

Cataract Surgery

From mid 2009 the Government intends to reduce the Medicare Rebate on cataract surgery. There is a possibility that this may flow through to the reimbursement levels provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to service providers providing cataract surgery for entitled veterans.

The RSL has written to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs expressing great concern if there is to be an impact, seeking clarification on this point, and arguing that veterans should not be disadvantaged in terms of their access to ophthalmological services by such a move.

The Secretary has subsequently advised that the Government introduced changes do not result in an automatic reduction to fees paid by the Department of Veterans' Affairs for these procedures. The DVA fees for these procedures are set independent of the Medicare Benefits Schedule. Changes to the DVA's fees for surgery would only be undertaken after close consultation with the Australian Medical Association.

Consequently, it is expected that veterans who are entitled to receive cataract surgery will still have the same level of access to Ophthalmic surgeons as they have enjoyed in the past.