



## **The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**

Minister for Health

Minister for Sport

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Guaranteeing vital services for Australia's world class health system**

The 2017-18 Budget delivers on the Turnbull Government's commitment to guarantee Medicare and ensure our health system continues to be one of the best in the world – where every Australian has access to the best doctors, nurses, hospitals and medicines.

This Budget supports our Long-Term National Health Plan – based on the four pillars of guaranteeing Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; supporting hospitals; prioritising mental and preventive health; and investment in medical research.

It secures the essential healthcare services Australians rely on.

The 2017-18 Budget includes a \$10 billion package to invest in Australia's health system and the health of Australians.

#### **Guaranteeing Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme**

As part of our rock solid commitment to Medicare, we're increasing funding by \$2.4 billion over the next four years. This locks in funding for Medicare.

The Government will establish a Medicare Guarantee Fund from 1 July 2017 to secure the ongoing funding of the Medicare Benefits Schedule and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, guaranteeing Australians' access to these services and affordable medicines into the future. Proceeds from the Medicare Levy (less the contribution for the NDIS) will be paid into the fund and topped up with a portion of personal income tax receipts to ensure it covers the combined costs of the MBS and PBS.

Partnerships have been struck with the nation's GPs, specialists, pharmacists and the medicines sector. These are key to the Turnbull Government's initiatives that will support the long-term future of Australia's health system.

In addition to the major initiatives of unfreezing the Medicare rebate and increasing affordable access to medicines, the 2017-18 Budget includes almost 50 measures that will help improve the health of Australians.

Since coming into Government, the Coalition has listed more than 1400 new or amended listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

We're building on this with \$514.6 million to list Sacubitril with Valsartan (Entresto®) for patients with chronic heart failure.

This will benefit more than 60,000 Australians every year who currently pay around \$2,000 per year for this medicine. Concession patients will now only pay \$6.30 per script and non-concession patients will pay \$38.80.

This builds on the more than \$310 million of new medicines added to the PBS just last week.

And we will continue to provide affordable access to new medicines that are recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee without fear or favour.

Having round-the-clock access to vital medical services is critical for a world-leading health system. We're therefore committed to ensuring that Australians have access to after-hours medical care at home when they need it. We're providing \$145.5 million to Primary Healthcare Networks to continue their work giving local communities access to this vital service.

We're also supporting organ donation by ensuring that financial hardship is not a barrier with a \$4.1 million extension of the Supporting Living Organ Donors Program for four years.

Living donors are reimbursed for leave or out-of-pocket expenses. This helps to encourage donation and reduce waiting lists for patients needing organs.

### **Supporting our Hospitals**

In addition to boosting primary care, we are supporting the Australian public hospital system with record funding.

Commonwealth funding to states and territories will increase by \$2.8 billion. This brings additional support for public hospitals delivered under the Turnbull Government to \$7.7 billion.

Total hospital funding will increase from \$18.5 billion in the current year to \$22.7 billion in 2020-21.

We are also providing \$730.4 million to the Tasmanian Government to secure the Mersey Community Hospital's future for the coming decade. Ownership of the Mersey will transfer to the Tasmanian Government from 1 July 2017 – as part of the largest one-off healthcare funding commitment from the Commonwealth to the State.

We're also providing \$6.2 million to support the continued operation of the Missiondale Recovery Centre and palliative care services in Tasmania.

### **Prioritising Mental Health, Preventive Health and Sport**

Significantly, the 2017-18 Budget puts a strong focus on mental health and preventive health – key elements of our Long-Term National Health Plan.

The Turnbull Government is building on its mental health reforms by delivering another boost of more than \$170 million for mental health support, treatment and research.

This includes \$80.0 million of additional funding, contingent on matched commitments from the states and territories, to maintain community psychosocial services for people with mental illness who do not qualify for assistance through the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

People living in rural and remote regions of Australia will now receive significantly improved access to psychologists, under a new \$9.1 million telehealth initiative set to roll-out later this year.

