



## Overview – How the 2021–22 Budget is investing in the health of women and girls

Across the pillars of *Australia's Long Term National Health Plan*, the Australian Government is investing \$535.8 million to improve health outcomes for women and girls, which includes all measures announced in the \$354 million *Women's Health Package* on 9 May 2021. The Australian Government recognises that responding to the different health challenges and outcomes between men and women, and between different groups of women and girls, is important to improve the overall health of our nation.

In line with the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030*, the Government is addressing core issues affecting the lives and livelihoods of women and girls. The Strategy has 5 priority areas: maternal, sexual and reproductive health; healthy ageing; chronic conditions and preventive health; mental health; and the health impacts of violence against women and girls.

The Government's investments include:

- \$100.4 million for improvements to cervical and breast cancer screening programs which will help detect these life-threatening cancers earlier, improving women's rate of survival
- \$21.6 million for women's health initiatives, including Jean Hailes for Women's Health and the Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia for the Periods, Pain and Endometriosis Program (PPEP-Talk)
- \$13.7 million to Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance for a national rollout of its program to reduce pre-term birth rates which affect 8% of births in Australia and up to 16% among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- \$47.4 million to support the mental health and wellbeing of new and expectant parents including to:
  - expand existing support services provided by Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia
  - develop a perinatal mental health minimum data set to support the identification of gaps in screening and to support evidence-based investments in perinatal mental health services, and

- deliver universal perinatal mental health screening in conjunction with states and territories.
- \$107.5 million to include new genetic testing procedures on the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS), including:
  - \$95.9 million for pre-implantation testing of embryos for inherited genetic disorders
  - \$2.5 million for diagnosis of hydatidiform moles (molar pregnancy), and
  - \$6.3 million for pregnancies with identified major foetal structural abnormalities.
- \$22 million for gynaecology items on the MBS, which includes items for Assisted Reproductive Technology
- \$26.9 million to provide support for people with eating disorders and their families, noting that women account for almost two thirds of eating disorder diagnoses, including:
  - \$13 million to establish a National Eating Disorder Research Centre
  - \$6 million to establish eating disorder day programs in WA and TAS
  - \$2.5 million for workforce credentialing to guarantee access to high quality subsidised care for people with an eating disorder, and
  - \$300,000 to continue Eating Disorders Families Australia's *strive* program.
- \$19.9 million for Basketball Australia and Football Australia to support the staging of the women's basketball and football world cups, and other major sporting events, in Australia in 2022 and 2023, including:
  - a high performance program for the Matildas
  - community engagement programs for womens' and girls' soccer, and
  - a female participation and leadership in basketball program.
- \$19.3 million for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing from 1 June 2021 of Oriprio® (progesterone) to prevent women going in premature labour saving around 14,250 patients up to \$300 per course of treatment
- \$6.6 million for a grant to Breast Cancer Network Australia to operate its helpline, rural and regional information forums and extending its consumer representative training program, and
- \$3 million to support the McGrath Foundation to support Breast Cancer Care Nurses.

**Why is this important?**

While Australian women and girls overall enjoy good health, there is no room for complacency. As well as new and emerging health challenges, there are long standing health issues affecting some women which need to be addressed.

The Australian Government is committed to supporting good mental and physical health for all women and girls and improving their long term health outcomes. Our particular focus is on the 5 priority areas identified in the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030*: maternal, sexual and reproductive health; healthy ageing; chronic conditions and preventive health; mental health; and the health impacts of violence against women and girls.

These measures will support improved health outcomes for women and girls, who make up more than half of the Australian population. One in 2 Australian females has one or more chronic conditions, the most common of which are: arthritis, asthma, back pain, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and mental ill health. Dementia is also a major issue for older women.

Endometriosis affects at least one in 9 girls and women, leading to severe chronic pain and, in some cases, infertility. Assisting these women will improve their health outcomes but reduce reduced school and workplace absenteeism.

**How much will this cost?**

The Australian Government is investing \$535.8 million in targeted health programs for women and girls.