

ART and the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS)

- The Australian Government funds ART treatment through subsidising ART services listed on the MBS. This provides Medicare rebates for complete ART cycles for patients where it is deemed clinically relevant.
- The legal basis for payment of Medicare rebates of services for ART is that the service: must be clinically relevant; performed in line with state and territory laws; is not associated with a surrogacy arrangement; and meets the relevant MBS item description as listed on the MBS.
- A 'clinically relevant service' means a service rendered by a medical practitioner that is generally accepted in the medical profession as being necessary for the appropriate treatment of the patient. The patient's treating medical practitioner determines whether a particular MBS item is appropriate and meets the above eligibility criteria.
- There are 14 MBS items specifically for ART treatment (13200 – 13292).
- ART services have been listed on the MBS since 1990.
- ART cycles include any associated ultrasounds, pathology tests and consultation services. However, tests and consultations before and after these cycles may also be subsidised by the MBS.
- ART providers may offer additional services which are not funded under Medicare.
- Medicare does not provide rebates for the costs associated with freezing (storage) of eggs, sperm or embryos, whether done for social or medical reasons. Freezing (storage) is not considered a clinical service, unlike Medicare funded ART treatment cycles which involve clinical expertise and management.
- Medicare does not explicitly prohibit the payment of benefits for ART services for same sex couples or single women. However, these patients only qualify for Medicare rebates if their treating doctor deems the service to be 'clinically relevant'. This generally means an assessment by a fertility specialist that the patient is medically infertile at the time of treatment. This is a determination that is up to the treating specialist. Access to ART services for same sex couples are also subject to state and territory laws.
- ART services are also provided in the public health system.
- MBS statistics also do not include the cost of IVF medicines that are subsidised under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Patients must be undertaking ART treatment under the relevant MBS item to access PBS subsidised medicines.

MBS Statistics

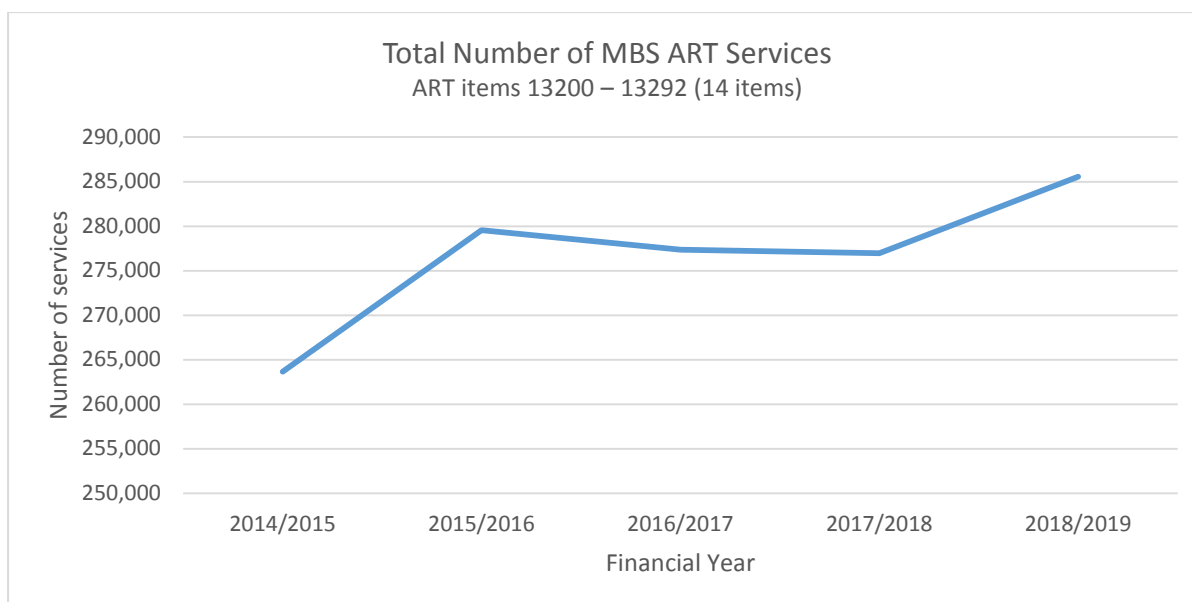
- In financial year 2018-19, 285,558 services of MBS items 13200-13292 for ART services were claimed (Table 1).
- In financial year 2018-19, Medicare paid a total of \$256.6 million in benefits for MBS items 13200-13292 for ART services (Table 1).

