



Blue Report

Electorate Breakdown

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 isⁱ

On 16 April 2023, Cleanbill released its 2023 Health of the Nation Report. The Report took data collected at the end of 2022 and the start of 2023 and used it to assemble the first ever electorate-by-electorate breakdown of bulk billing rates and out-of-pocket costs for every Commonwealth electorate in Australia.

When we updated this data at the end of 2023 for the 2024 Blue Report, we thought it'd be a great idea to compare these two Reports to see what had happened to bulk billing rates and out-of-pocket costs in every Commonwealth electorate over the course of 2023.

So, that's exactly what we've done.

This Report takes the data from the 2023 Health of the Nation Report and compares it to the data collected for the 2024 Blue Report on an electorate-by-electorate basis. This allows us to map the changes to bulk billing rates and out-of-pocket costs that occurred over the course of 2023 to individual Commonwealth electorates, enabling a better understanding of accessibility of primary care as it currently stands.

The Report's findings focus on the electorates with the largest increases and decreases in these rates and costs over the course of 2023, as well as those which no longer have any bulk billing clinics.

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 and the Electorate Breakdown are as follows:

- Available clinics – this is the total number of clinics in Cleanbill's database for the given jurisdiction that were taking on new patients when we called. Cleanbill goes to every length to ensure that this accounts for every single clinic in that jurisdiction, and we estimate it to have an accuracy above 99%. But there is no publicly available list of every single clinic across the country to compare it to, so we may inadvertently miss some. If you are a clinic that isn't listed, please reach out so that we can update our database with your details.
- Availability rate – this is the total number of clinics in the jurisdiction that were taking on new patients when we called, divided by the total clinics for which we were able to get a quote (this is slightly less than the total clinics listed – refer to Note i).ⁱⁱ
- Bulk Billing Rate – this is the number of clinics that will bulk bill all adult patients without concessions who attend for a standard consultation (MBS Item 23) during regular, weekday business hours, divided by the total number of

available clinics in the jurisdiction (refer to Note ii for a full list of inclusions and exclusions).ⁱⁱⁱ

- Average Out-of-pocket Cost – this is the average cost of a standard consultation (MBS Item 23) for an adult patient without concessions who attends during regular, weekday business hours, amongst all clinics in the jurisdiction not listed as bulk billing.

Isn't there Government data on this?

Yes, but it measures something else.

The Government data looks at the percentage of all services rendered by GP clinics that were bulk billed. Unless further broken down, this figure does not differentiate between age groups, concession status and item number, all of which can affect whether a service is bulk billed. It shows the percentage likelihood of a person being bulk billed in an area but doesn't say whether that person has the same concessions as you or is accessing the same services as you, and it doesn't say at which clinics this bulk billing is occurring.

By comparison, Cleanbill looks at the percentage of clinics that will bulk bill a non-concession adult for a standard consultation. So, if you're a non-concession adult our rate tells you the percentage of clinics around you that can take you on as a new patient and will bulk bill you when they do. And, if you go onto cleanbill.com.au, you can see exactly which clinics these are.

Overview – Commonwealth Electoral Divisions

Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (electorates)	151
Electoralates with a bulk billing decrease	132
Electoralates with an out-of-pocket cost increase ^{iv}	116
Electoralates with no bulk billing clinics^v	9 (6.0%)

With fewer clinics bulk billing [across 87% of electoralates](#), Australians' options for finding a bulk billing GP in most electoralates are more limited than they were at the start of 2023. While there are still [9 electoralates](#) with bulk billing rates above 75%, [all 9 are located in Western Sydney](#). Across the rest of the country, there are [9 electoralates with no bulk billing clinics](#) at all:

Bass (TAS)	Clark (TAS)
Braddon (TAS)	Fairfax (QLD)
Cowper (NSW)	Pearce (WA)
Franklin (TAS)	Shortland (NSW)
Lyne (NSW)	

this is [up from 4](#) at the start of 2023. [15 electoralates](#) have only one bulk billing GP clinic.

