



Blue Report

Membership Clinics

February 2024

Who we are

Cleanbill is a healthcare directory with one simple aim: to increase healthcare accessibility.

We believe that healthcare is at its most accessible when you can see all your options and their costs before making a booking.

So, Cleanbill shows you just that.

What we do

We collect basic background, pricing, availability, location and contact information for every single healthcare practice of a given speciality in a given area.

Then we put it all on cleanbill.com.au.

Users in that area can then search Cleanbill to find every single healthcare practitioner around them and filter those results by the price of their basic services. In one simple, free search, users can see every healthcare practitioner around them and find one that meets all their affordability and accessibility criteria.

What this report is

On 8 January 2024, Cleanbill released its 2024 Blue Report, which provided an outline of the aggregated data gathered from listing billing and availability information for every GP clinic in the country.

While collecting the information for these GP listings, we came across a new type of GP clinic structure: membership clinics.

Membership clinics are GP clinics that bulk bill all of their non-concession adult patients, provided these patients pay some sort of membership fee to access the clinic.

This is new.

In fact, it's so new that we didn't even report on these clinics in our 2023 Health of the Nation Report because there were so few of them.

But there are more now. And we're keen to see how prevalent they are becoming across jurisdictions.

So, this Report outlines the total number of membership clinics we were able to find across the country and the cost of visiting them, before breaking these clinics down by state and territory.

What the data means

Cleanbill's data reflects its listings; it aims to provide the best understanding of what every GP clinic around you would say if you, as an adult without concessions, asked for their pricing and availability information for a standard consultation during regular, weekday business hours. With this in mind, the definitions of the terms in this Report are as follows:

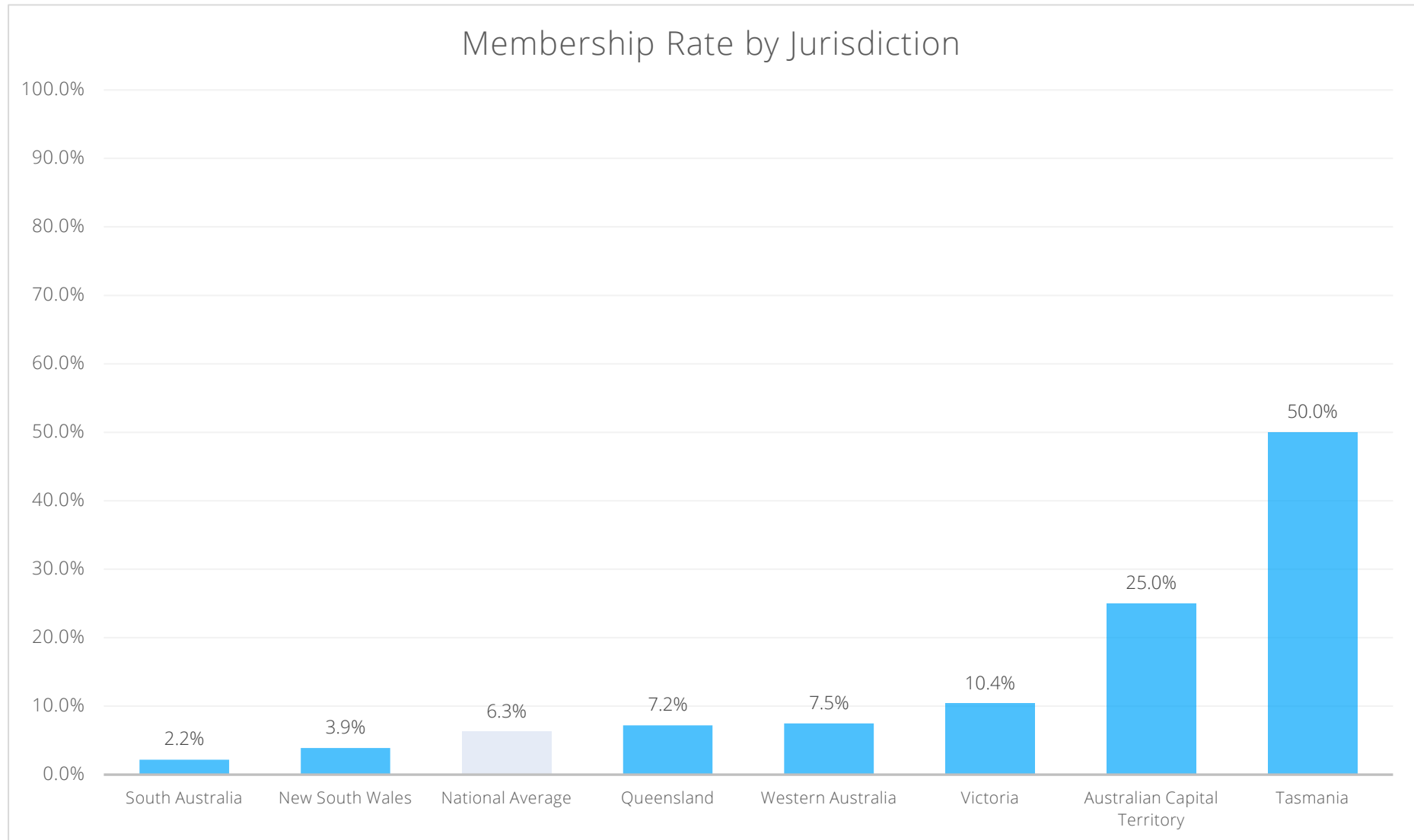
- Membership Clinics – these are GP clinics that bulk bill all adult patients without concessions for a standard consultation (MBS Item 23) during regular, weekday business hours, but charge these patients some kind of membership fee in order to access the clinic. This membership fee can be an initial, yearly or monthly fee.
- Membership Rate – because of the upfront cost associated with visiting them, Membership Clinics were not included as bulk billing when calculating the Bulk Billing Rate for the 2024 Blue Report. We were, however, curious to see what percentage of total bulk billing clinics these membership clinics might account for, were they to be included. This is what the Membership Rate captures; the number of Membership Clinics divided by the total number of Bulk Billing and Membership Clinics.
- Average Upfront Cost – this is the average membership fee paid for your first appointment with a Membership Clinic. No Medicare rebates have been removed from this figure; this is just the average membership fee Cleanbill would expect you to pay at that jurisdiction's Membership Clinics.

