

The Albanese Government acknowledges the significant burden chronic conditions, including arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, have on Australians. We are committed to supporting these Australians to ensure they have access to the health care they need.

The National Strategic Action Plans for Arthritis, Osteoporosis and Pain Management provide blueprints to guide nationally coordinated strategic action to respond to the increasingly complex challenges and burden of musculoskeletal conditions in Australia. Funding of more than \$12 million has been allocated to support a suite of activities that broadly align with the recommended actions outlined in the Action Plans, including consumer awareness, education and support activities and health professional education and awareness initiatives to support early diagnosis and appropriate treatment and care.

You may also be interested to know about medical research for these conditions the Government is funding. The Government is committed to health and medical research through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). From its inception in 2015 to 31 July 2024, the MRFF has invested \$78.47 million across 46 grants with a focus on musculoskeletal conditions research. Of this, \$18.25 million has been invested in research focused on arthritis. In addition, between 2014 and 2023, the NHMRC expended \$493.8 million towards research relevant to musculoskeletal conditions. Of this, \$144.3 million has been invested in research focused on arthritis.

In terms of out-of-pocket health care costs - the Government is committed to strengthening Medicare by delivering more bulk billing for all Australians. We recently announced a plan to make the largest investment in Medicare since its creation, which will deliver an additional 18 million bulk billed GP visits each year. This will mean 9 out of 10 GP visits will be bulk billed by 2030. You can find out more [here](#).

The Albanese Government also delivered a range of important measures to make medicines cheaper – including a reduction in the PBS safety net - during our time in Government. This has saved Australians more than \$1.2 billion on the cost of their scripts. In addition, on 20 March we announced that medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) will cost no more than \$25 from 1 January 2026.

Finally, in terms of access to allied health care, the Government is currently [undertaking a review](#) into chronic disease management services – which enable patients to receive up to 5 Medicare rebated allied health services a year. This review will consider how effective this program is, including the number of Medicare rebated services which are available.

I can assure you our Government is committed to delivering a stronger Medicare, with more accessible, more affordable healthcare for all Australians.

Thank you for your advocacy.

Yours sincerely,

ALP National Secretariat