

A strong voice for our future

BRITTANY LAUGA MP

B Urb Dev (Urb&Reg Plan)(Hons), C.dec

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL
AND ASSISTANT MINISTER
FOR EDUCATION**



MEDIA RELEASE

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Lauga calls for more funding for Medicare

Brittany Lauga has called on the Federal Member for Capricornia to stand up for Central Queensland and do something about the escalating out-of-pocket medical costs and decreasing rates of bulk-billing for GP appointments.

She has written to Ms Landry saying: “People and families in Central Queensland are struggling to pay for basic health care, so I’m calling on you, in your capacity as the Member for Capricornia and Assistant Minister for Children and Families, to immediately address the escalating out-of-pocket costs and decreasing rates of bulk-billing in our region.”

Ms Lauga, the Member for Keppel and Assistant Education Minister, said the out-of-pocket costs for families in Central Queensland are increasing as a result of a lack of action from the Federal Government to properly fund Medicare.

“Out of pocket costs for seeing a GP (without a referral) in Capricornia have increased to \$40.60 per person on average in 2018-19.

“There are fewer and fewer bulk-billing doctors in Central Queensland and, as a result, more people and families in our local community are struggling to see a doctor, if they can afford to at all.”

Ms Lauga said the Morrison Government’s GP bulk-billing rates by electorate data have seen bulk-billing rates in Capricornia drop in the past financial year.

“We need more bulk-billing services, not less.

ELECTORATE OFFICE

Shop 6, Yeppoon Central Shopping Centre
42 Park Street, Yeppoon QLD 4703

POSTAL ADDRESS

Post Office Box 1474
Yeppoon QLD 4703

CONTACT

Phone: (07) 4913 1500 Fax: (07) 4913 1509
Email: keppel@parliament.qld.gov.au

WEBSITE

www.brittanylauga.com.au

“I am seriously concerned that every day the Federal LNP fails to appropriately increase Medicare rebates is another day that struggling families are paying higher out-of-pocket costs to visit the doctor.”

Ms Lauga said there was a similar problem with psychologists as the Medicare gap for appointments also applies to psychological services.

“People suffering from depression, anxiety or other mental health issues are not making an appointment to see a psychologist (even if they have a Mental Health Plan) because they can’t afford the gap between what Medicare covers and the fee charged by the psychologist.

“The impact of these out-of-pocket expenses is having an impact on local people and families but it’s also having a secondary impact on our local hospital emergency departments.”

She said because fewer people are able to afford to see a GP as a result of these out-of-pocket expenses, they are presenting at local emergency departments for conditions that a GP could easily attend to.

“I’m concerned more people presenting to our emergency departments is putting serious pressure on our emergency doctors and nurses and wait times at our Emergency Departments,” said Ms Lauga.

ENDS

Contact John 0400787037