- Data from the MBS for the last five financial years show that the overall trend in the number of MBS ART services and total ART expenditure is that of an increase, although services and expenditure were relatively static or decreased during the period from 2015/16 to 2017/18 (Table 1 and Figure 1).
- Overall, in the five year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19, there has been approximately a 8 % growth in total MBS ART services and approximately a 6 % increase in corresponding Medicare benefits paid. For context, this compares to a 15 % growth in MBS services and a 19 % increase in Medicare benefits paid for all MBS services in the same time period (Table 2 and Figure 2.)

Table 1

		Services	Benefits (\$ million)
ART items 13200 – 13292 (14 items)	2018-19	285,558	\$256.6
	2017-18	276,952	\$249.0
	2016-17	277,366	\$251.1
	2015-16	279,552	\$256.1
	2014-15	263,663	\$242.2

Table 1. MBS services and benefits paid for selected ART items for financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19. Source: Department of Human Services, Medicare Australia Statistics, accessed 13 August 2019



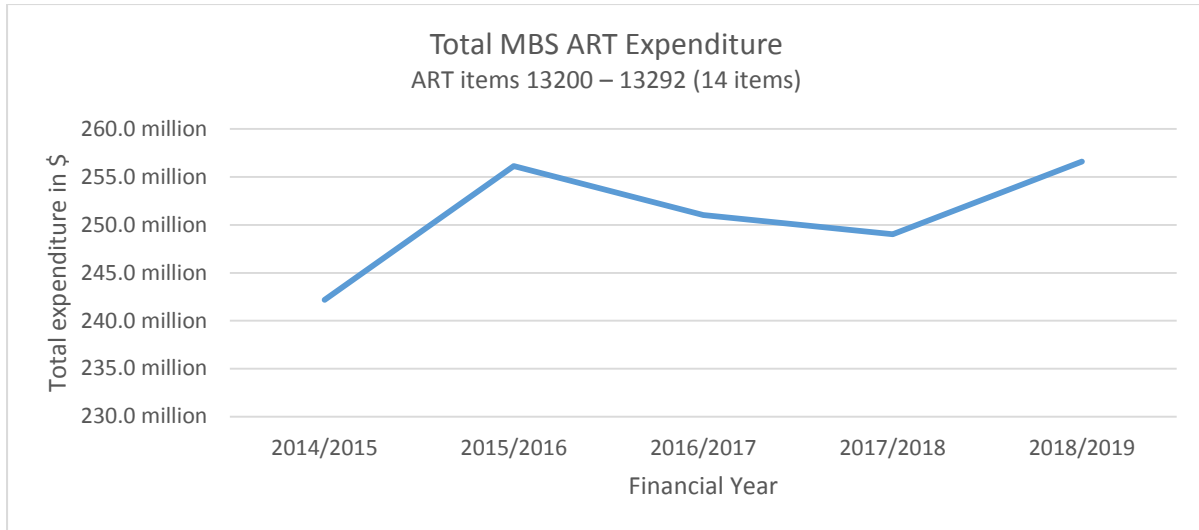
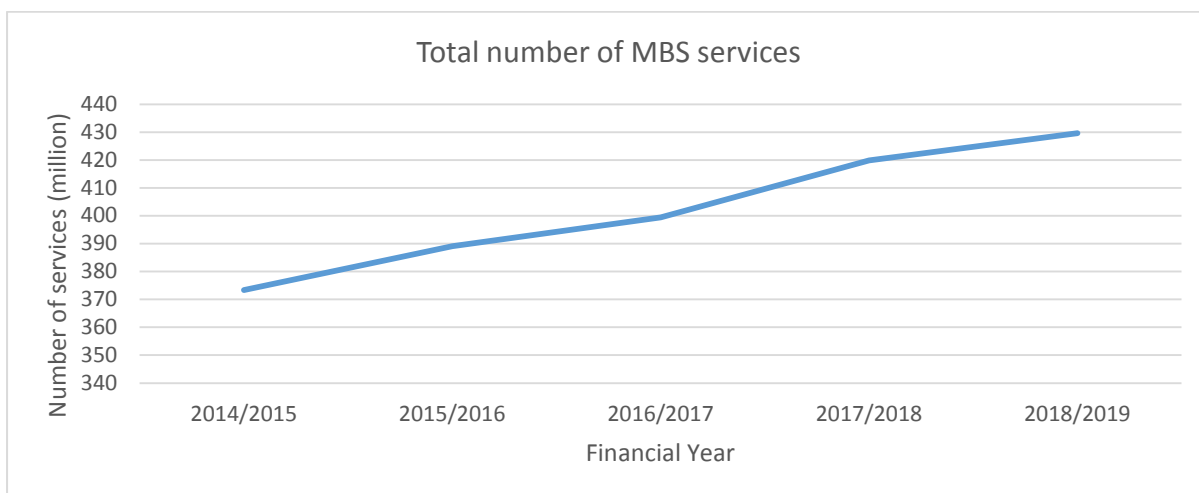


