Yes     No     Family to Decide  
 Clergy     Celebrant     None  
 Clergy Religion.....

Coffin:  Basic     Middle Range     Top Range  
 Flowers:  Casket Spray     Wreaths     Single Flowers  
 Amount:.....

Press Notices:  None     Death Notice  
 Funeral Notice    Placed in:.....

Pallbearers:  Yes     No  
 Flag Required:  Yes     No  
 RSL Service Required:  Yes     No  
 Audio / Visual Display  Yes     No  
 RSL/Clubs/Associations to be Notified Name:  
 .....

Name: .....

What would you like to do with the Ashes?  
 Please specify.....

Other options:  Memorial cards  
 Other Requests:.....

Please Sign Here.....  
 Date .....

*Please contact Sandi or Heather*

**Finlayson & McKenzie**

**56 William Street**

**Rockhampton**

**Telephone– 4922 1269**

Or email to [fmckfunerals@live.com.au](mailto:fmckfunerals@live.com.au)

**G**Ps will soon get extra incentives to bulk bill. So will your doctor be free?

A key commitment at May's federal election was an A\$8.5 billion promise to increase incentives for GPs to bulk bill patients. The government moved quickly after the election, with new arrangements to start on November 1.

When a patient is bulk billed they don't have any out-of-pocket payment to see a GP. If a patient isn't bulk billed, the GP can charge an out-of-pocket fee. The new incentive arrangements gives the GP a small additional payment to help cover the difference.

Bulk-billing incentives are unlikely to lead to 100% of GP visits being bulk billed. But that wasn't the government's ambition: it aims to increase the bulk billing to 90% by 2030. The current rate is 79%.

The Medicare promise is that financial barriers to health care will be a thing of the past. All you should need is "your Medicare card, not your credit card" was Prime Minister Albanese's mantra during the election campaign, as he waved his Medicare card around at every opportunity.

It has been a consistent Labor slogan since then-Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Health Minister Neal Blewett introduced Medicare over 40 years ago.

Starting on November 1, the bulk-billing incentive will apply to all Australians. In addition, if a practice bulk bills all its patient visits, it will receive a further 12.5%.

The rebate for a typical (level B, 6 to 19 minute) consultation is A\$43.90. The bulk-billing incentive will be \$21.85 if eligible patients are bulk billed in metropolitan areas, totalling \$65.75 (or \$73.97 if all the practice bulk bills all patient visits.

Larger bulk-billing incentives will apply in regional, rural and remote areas.

For the one-quarter of visits that aren't bulk-billed, the average out-of-pocket payment is

around \$50 – significantly less than the bulk-billing incentive payment.

GPs and practice owners are now doing their sums to see if they should increase bulk billing. The government has produced a calculator to help them do this analysis.

Contrary to the views of some GPs, the government target of 90% of all attendances bulk billed by 2030 will probably be achieved.

There will be an immediate uplift from the current rate of 79% when the new arrangements start on November 1. The current bulk-billing rate in areas with the lowest socioeconomic status is already 89% and that is likely to get even closer to 100% pretty quickly.

A combination of patient pressure, realisation that the sky has not fallen in under the new arrangements, and that this government can be trusted to index rebates, will mean the bulk-billing percentage will continue to increase over the next few years.

This means patients will face fewer financial barriers to access to essential primary medical care. Patients will have improved access bulk billed GP services.

The department will continue to publish bulk billing rates. Providers are responsible for ensuring Medicare services claimed using their provider number meet all legislative requirements. All Medicare claiming is subject to compliance checks and providers may be required to submit evidence about the services they bill

Sources: Australian Government Changes to Bulk Billing Incentive Items from 1 November 2025 <https://theconversation.com/gps-will-soon-get-extra-incentives-to-bulk-bill-so-will-your-doctor-be-free-266500>

### *"The Smallest Star"*

*On a quiet Christmas Eve, a tiny star hung at the edge of the sky. All the other stars sparkled proudly, but the little one worried it was too small to make any difference.*

*As night grew deeper, the world below filled with families wrapping gifts, baking cookies, and sharing laughter. The little star wished it could help bring someone joy-but how could something so small matter?*

*Just then, a lone traveler wandered through the snowy night, trying to find his way home. Clouds covered the heavens, hiding every bright star-except one. The smallest star shone with all its might, casting a single beam of gentle light onto the path.*

*The traveler looked up, saw the faint glow, and followed it. Step by step, the light guided him until he reached the warm glow of his village. Bells chimed in the distance, and windows lit up with cheer.*

*The traveler whispered, "Thank you," to the sky.*

*From that night on, the smallest star no longer felt small-for it had made Christmas bright for someone who needed it most.*

Rosie Hall buys a self-assembly, flat-pack, cupboard from her local Homebase store. Reaching home Rosie reads the instructions carefully, counts the pieces then assembles the cupboard in the bedroom. It looks really great and she is delighted.

Now, Rosie lives near a railway line and as the train passes by the cupboard collapses. Undaunted by this misfortune she re-reads the instructions and reassembles the cupboard. Once more, another train passes and the whole cupboard collapses again.

Rosie now frustrated and thinking that she must have done something “wrong” re-re-reads the instructions and re-re-assembles the cupboard. Shortly, a train passes and the whole cupboard collapses yet again for the 3rd time.

Rosie is now fed up, cross and rather angry so she ‘phones the customer service department. She is told that this is quite impossible and that they’ll send along a fitter to take a look.

The fitter arrives and assembles the cupboard. Again, a train passes and the cupboard collapses. Completely baffled by this unexpected event, the fitter decides to reassemble the cupboard and sit inside it to see whether he can find out what causes the cupboard to collapse. At this point, Rosie’s husband comes home, sees the cupboard and says, ‘Oh, that’s a splendid looking cupboard,’ and he opens it to look inside.

The fitter, who had been wondering how to explain his position in Rosie’s bedroom cupboard, blurts out, ‘You probably won’t believe me, but I’m standing here waiting for a train.’



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*As we welcome the New Year, let us pause to reflect on the past year—the joys we celebrated, the challenges we faced, and the memories that will stay with us forever. Each day, whether calm or busy, brought moments that shaped us, reminded us of our resilience, and offered reasons to be grateful.*

*May the year ahead bring health, happiness, and peace to your heart. May laughter fill your home, and may every day offer small moments of joy—a shared smile, a quiet walk, a favorite song, or the warmth of family and friends gathered together. Let us embrace new opportunities, revisit old dreams, and find delight in both familiar comforts and unexpected surprises.*

*As we step into this new chapter, let us let go of worries and regrets, carry forward the lessons we have learned, and approach each day with hope, curiosity, and gratitude. May kindness guide our actions, and may we cherish the simple pleasures that make life meaningful. Let us celebrate each moment, whether ordinary or extraordinary, knowing that even the smallest joys can brighten our days and the lives of those around us.*

*Here’s to a New Year filled with laughter, love, and cherished memories. May it be a year of health, hope, and happiness, and may we face it with courage, grace, and the quiet confidence that every day is an opportunity to create joy, share kindness, and live fully.*