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LABOR'S NEW DEAL FOR MEDICARE: GOOD NEWS FOR NEWCASTLE

The 90% of Newcastle people who will miss out on the Howard Government's tax cut can't afford to lose Medicare too.

A Federal Labor Government will save Medicare before it's too late.

Labor will lift the patient rebate in Newcastle by \$7.80 for doctors who reach bulk billing targets.

Labor's New Deal to Save Medicare, announced today, will do this by:

- **immediately lifting the Medicare patient rebate for all bulk billed consultations to 100% of the scheduled fee** – an average increase of \$5.00 per visit to the doctor; and
- providing strong targeted incentives for doctors to bulk bill – **doctors in Newcastle will get an additional \$15,000 per year** if they bulk bill 75% or more of their patients.

Labor will also address the critical health workforce shortage by creating more nursing places at university and attracting and retaining more doctors and nurses in the health system.

This is part of Labor's \$3.4 billion commitment to stop the collapse in bulk billing and keep health care affordable for all Australians. Labor's plan is to ensure all Australians have access to high quality health care.

Only Labor believes in Medicare because we understand it relieves financial pressures on families.

The Newcastle Medicare Survey released last year highlighted the difficulty of finding a doctor who bulk bills in Newcastle. Novocastrians made clear that they didn't want a "safety-net"; they wanted more doctors, more bulk billing and quality public hospitals. They demanded Medicare be saved. Newcastle families can't afford to lose Medicare.

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