And we are providing \$11.1 million to prevent suicide in specific locations – hotspots – where suicide incidents repeatedly occur. Crisis help signage and infrastructure such as barriers will deter

suicide attempts, and the capacity of existing crisis line services to respond to cries for help will be improved.

A further \$15.0 million will be provided for three major mental health research initiatives.

This includes \$5.0 million to complete work on Orygen's National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health in Melbourne, \$5.0 million to establish the Sunshine Coast Mind & Neuroscience Thompson Institute as a leading Australian mental health research hub and \$5.0 million to establish a Centre for Research Excellence on Prevention of Anxiety and Depression, led by the NSW-based Black Dog Institute and the Hunter Institute.

We are also providing more than \$50 million for a mental health prevention and support package for serving ADF members, veterans and their families.

We also recognise the important mental and physical health benefits of a healthy active lifestyle.

The Government will provide \$10.0 million for a Prime Minister's Walk for Life Challenge, to be led by The Heart Foundation, which will support up to 300,000 Australians to become new regular walkers by the end of 2019.

A four-year, \$5.0 million GPs' Healthy Heart partnership with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners will support GPs to encourage patients to lead a healthy lifestyle.

And as we count down to the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, we're investing \$15.5 million to support our athletes and help inspire young Aussies. This will be the first step in a broader National Sports Plan.

We're also looking after young Australians by building on our highly successful No Jab No Pay policy to vaccinate children, with a new \$5.5 million immunisation awareness campaign.

And to ensure that no Australian child slips through the cracks, we're expanding the National Immunisation Plan to provide catch up vaccinations to 10 to 19 year olds who missed out on essential childhood vaccinations. This measure will cost \$14.1 million.

Cancer screening is vital to achieving early detection and the Government will invest over \$230 million in cancer screening and research.

We're providing \$41.6 million to extend an agreement for the Victorian Cytology Service to continue research and quality services for cervical cancer screening.

We will also provide \$64.3 million to continue mammogram screening for women from 70 to 74 years of age, in addition to women aged 50 to 69 years of age receiving screening services through the BreastScreen Australia program.

And we're doubling the number of prostate cancer nurses with an additional \$5.9 million. This is on top of the \$5.9 million announced last month.

### **Investing in Medical Research**

In addition to support for cancer screening, we're also supporting the search for a cure.

The Government is contributing \$79 million to cancer research including \$10.8 million to fight childhood cancer. This includes \$1.4 million for pediatric brain cancer clinical trials and \$4.4 million for Cancer Australia.

CanTeen will also receive \$5 million to support clinical trials in adolescents and young adults as one of the first allocations from our landmark \$20 billion Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

We are also funding the latest in advanced medical research technology with \$68 million towards the establishment of Australia's first Proton Beam Therapy facility at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute.

We are on track to double our current medical research funding, with \$1.4 billion allocated under the MRFF by 2020-21 – including over \$640 million in 2020-21.

Under the MRFF, \$65.9 million will be immediately shared by eight research projects, including trialling new drugs, devices and services, clinical fellowships, and projects to address childhood obesity.

Other projects include developing pandemic vaccines, tackling antimicrobial resistance, and supporting cutting edge ideas and the next generation of researchers.

### **Aged Care**

The 2017-18 Budget also supports older Australians with a \$5.5 billion continuation of the funding arrangements for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme over two years from 1 July 2018.

Older Australians benefiting from home support services can expect a greater focus on increasing independence and quality of life, and the funding provides certainty to the sector.

This includes contributions for essential home support services, such as Meals on Wheels, personal care, nursing, domestic assistance, home maintenance and community transport to assist older people to keep living independently in their own home.

We're also improving the My Aged Care platform with \$3.1 million to increase efficiency and effectiveness for users.

The investment will benefit all users of My Aged Care system – including over one million older Australians, their families and representatives.

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