

Medical, allied and mental health, private and public hospital fees

Introduction

ReturnToWorkSA is seeking to gazette fees for medical, allied, mental health, and hospital services for 2025-26, effective 1 July 2025.

The *Return to Work Act 2014* (the Act) requires ReturnToWorkSA to consult with stakeholders prior to a fee schedule being published. This paper describes the proposed changes and fee calculation methodology and forms part of the formal consultation process. We invite your feedback throughout the formal consultation period, which will be for 5 weeks, commencing Monday 24 February 2025.

ReturnToWorkSA will consider all feedback received before finalizing fees for 2025-26.

Please provide your feedback to providers@rtwsa.com by close of business Friday 28 March 2025.

Fee calculation methodology

The *Return to Work Act 2014* requires ReturnToWorkSA to set fees based on the average charge to private patients for the relevant service. The amount fixed for the service must not exceed the amount recommended by the relevant professional association.

ReturnToWorkSA obtains data from Medicare Australia and the Private Hospital Data Bureau (PHDB) to calculate the average private charge for the relevant service, except for public hospitals and other non-gazetted services (such as remedial massage and aquatic & gymnasium facilities). The Medicare data includes both the Medicare scheduled fee and the actual charge raised by providers across Australia for the service (i.e. the gap charged in addition to the Medicare scheduled fee). This enables ReturnToWorkSA to:

- derive an hourly rate/actual charge for services/items,
- compare year-to-year charges to determine the change in average private charge, and
- determine the percentage difference between ReturnToWorkSA fees and the average private charge.

Fees are then adjusted relative to these benchmarks.

Medical Practitioner attendance fees

ReturnToWorkSA has agreed to increase General Practitioner and Specialist attendance fees to the published Australian Medical Association (AMA) rates.

The following table illustrates the change in Average Private Charge (APC), ReturnToWorkSA's fees compared to the average private charge and Medicare scheduled fees, and the proposed changes to ReturnToWorkSA medical fees for 2025-26:

	APC change for 2024-25	RTWSA vs APC for 2024-25	RTWSA vs Medicare scheduled fee for 2024-25	Proposed RTWSA change
Medical practitioner attendance fees (Schedule 1A)	5.32%	45.13% higher than APC	130.46% higher than MBS	5.32% weighted average
All other medical fees (excl. Schedule 1A attendance fees)	5.82% weighted average	19.64% higher than APC	85.26% higher than MBS	5.82% weighted average

In addition, ReturnToWorkSA may review the Medical 1B, Permanent Impairment Assessment Services and Independent Medical Examiner fee schedules and policies to ensure terminology is clear and accurate.

Anaesthetic fees

In 2023-24, ReturnToWorkSA commenced a review of anaesthetic fees in collaboration with AMA(SA). ReturnToWorkSA undertook a detailed analysis of Medicare charges to determine the average private charge and in doing so, identified that Medicare had not provided private charges for relative value units, modifier and incentive fees. Extensive consultation occurred with both the AMA and Medicare to better understand why these items were suppressed from the dataset and an amended request for the full dataset was submitted in July 2024. Despite this extensive consultation, the data supplied by Medicare did not contain private charges for these items and work continues to obtain the full dataset. Given the existing delay, an analysis was undertaken on anaesthetic items where private charges were supplied (matched items), representing 65% of all anaesthetic fee items. This analysis identified that ReturnToWorkSA’s fees were 85% lower than the average private charge. As a result, it is proposed to increase the matched items by 85%. Please refer to Attachment 1 for a list of fee items to be increased.

ReturnToWorkSA are continuing to consult with Medicare to obtain average private charges for the remaining fee items (relative value units, modifier and incentive fees) and will advise of any updates to the fee schedule when the necessary data has been obtained.

Dental Independent Medical Examiner fees

Dental Independent Medical Examinations are not currently provided for in the Independent Medical Examiner Services Fee Schedule. ReturnToWorkSA is proposing to introduce a dental IME fee for general and specialist dentists, as outlined in table 1.

The proposed fees align with hourly rates provided by the Australian Dental Association SA (ADA) and are comparable to other compensable schemes.

