



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

Minister for Human Services

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Easier electronic claiming for Medicare

The Australian Government will assist people to claim Medicare benefits quickly and easily by investing \$8.6 million over four years towards streamlining electronic claiming processes.

This investment will benefit medical providers and their patients by making electronic Medicare claiming easier and more efficient, removing the need for patients to visit a Medicare office in person to claim their benefits.

Minister for Human Services, Senator Joe Ludwig said “In an ideal world, medical practice staff wouldn’t have to enter payment details in their practice management software and then separately enter them again into the EFTPOS device. That would be easier for them and more convenient for patients.”

“The Liberals’ attempt to introduce their ‘Easyclaim’ system did little more than tie up in red tape medical practices that wanted to do the right thing by their patients.”

“This is the major reason why despite making \$28 million available to drive Easyclaim take-up, the Liberals achieved take up rates of only 0.5 per cent of electronic patient claims.”

“The Liberals promised Easyclaim would do away with queues, but all that happened is that queues rose from 80,000 people each day to 85,000 a day since the Easyclaim program was announced.”

“This failure was a result of Joe Hockey’s fondness of headlines and his weakness for a quick-and-easy fix,” said Senator Ludwig.

“Electronic claiming of Medicare and reducing the workload of medical practice staff is good policy and goes a long way towards making Australia’s health system more user-friendly. By streamlining electronic claiming processes we can give working families an easier way of managing their health costs and benefits.”

Patients without an EFTPOS card who want to avoid a trip to a Medicare office can have their claims processed using bank details held by Medicare Australia, Senator Ludwig said.

“I am keen to work with industry to get electronic Medicare claiming back on track.”