Figure 1. Total MBS services (upper panel) and benefits paid (lower panel) for selected ART items for financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19. Source: Department of Human Services, Medicare Australia Statistics, accessed 13 August 2019.

		Services	Benefits (\$ million)
All MBS services	2018-19	429,647,199	2,4396.3
	2017-18	419,852,601	2,3530.3
	2016-17	399,485,575	2,2321.8
	2015-16	389,117,735	2,1420.5
	2014-15	373,401,642	2,0501.2

Table 2. Total MBS services and benefits paid for all MBS items for financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19. Source: Department of Human Services, Medicare Australia Statistics, accessed 14 August 2019.



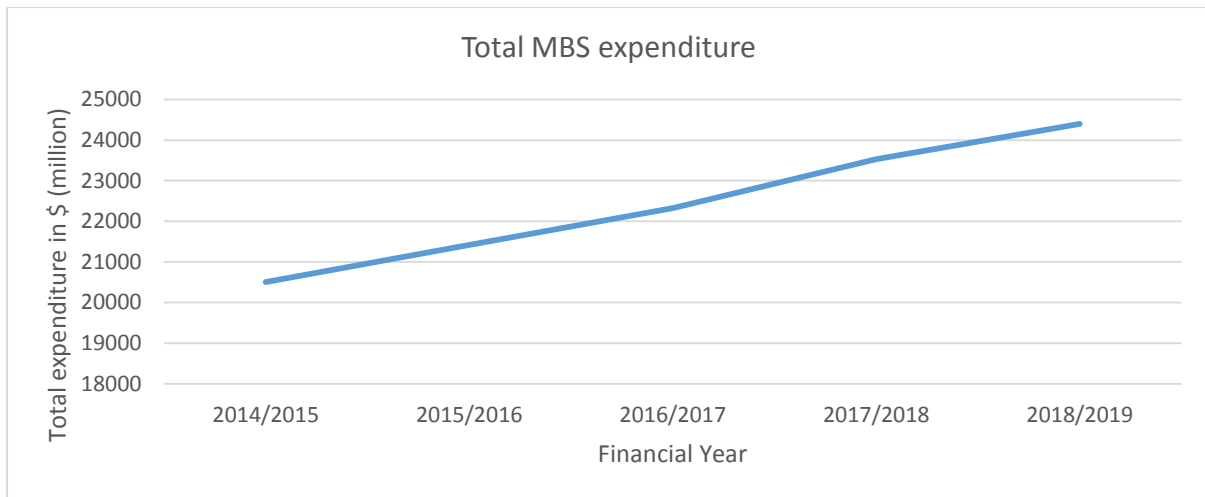


Figure 2. Total MBS services (upper panel) and benefits paid (lower panel) for all MBS items for financial years 2014/15 to 2018/19. Source: Department of Human Services, Medicare Australia Statistics, accessed 14 August 2019.