



BUDGET OVERVIEW

Making it easier to get the healthcare you need

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) will be funded to extend the PHN After Hours programs for another 2 years and to improve access to primary care for multicultural communities and for people experiencing homelessness (\$143.9m).

Patients, including aged care residents, will be able to get consistent care from a team of Medicare-funded healthcare providers (\$19.7m).

MyMedicare will make it easier for GPs to provide telehealth consultations (\$5.9m). Providers will receive incentive payments to deliver wraparound, tailored care to keep patients with complex, chronic disease out of hospitals (\$98.9m).

The Budget includes additional funding to support the Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) program, including 8 new Medicare UCCs (\$358.5m).

There will be a new Medicare rebate for consultations of 60 minutes or longer, which will give doctors the support they need to provide high-quality care to people with chronic conditions and complex needs (\$98.2m).

There will be also better access to more affordable wound care for eligible patients with a chronic wound and diabetes (\$47.8m).

The Government is investing in new and amended MBS items including heart health checks to protect Australians against heart disease (\$118.2m).

A \$951.2 million digital health package will improve digital systems to build a more efficient, connected and collaborative healthcare system. The Australian Digital Health Agency will be an ongoing entity and will upgrade and modernise My Health Record to make it easier for patients and providers to use and support the secure, safe and efficient sharing of information.

The Intergovernmental Agreement on National Digital Health will be renewed for 4 years to progress the secure, safe and efficient sharing of information across the health system.

We will fund more Clinical Quality Registries (\$40m) to ensure patients are receiving the best quality medical procedures and treatments, including those for dementia, cystic fibrosis, and pelvic floor disorders.

The Australian Government is continuing and expanding mental health and suicide prevention supports (\$586.9m) for:

- people with severe mental illness not in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- children and young people
- people with eating disorders
- people bereaved by suicide
- people and communities impacted by disasters
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including refugees and migrants who have experienced torture and trauma
- First Nations people in the lead up to, during and following the referendum to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the Constitution

Funding for digital mental health services will also be extended.

Bigger incentives to bulk bill, cheaper medicines and more affordable care

The 2023–24 Budget provides a historic \$6.1 billion investment in strengthening Medicare, to revamp primary healthcare. It also includes an additional \$2.2 billion for new and amended Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings and \$259.5 million for other critical health infrastructure.

It includes a \$3.5 billion investment to triple bulk billing incentives, in the largest increase to the incentive in the 40-year history of Medicare. This will directly benefit 11.6 million Australians, with flow on benefits for all Australians. Incentives will cover face-to-face and telehealth GP consultations.

From 1 November, a GP who bulk bills an eligible patient for a standard consultation in a metropolitan area will receive a bulk billing incentive benefit of \$20.65 instead of \$6.85. In remote areas, the bulk billing incentive for a standard consultation will increase from \$13.15 to \$39.65.

This will address the sharp decline in bulk billing rates and doctor availability over recent years, and make healthcare more affordable for about 5.1 million children under 16, and 7.9 million pensioners and concession card holders.

More than 300 common medicines will be cheaper for 6 million Australians who will be able to buy 2 months' worth of medicine with a single prescription. This will halve patients' visits to the GP and pharmacy. It will save patients up to \$180 per year for each eligible medicine they take. Commonwealth concession card holders will save up to \$43.80 a year per medicine.

Medicines, including to treat COVID-19 and cystic fibrosis, are being expanded or added to the PBS, saving patients thousands of dollars a year (\$2.2b).

