### Theme 1 – Reduce red tape by streamlining processes

**Our year one commitments**

- We will investigate practical solutions to overcome restrictions on practice managers from obtaining certain provider and patient information.

**Our progress as at 30 June 2009**

- In November 2008, we introduced greater flexibility by allowing practice staff acting on behalf of a provider to access certain information that is relevant to a particular practice. Practice staff can now:
  - be updated on the status of an application for a new provider number
  - be advised of the expiry date of a provider number
  - confirm current bank account details
  - update the practice location address for the provider, which will also update the provider’s mailing address where this is the same location.

- In April 2009, we further increased convenience for practice staff by allowing online search and confirm functions for Medicare card numbers through the Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) functionality.

### Theme 2 – Access to real time support and reference tools

**Our year one commitments**

- We will improve our technical helpdesk support for providers (in conjunction with software vendors) to better understand your practice needs and to solve eBusiness administrative and technical helpdesk issues as they arise.

**Our progress as at 30 June 2009**

- We are working closely with the medical software industry to revitalise our approach to delivering technical helpdesk support.
- We are finalising a new training curriculum for eBusiness technical helpdesk teams to make sure our support and advice is high quality and consistent.
- We have completed the consolidation and the location of eClaiming system status pages on the Medicare Australia website to make access easier.

- We will continue to develop and implement a national curriculum and training approach across Medicare Australia’s major business programs and services to ensure consistent and timely advice is delivered to providers, regardless of location and/or channel.

- We completed national curricula for the Medicare and Family Assistance Office programs to help our staff deliver accurate and consistent advice to practice managers at first point of contact.
- Work is underway on the curricula for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Australian Organ Donor Register, Aged Care, Veterans’ Affairs processing, Compensation, eBusiness, Telephony Environment and the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register programs and services.

- We will review our telephony platform and implement recommendations from the review, including an efficient escalation process.

- We are currently investigating innovative and cost-effective telephony solutions, including a Natural Language Speech IVR system to automate a number of call types. IVR would encompass some self service facilities for providers—such as verification of patient Medicare Card Numbers—thus making access more convenient and reducing call waiting times.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3 – Improve partnerships and relationships</th>
<th><img src="#" alt="Table" /></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Our Medicare Liaison Officers for Indigenous Access (MLOs) will work closely with key stakeholders, communities and health service providers to build relationships and develop a collaborative approach to improving access to health services for Indigenous Australians. | ▪ Our MLOs engaged in a range of activities designed to strengthen relationships with practice managers and/or health services staff, and to improve Indigenous access to health services, including:  
- outreach work that included training and support for Indigenous health service providers to ensure all the benefits available to them are being claimed  
- servicing the 1800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Access Line which predominantly receives calls from Indigenous Australians and health services staff—providing quick responses to queries. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We will build on the success of account managers allocated to all major stakeholders by continuing to strengthen our relationships.</th>
<th><img src="#" alt="Table" /></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Our account managers held regular conversations with practice managers to facilitate the collaborative design of administrative service delivery solutions for providers, including electronic claiming initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4 – Enhance communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| We will develop a communications strategy tailored to meet the changing needs of the practice environment. | ▪ The representation of the Australian Association of Practice Managers (AAPM) at the Stakeholder Consultation Group, one of our major consultation forums, enables practice managers the opportunity to provide regular input and advice on key business initiatives administered by Medicare Australia.  
▪ This year, Medicare Australia placed practice managers at the forefront of our May 2009 communication campaign to promote electronic Medicare claiming. Utilising a phased approach practice managers were made aware of the campaign before Medicare cardholders, allowing medical practices to build their capability before demand was created. In addition, Medicare Australia’s Business Development Officers worked directly with some practices regarding Medicare Australia’s electronic claiming solutions. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5 – Better support and compliance through education</th>
<th><img src="#" alt="Table" /></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| We will provide access to practical and timely education and support through eLearning about the Medicare program and provision of reference guides for complex Medicare items. | ▪ Improving education and support through provision of online tools for practice staff is a major focus for us:  
  - *Medicare and You* series of interactive eLearning modules that build understanding of the Medicare program was made available on the Medicare Australia website.  
  - Chronic Disease Management quick reference guides for MBS items were distributed to approximately 6200 GP practice staff in August 2008 and made available on the Medicare Australia website.  
  - In collaboration with the AAPM, two eSeminars were conducted covering the topics of common Medicare items, practice nurse items, health assessments and skin lesion excisions in August 2008 and June 2009.  
  - We have commenced consultation with the medical software industry and practice manager stakeholder groups to explore opportunities to ensure software products support program integrity requirements. |

---

# Theme 3 – Improve partnerships and relationships

Our Medicare Liaison Officers for Indigenous Access (MLOs) will work closely with key stakeholders, communities and health service providers to build relationships and develop a collaborative approach to improving access to health services for Indigenous Australians.

- Our MLOs engaged in a range of activities designed to strengthen relationships with practice managers and/or health services staff, and to improve Indigenous access to health services, including:
  - outreach work that included training and support for Indigenous health service providers to ensure all the benefits available to them are being claimed
  - servicing the 1800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Access Line which predominantly receives calls from Indigenous Australians and health services staff—providing quick responses to queries.

We will build on the success of account managers allocated to all major stakeholders by continuing to strengthen our relationships.

- Our account managers held regular conversations with practice managers to facilitate the collaborative design of administrative service delivery solutions for providers, including electronic claiming initiatives.

# Theme 4 – Enhance communications

We will develop a communications strategy tailored to meet the changing needs of the practice environment.

- The representation of the Australian Association of Practice Managers (AAPM) at the Stakeholder Consultation Group, one of our major consultation forums, enables practice managers the opportunity to provide regular input and advice on key business initiatives administered by Medicare Australia.

- This year, Medicare Australia placed practice managers at the forefront of our May 2009 communication campaign to promote electronic Medicare claiming. Utilising a phased approach practice managers were made aware of the campaign before Medicare cardholders, allowing medical practices to build their capability before demand was created. In addition, Medicare Australia’s Business Development Officers worked directly with some practices regarding Medicare Australia’s electronic claiming solutions.

# Theme 5 – Better support and compliance through education

We will provide access to practical and timely education and support through eLearning about the Medicare program and provision of reference guides for complex Medicare items.

Improving education and support through provision of online tools for practice staff is a major focus for us:

- *Medicare and You* series of interactive eLearning modules that build understanding of the Medicare program was made available on the Medicare Australia website.

- Chronic Disease Management quick reference guides for MBS items were distributed to approximately 6200 GP practice staff in August 2008 and made available on the Medicare Australia website.

- In collaboration with the AAPM, two eSeminars were conducted covering the topics of common Medicare items, practice nurse items, health assessments and skin lesion excisions in August 2008 and June 2009.

- We have commenced consultation with the medical software industry and practice manager stakeholder groups to explore opportunities to ensure software products support program integrity requirements.