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MEDIA RELEASE

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REBUILDING GENERAL PRACTICE TRAINING

The Abbott Government is honouring its election commitment to rebuild primary care. The 2014-15 Budget delivers funding for an extra 300 GPs to be trained each year.

The Budget is part of the Government's Economic Action Strategy to build a strong, prosperous economy and a safe, secure Australia.

More GP training is the centrepiece of the Government's strategic push to boost the nation's health workforce, direct funding to frontline services, and ensures the workforce can deliver these services for a sustainable health system.

The Government will deliver more health professionals, at lower cost, through better training programmes. The focus will be on primary care and rural health.

The Government will immediately boost GP training places by 300 – from 1,200 to 1,500 new places in 2015, tackling current shortages, particularly in regional and rural Australia.

GP training places will continue increasing in future years, as the Government works in partnership with business and the medical profession to reduce the costs of GP training and remove unnecessary red tape.

In a major overhaul, the 300 new places will be funded by ending the expensive Prevocational General Practice Placements Program, redirecting funding for training GP registrars employed by state governments, and reducing the administrative costs of GP training.

The Abbott Government is delivering on its commitment to invest \$238.4 million over five years to double the Practice Incentive Payment for teaching medical students from \$100 to \$200 per session.

The Government will also deliver on its commitment to provide new infrastructure funding. It will provide \$52.5 million to enable regional and rural GP practices to

build the facilities they need to take on more trainees. A minimum of 175 infrastructure grants, each capped at \$300,000, will be made available.

Additional funding of \$35.4 million will be made available through the General Practice Rural Incentives Programme over two years from 2013-14 to 2014-15. This programme provides financial incentives to around 13,000 doctors working in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia, and continues to exceed expected demand.

The Government is delivering on its commitment to provide around 500 new nursing and allied health scholarships. These will be delivered over three years, costing \$13.4 million, to target workforce shortages in regional and rural areas.

The Government has already committed \$40 million over four years to support extra medical intern places in private hospitals and regional and rural areas. 76 interns began their one year placements in January 2014.

This Budget lays the foundation for building a stable, efficient health workforce for the nation.

Expanding GP numbers is a priority for medical workforce planning. Australia has too many junior doctors unable to secure vocational training places, and not enough GPs to provide primary care now and into the future.

We need to ensure that health workforce spending leads to better health outcomes for patients.

The Government is repairing the Budget so that we can build a stronger economy to generate more jobs and deliver better services in the years ahead.

Over the last eight months, the Government has undertaken extensive economic analysis and received the findings of an audit. We have been working methodically through all of the options to see where we can get the best outcomes for our country in the fairest way possible.

The Government will close three agencies, Health Workforce Australia, General Practice Education and Training Ltd (GPET) and Australian National Preventative Health Agency (ANPHA). Their functions will be transferred to the Department of Health.

This will cut the size of the health bureaucracy, giving the Government a smaller footprint, and put more money back into health.

Funding for the existing 17 GPET regional training providers will be wound up by the end of 2015. The Government will run a competitive tender process to reduce the number of organisations coordinating GP training.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220