Tackling smoking and vaping and improving cancer outcomes

The Government is taking strong action to reduce smoking, stamp out vaping and improve cancer outcomes through:

- proposed stronger regulation and enforcement of all e-cigarettes, including new controls on importation, contents and packaging
- a new public health information campaign to discourage Australians from taking up smoking and vaping, and encourage people to quit (\$63.4m)
- expanding specialised programs and health services to support Australians to quit smoking and vaping (\$29.5m)
- a new national lung cancer screening program that is predicted to prevent over 4,000 deaths from lung cancer through early diagnosis and treatment (\$263.8m)
- extending and widening the Tackling Indigenous Smoking program to include efforts against vaping (\$141.2m)
- addressing inequity in cancer outcomes for First Nations people by building the capacity and capability of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to support cancer care on the ground and ensure mainstream services are culturally safe and accessible (\$238.5m).
- increasing tobacco tax by 5%, making cigarettes more expensive and less attractive, and taxing all tobacco at the same rate

Total new investments



This investment includes:

- **\$6.1 billion**
Strengthening Medicare
- **\$654.4 million**
First Nations health
- **\$1.1 billion**
Health prevention and protection
- **\$737 million**
Smoking and vaping cessation
- **\$586.9 million**
Mental health

Growing health workforce

To improve the accessibility and affordability of general practice in rural areas, a new pre-fellowship program for non-vocational doctors will be established to support international medical graduates to work in primary care and remain in rural communities (\$30.5m).

Changes to scholarship arrangements – with a focus on nursing, midwifery and First Nations health workers – will boost the workforce in primary care, aged care, regional and rural areas and other areas of workforce shortage (\$50.2m).

The number of nurses in primary care and aged care will grow, with an extra 6,000 clinical placements (\$4.2m), 1,850 post graduate scholarships to train more nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives (\$50.2m), and incentives to get 500 nurses back into the workforce (\$1m).

GP registrars in regional, rural and remote locations will be able to deliver services in community-based medical practices without losing employment benefits as they move between employers, through an extension of the Single Employer Model trials (\$4.5m).

The Budget will significantly increase workforce incentives for primary care practices to employ various health professionals, to provide team-based, patient-centred, high-quality primary care (\$445.1m).

A one year extension of the Practice Incentives Program Quality Improvement and a review of workforce incentive programs will be undertaken, to ensure incentive payments appropriately support primary care practices to deliver the care Australians expect (\$60.2m).

PHNs will be funded to commission multidisciplinary care from allied health, nurses and midwives (\$79.4m) to support smaller or solo primary care practices, to increase patient access and improve the management of chronic conditions.

Medicare patient rebates for care provided by nurse practitioners will be increased by 30%. The Government will also enable our highly-trained nurse practitioners and participating midwives to prescribe PBS medicines and provide services under Medicare without the need for a legislated collaborative arrangement and will increase MBS rebates for standard nurse practitioner attendance items (\$46.8m). Over time, MyMedicare will be extended to Nurse Practitioners and other primary care providers.

Patients will have continued access to medication management and dose administration aids programs, with funding for community pharmacy programs increased (\$654.9m). The total budget for the Regional Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance will be doubled (\$79.5m).

Pharmacists will be able to administer National Immunisation Program vaccines at no cost to patients (\$114.1m), and the more than 50,000 Australians who need treatment for opioid dependency will have funded support from their local pharmacy to access the treatment medications they need at a cost they can afford (\$377.3m).

Delays in the psychology training pipeline will be addressed while longer-term reform is progressed. This includes 500 extra postgraduate psychology places, 500 one-year internships for provisional psychologists, and 2,000 supervisor training sessions (\$91.3m).

A \$17.8 million investment will help upskill the broader health workforce to better recognise and respond to mental health issues.

Restoring dignity to aged care

Aged care workers will receive their largest ever pay rise, with the Government investing \$11.3 billion to fund the Fair Work Commission's interim decision for a record 15% pay increase.

The wage rise will deliver cost-of living relief for over 250,000 aged care workers. It is the largest ever pay increase in the history of the Fair Work Act.

The Government will also progress the National Worker Registration Scheme (\$59.5m).

A new regulatory framework and prudential model (\$72.3m) will enable changes in how providers are regulated. The new model will be complemented by actions to:

- improve aged care residents' dining experiences and food and nutrition reporting (\$12.9m)
- require residential aged care services to provide residents with Monthly Care Statements on care provided and occurrences of significant change
- enable continuous improvement and enhance Star Ratings for older Australians and work to expand the Quality Indicator program to in-home care services (\$139.9m).