Table 1. Fee proposal

Fee*	Dentist	Specialist Dentist (incl. Oral & Maxi'l Surgeon)
Independent Medical Examiner – report, examination and reading (inclusive of physical examination, up to 100 pages reading, and report writing)	\$1057.10 flat fee	\$1576.70 flat fee
Supplementary Report	\$211.45 flat fee	\$292.10 flat fee
Additional Reading (up to max. 2 hours)	\$422.85 p/h	\$584.20 p/h
Non-attendance or cancellation (less than 2 business days before appt)	\$422.85 flat fee	\$584.20 flat fee

* See fee schedule for conditions of payment

Allied and mental health fees

The methodology for 2025-26 considers the change in average private charge across all the allied and mental health groups and compares this to the June 2024 annual Australian Bureau of Statistics Consumer Price Index – CPI (3.8%). Where the figures are similar across the groups, the allied and mental health fees are increased by the annual CPI amount. The change in average private charge ranged from 4.5% to 12.9% across the groups, with an average of 7.9% (excluding Speech Pathology which had an unusually high increase of 27.3%). Therefore, it is proposed to increase allied and mental health fees by the average change in private charge (7.9%).

The following table illustrates the change in Average Private Charge (APC), ReturnToWorkSA’s fees compared to the average private charge and the proposed changes to ReturnToWorkSA fees for 2025-26:

	Fee Increase FY 2024-2025	APC Change	Proposed Increase for 2025-2026	RTWSA rate compared to APC
Physiotherapy	6.0%	9.2%	7.9%	14.8% higher
Psychology (clinical)	6.0%	6.3%	7.9%	6.4% higher
Occupational Therapy	6.0%	9.7%	7.9%	12.0% higher
Chiropractic	6.0%	4.5%	7.9%	9.4% higher
Speech Pathology	6.0%	27.3%	7.9%	-12.9% lower
Osteopathy	6.0%	6.1%	7.9%	5.6% higher
Exercise Physiology	6.0%	7.6%	7.9%	10.3% higher
Audiology	6.0%*	12.9%	7.9%*	-11.3% lower
Social work	6.0%	8.2%	7.9%	8.4% higher
Counselling	6.0%	N/A	7.9%	N/A

*This does not include hearing aids and other devices. There is no fee increase to hearing aids and other devices.

ReturnToWorkSA may review allied health fee schedule descriptors and policies to ensure terminology is clear and accurate.

Allied Health Management Plans

ReturnToWorkSA is proposing to remove the requirement to complete a Management Plan and the associated fee, effective 1 July 2025. ReturnToWorkSA expects that practitioners continue to adopt the biopsychosocial approach by setting goals focussed on function and return to work and regularly communicating and collaborating with case managers and other treating professionals through existing communication channels, such as reports, case conferences and telephone calls.

Private Hospital fees

The Private Hospital Data Bureau (PHDB) data shows a 3.3% change in the average private charge, after removing I16Z DRG (other shoulder procedures), which is not represented in the South Australian data. Therefore, a 3.3% increase is proposed for private hospital fees for 2025-26.

Public Hospital fees

The ABS Medical and Hospital Services Index (Adelaide) shows a 7.9% change. Therefore, a 7.9% increase is proposed for public hospital fees for 2025-26.

Next steps

To enable fees to take effect from 1 July 2025, ReturnToWorkSA will:

- consider all feedback provided by stakeholders
- seek the approval of the ReturnToWorkSA Board and the Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector to publish medical, allied health, and public and private hospital fees in the South Australian Government Gazette to be effective 1 July 2025
- provide a written response to feedback received following approval to gazette fees (late May/early June)

Further information

If you have any questions, please contact Elyse Lloyd, Regulatory Policy Analyst, Scheme Support on 8233 2172 or email providers@rtwsa.com.