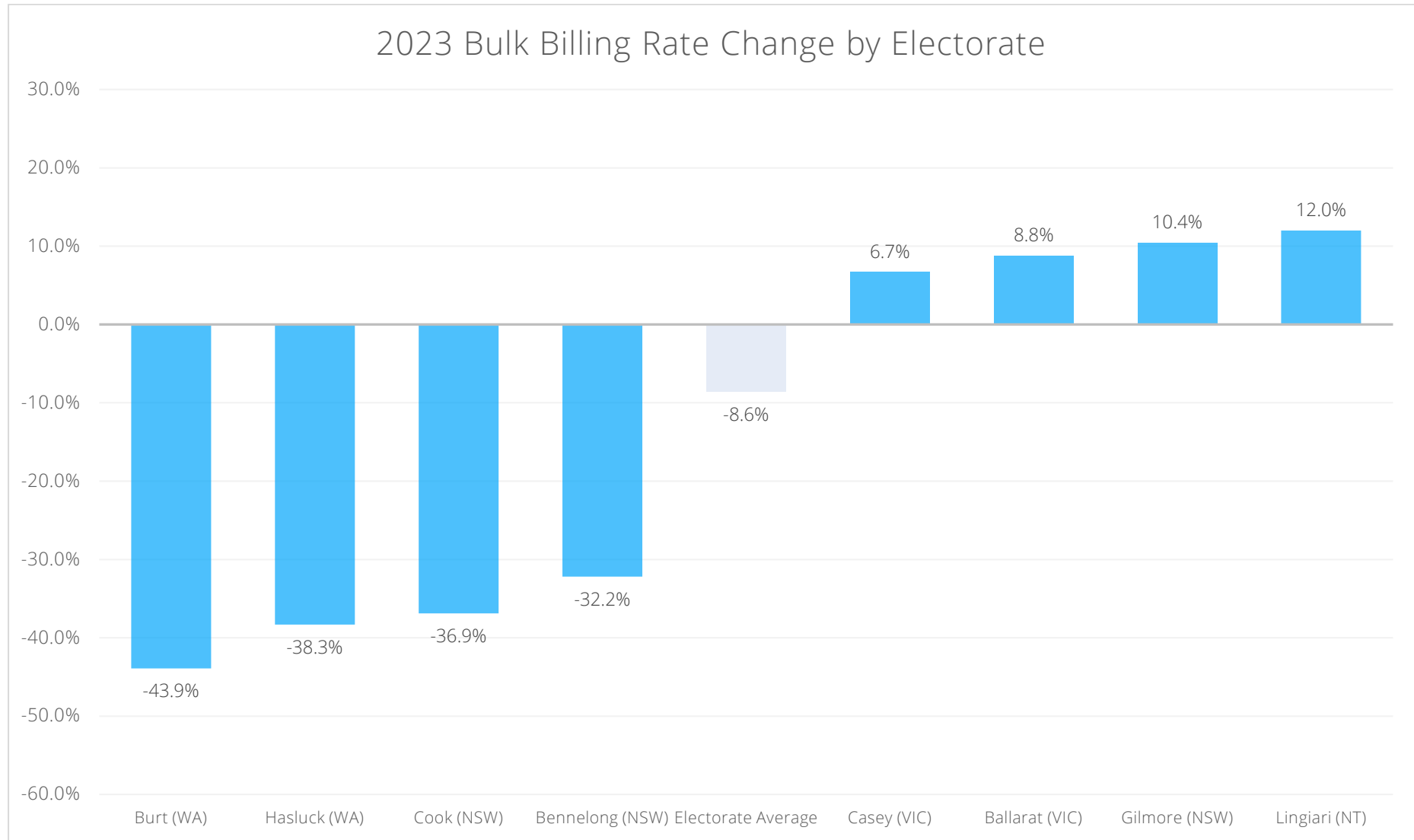
There were also [significant disparities in out-of-pocket cost changes](#) between electoralates, with some experiencing a [drop in fees](#) and others experiencing a [larger increase in fees](#).

The following datasets outline the electoralates with the largest increases and decreases in bulk billing and average out-of-pocket costs over the course of 2023.