Overview - Membership Clinics

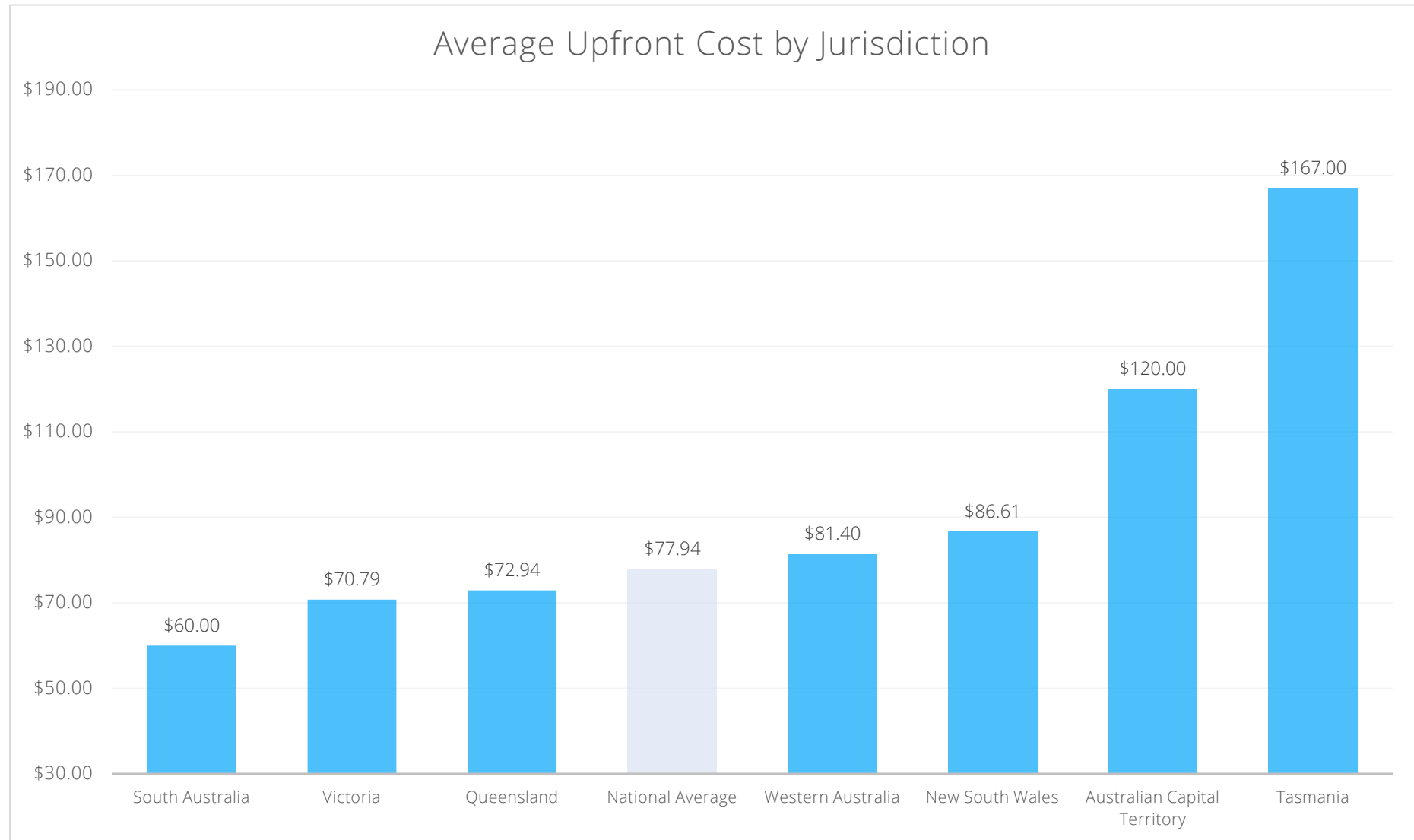
Area	Membership Clinics	Membership Rate	Average Upfront Cost
National	98	6.3%	\$77.94
New South Wales	30	3.9%	\$86.61
Victoria	42	10.4%	\$70.79
Queensland	18	7.2%	\$72.94
Western Australia	5	7.5%	\$81.40
South Australia	1	2.2%	\$60.00
Tasmania	1	50%	\$167.00
Australian Capital Territory	1	25%	\$120.00

Cleanbill did not record any Membership Clinics in the Northern Territory.

Breakdown – Membership Rate



Breakdown – Average Upfront Cost



Conclusion

The trend this Report covers is an interesting and novel one that remains [entirely unaddressed by any other published data](#).

While appearing to be an equitable way for clinics to remain economically viable while continuing to bulk bill, membership fees like this [may in fact limit new patient accessibility](#).

Under a membership fee structure, the out-of-pocket fees that would ultimately be paid to the clinic over a course of care are [concentrated in the cost for an initial appointment](#). While this is preferable for regular patients, any new patient seeking a one-off appointment has to cover a [significant upfront cost](#) to access the clinic that might otherwise be defrayed over multiple appointments.

And because these clinics are regularly reported as, and listed on directories as, wholly bulk billing, [this initial bill will come as a shock](#), further decreasing accessibility of care.

It's for this reason that a directory which shows all of the costs associated with visiting a GP clinic in a single search is no longer a luxury; [it's a necessity](#).

[Without Cleanbill](#), no such service exists.