Attachment 1: Anaesthetic Fees

MBS Code	Current fee 2024-25	Proposed fee 2025-26
17610	\$90.50	\$167.40
17615	\$180	\$333
17620	\$235	\$434.80
17625	\$316.60	\$585.70
17640	\$85.20	\$157.60
17645	\$169.60	\$313.80
20100	\$264.50	\$489.30
20104	\$211.60	\$391.50
20142	\$317.40	\$587.20
20160	\$317.40	\$587.20
20170	\$317.40	\$587.20
20190	\$264.50	\$489.30
20192	\$529	\$978.70
20210	\$793.50	\$1468
20225	\$634.80	\$1174.40
20300	\$264.50	\$489.30
20320	\$317.40	\$587.20
20402	\$264.50	\$489.30
20420	\$264.50	\$489.30
20450	\$264.50	\$489.30
20470	\$317.40	\$587.20
20540	\$687.70	\$1272.20
20600	\$529	\$978.70
20620	\$529	\$978.70
20630	\$423.20	\$782.90
20632	\$370.30	\$685.10
20670	\$687.70	\$1272.20
20690	\$264.50	\$489.30
20700	\$158.70	\$293.60
20703	\$211.60	\$391.50
20706	\$370.30	\$685.10
20730	\$264.50	\$489.30
20740	\$264.50	\$489.30
20745	\$317.40	\$587.20
20750	\$211.60	\$391.50
20752	\$317.40	\$587.20
20790	\$423.20	\$782.90
20791	\$529	\$978.70
20806	\$370.30	\$685.10
20810	\$211.60	\$391.50

MBS Code	Current fee 2024-25	Proposed fee 2025-26
20830	\$211.60	\$391.50
20832	\$317.40	\$587.20
20840	\$317.40	\$587.20
20841	\$423.20	\$782.90
20860	\$317.40	\$587.20
20880	\$793.50	\$1468
20910	\$211.60	\$391.50
20940	\$211.60	\$391.50
21100	\$158.70	\$293.60
21110	\$264.50	\$489.30
21170	\$423.20	\$782.90
21199	\$211.60	\$391.50
21202	\$211.60	\$391.50
21210	\$317.40	\$587.20
21214	\$529	\$978.70
21215	\$497.50	\$920.40
21321	\$211.60	\$391.50
21360	\$264.50	\$489.30
21380	\$158.70	\$293.60
21382	\$211.60	\$391.50
21390	\$158.70	\$293.60
21392	\$211.60	\$391.50
21400	\$211.60	\$391.50
21402	\$370.30	\$685.10
21403	\$529	\$978.70
21430	\$211.60	\$391.50
21460	\$158.70	\$293.60
21461	\$211.60	\$391.50
21462	\$158.70	\$293.60
21464	\$211.60	\$391.50
21472	\$264.50	\$489.30
21480	\$211.60	\$391.50
21482	\$264.50	\$489.30
21484	\$264.50	\$489.30
21486	\$370.30	\$685.10
21500	\$423.20	\$782.90
21535	\$529	\$978.70
21610	\$264.50	\$489.30
21620	\$211.60	\$391.50
21622	\$264.50	\$489.30

MBS Code	Current fee 2024-25	Proposed fee 2025-26
21630	\$264.50	\$489.30
21632	\$317.40	\$587.20
21634	\$476.10	\$880.80
21638	\$529	\$978.70
21710	\$211.60	\$391.50
21712	\$264.50	\$489.30
21714	\$264.50	\$489.30
21716	\$264.50	\$489.30
21732	\$211.60	\$391.50
21740	\$264.50	\$489.30
21756	\$317.40	\$587.20
21760	\$370.30	\$685.10
21800	\$158.70	\$293.60
21810	\$211.60	\$391.50
21820	\$158.70	\$293.60
21830	\$211.60	\$391.50
21832	\$370.30	\$685.10
21834	\$211.60	\$391.50
21850	\$211.60	\$391.50
21872	\$423.20	\$782.90
21878	\$158.70	\$293.60
21879	\$264.50	\$489.30
21882	\$581.90	\$1076.50
21922	\$370.30	\$685.10
21926	\$264.50	\$489.30
21990	\$158.70	\$293.60
22002	\$211.60	\$391.50
22007	\$211.60	\$391.50
22008	\$211.60	\$391.50
22012	\$158.70	\$293.60
22014	\$158.70	\$293.60
22020	\$211.60	\$391.50
22025	\$211.60	\$391.50
22031	\$264.50	\$489.30
22036	\$158.70	\$293.60
22041	\$105.80	\$195.70
22042	\$52.90	\$97.90
22900	\$317.40	\$587.20
22905	\$317.40	\$587.20