An additional 9,500 home care packages will be made available in 2023-24 (\$166.8m), to meet the growing preference for older people to continue to live independently in their own home.

A newly established single assessment system will use existing assessment organisations to simplify and improve access to aged care services. Older people will no longer be bounced between different organisations to assess need.

A new Aged Care Taskforce will be established to review aged care funding arrangements and develop options to make the system fair and equitable for all Australians (\$0.7m).

The Taskforce will also inform the final design of the Support at Home program which will be postponed to commence on 1 July 2025, in response to feedback and to allow time to further refine the design. Existing grant arrangements for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme will be extended for a further 12 months to 30 June 2025.

The Disability Support for Older Australians program will be extended with \$487 million. Older people with disability will benefit from delivery of consistent, timely, and high quality disability services so they can live in their homes and communities.

Aged care recipients will have greater choice and control in decision making through the development of systems that will help them to choose their provider (\$41.3m).

There will be increased access to primary care for aged care residents, with new incentives for GPs (\$112m).

Rural and remote areas, in particular, will receive support to ensure the viability of local aged care providers (\$98.7m).

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program will receive increased funding (\$77.3m) to ensure First Nations elders access high quality, culturally safe care. The Government will build the capacity of Aboriginal Controlled Organisations to ensure on Country services (\$8.2m). An interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner will be appointed (\$1.6m).

Stronger preventive health

This Budget takes the first key step towards establishing a world-class Australian Centre for Disease Control to better prepare Australia for future pandemics and health threats (\$91.1m). The National Medical Stockpile will be replenished and begin transitioning into the ACDC. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will receive long term funding for activities aimed at protecting public health (\$61m).

The shingles vaccine Shingrix will be added to the National Immunisation Program (\$446.5m). The Budget also continues the important public information campaign for routine childhood immunisation (\$3.4m).

An additional 30,000 eligible adult public patients will be able to receive dental treatment (\$219.4m).

First Nations people will benefit from funding to increase uptake of annual health checks, expand both the Deadly Choices program and the Practice Incentives Program Indigenous Health Incentive (\$17.1m) and the 'Strong Born' awareness campaign for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) (\$1.4m). There are measures to increase renal services (\$28.2m).

\$40.6 million will support equity in the healthcare system and improve the health of Australian women and girls. There will be continued funding for donor breast milk bank services (\$6m), and the Australian Breastfeeding Association's National Breastfeeding Helpline (\$4.8m).

The Budget extends FASD prevention, diagnosis and support activities (\$5m), and important alcohol and drug prevention and treatment programs (\$33.6m).

It provides \$0.9m to develop a 10-year national action plan for the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people, and establish an LGBTIQ+ Health Advisory Group.

There is funding to enhance efforts to end HIV transmission in Australia by 2030, including access to treatment for people who are ineligible for Medicare (\$10m), and increased access to testing, treatment and information (\$3.2m). The Blood Borne Virus (BBV) and Sexually Transmissible Infection (STI) National Response will be continued (\$6.6m).

A new National Sport Plan will be developed and the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* will be reviewed to ensure a strategic approach to major sporting events. In addition, the Government will implement the Major Sporting Events Legacy Framework to ensure major international sporting events deliver social, economic, and sporting benefits for all Australians (\$1.1m).

The Budget will support the Confederation of Sport's bid to host the World Masters Games 2029 (WMG) in Perth (\$5m).

Funding is being provided to advance the rights of women and girls, and broader human rights objectives, and for a talent and development program that will increase the number of female coaches, officials and administrators from grassroots through to elite level (\$2.1m).

Financial assistance will be given to thousands of junior competitors, coaches and officials to attend sporting competitions through the Local Sporting Champions and Local Para Champions programs (\$8.3m).

\$11.3 billion
for aged care
workforce
pay rise