Overview – 2023 Bulk Billing Rate Change

	Electorate ^{vi}	Bulk Billing Rate		
		2022-23	2023-24	Change
	Electorate Average	32.4%	23.8%	-8.6%
Largest Decrease	Burt (WA)	61.0%	17.1%	-43.9%
	Hasluck (WA)	44.8%	6.5%	-38.3%
	Cook (NSW)	54.8%	17.9%	-36.9%
	Bennelong (NSW)	59.1%	26.9%	-32.2%
Largest Increase	Lingiari (NT)	14.3%	26.3%	+12.0%
	Gilmore (NSW)	10.9%	21.3%	+10.4%
	Ballarat (VIC)	22.2%	31.0%	+8.8%
	Casey (VIC)	11.8%	18.4%	+6.7%

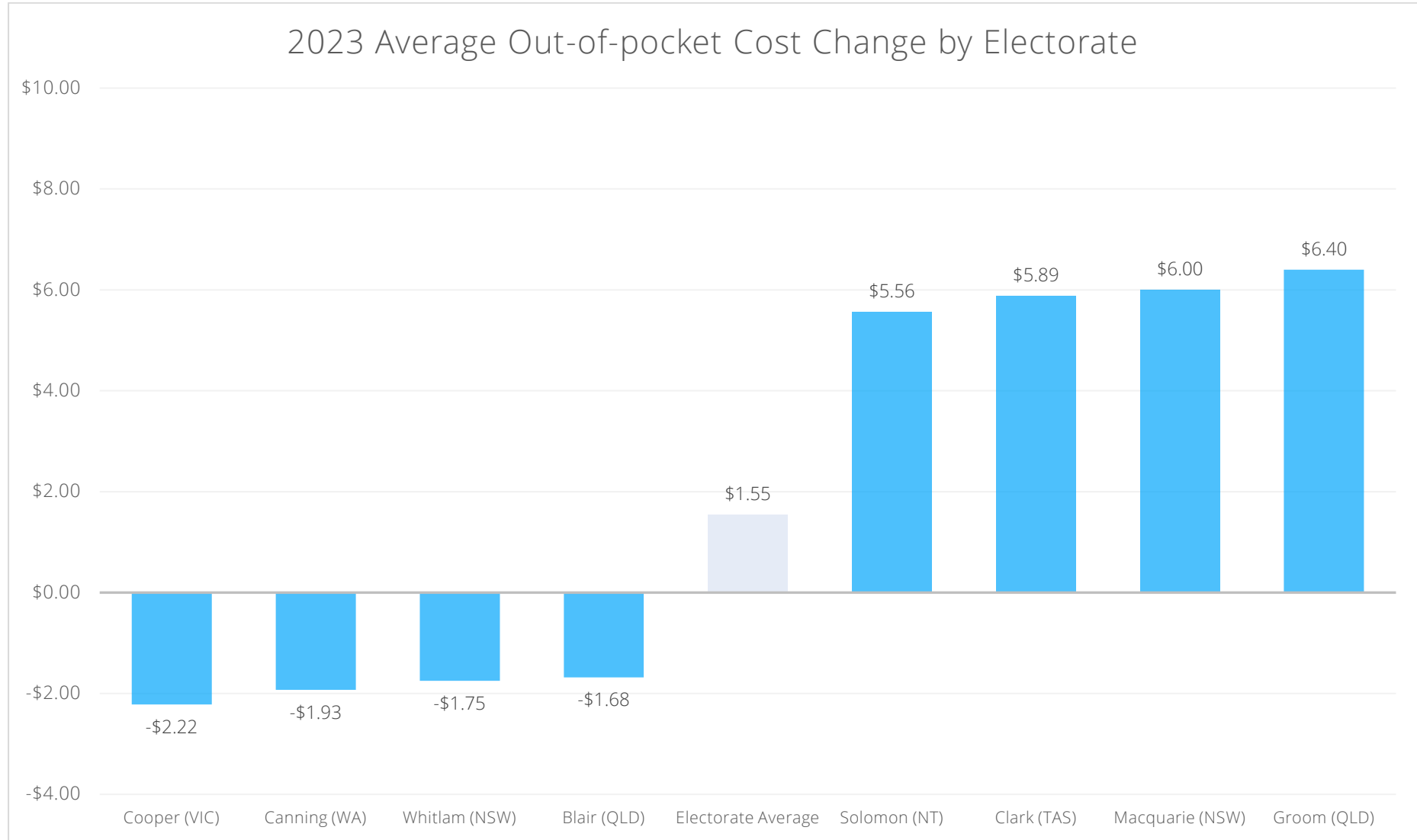
Breakdown – 2023 Bulk Billing Rate Change



Overview – 2023 Average Out-of-pocket Cost Change

	Electorate ^{vii}	Average Out-of-pocket Cost		
		2022-23	2023-24	Change
	Electorate Average	\$39.23	\$40.78	+\$1.55
Largest Decrease	Cooper (VIC)	\$40.45	\$38.22	-\$2.22
	Canning (WA)	\$39.51	\$37.59	-\$1.93
	Whitlam (NSW)	\$42.62	\$40.87	-\$1.75
	Blair (QLD)	\$38.04	\$36.36	-\$1.68
Largest Increase	Groom (QLD)	\$33.65	\$40.05	+\$6.40
	Macquarie (NSW)	\$33.78	\$39.78	+\$6.00
	Clark (TAS)	\$48.51	\$54.40	+\$5.89
	Solomon (NT)	\$36.16	\$41.72	+\$5.56

Breakdown – 2023 Average Out-of-pocket Cost Change



Conclusion

This Report is the first to offer an electorate-by-electorate breakdown of changes in the bulk billing rate and average out-of-pocket cost of a standard GP consultation over the course of 2023. The results are [deeply concerning](#).

While some electorates did [gain bulk billing clinics](#) in 2023, [the vast majority \(87%\) lost them](#). And there were [staggering collapses in bulk billing](#) in some electorates over the course of just one year, with [9 electorates](#) now containing no available, bulk billing GP clinics.

The story is much the same with out-of-pocket costs: some electorates saw [decreases](#), but [the vast majority](#) of electorates showed [increases in out-of-pocket costs](#), some by as much as [15% of the average fee](#) at the start of 2023.

With bulk billing rates and out-of-pocket costs varying so greatly from electorate to electorate, it's critically important that Australians have [easy access to availability and pricing information](#) for every clinic around them.

Yet, this access is [just not there](#). [1 in 4 GP clinics don't have a website](#) and, of those that do, [only around 10%](#) display pricing information online, with [fewer than 1%](#) displaying availability information.

Faced with these information barriers, it's easy to see why [over 1.2 million Australians per year](#) delay or forego care with a GP in their community because of [concerns surrounding cost](#). These Australians almost inevitably end up in public hospitals.

This [should not be happening](#).

If out-of-hospital primary healthcare is to be accessible for all Australians, a service that helps people find available doctors who they can afford around them is no longer a luxury; [it's a necessity](#).

Without Cleanbill, no such service exists.

Notes

ⁱ We note that we have had to make adjustments to this Report to account for an identified error in our electorate allocation software. The error caused the inadvertent allocation of a small number of clinics located near electorate borders to adjacent electorates, instead of the electorate in which they are actually located. This error is specific to our 2023-24 GP collection and does not impact any of our other collections. It has now been rectified, and this Report now reflects the updated results.

ⁱⁱ Occasionally Cleanbill calls clinics and is not provided with pricing or availability information. This is because:

- The clinic refuses to provide any pricing or availability information when called; or
- Cleanbill can confirm the clinic exists but has not been able to reach it despite multiple calls during regular business hours.

Clinics that fall into this group are taken to have not provided a quote and are indicated as such on their Cleanbill listing. For data aggregation purposes, these clinics are removed from the total clinics in a jurisdiction before calculating that jurisdiction's availability rate. In our listing data collection at the end of 2023, there were 69 clinics nationally (~1%) that fell into this group.

ⁱⁱⁱ Under the above definition of bulk billing, the following clinics are considered bulk billing for the purposes of this Report:

- Clinics with at least one doctor who is taking on new patients and established as bulk billing in accordance with the above definition, even if the clinic has other doctors that do not bulk bill in accordance with the above definition.
- Clinics that bulk bill in accordance with the above definition during regular, weekday business hours, but which do not bulk bill in accordance with the above definition outside of these hours.
- Clinics that do not charge a one-off, yearly, or monthly fee to access bulk billing in accordance with the above definition.

^{iv} Includes only electorates with a bulk billing rate below 80% in both 2022-23 and 2023-24.

^v Number of electorates with no bulk billing clinics in accordance with the above definition.

^{vi} Number excludes the electorate of Leichhardt, which experienced an increase in bulk billing only because of Cleanbill's inclusion in 2023-24 of state-funded medical services that provide bulk billed primary care to remote communities in Far North Queensland. Without the inclusion of these clinics, Leichhardt experienced a fall in bulk billing over the course of 2023.

^{vii} Includes only electorates with a bulk billing rate below 80% in both 2022-23 and 2023-24.