



## Overview – How the 2021–22 Budget is investing in the health workforce

Across the pillars of *Australia's Long Term National Health Plan*, the Australian Government is investing an additional \$972.5 million to ensure we have the skilled and professional health workforce necessary to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

The Government's investments in the 2021–22 Budget will improve the quality, distribution and planning of the health workforce to better meet the needs of the community including in the key priority areas of aged care, mental health and suicide prevention, and rural and regional health.

The Government's health workforce investment include:

- \$652.1 million for the 366,000-strong aged care workforce, including:
  - to grow, train and upskill the aged care workforce to drive improvements to the safety and quality of care, with 33,800 additional training places for personal care workers (PCWs) to attain a Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing), provided in the Jobs Package
  - \$216.7 million to provide eligible registered nurses in aged care with financial support of \$3700 for full time workers and \$2700 for part time workers, nursing scholarships and places in the Aged Care Transition to Practice Program, and
  - \$228.2 million to create a single assessment workforce which will improve the assessment experience for senior Australians as they enter or progress within the aged care system.
- \$106 million to expand the Indigenous workforce by recruiting staff with aged care skills and qualifications to assist 60,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to better navigate and access aged care
- \$58.8 million to attract, train and retain skilled workers in the mental health workforce and address areas of workforce undersupply including:
  - \$38.7 million to increase the number of nurses, psychologists, and allied health practitioners, and psychiatrists, including for psychiatry training

- \$8.3 million to support greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the mental health workforce through 40 additional mental health-specific scholarships, and providing training to support healthcare workers to deliver culturally safe care
- \$3.1 million to boost and support the mental health peer workforce through up to 390 scholarships and opportunities for professional collaboration
- \$2.4 million to continue mental health training for practitioners working in aged care and support professional collaboration through the Mental Health Professionals' Network
- \$1 million for initiatives to reduce the stigma associated with mental health among health practitioners, and promote mental health as a preferred career option, and
- \$0.3 million to identify opportunities to boost the skills of mental health professionals who work with children and families.
- \$15.9 million to support GPs and other medical practitioners to provide primary mental health care through new training and development opportunities, qualifications, and guidelines
- \$2.6 million to provide tailored mental health supports to health practitioners and reduce stigma associated with health practitioners seeking support for their own mental health
- The Government will remove employment criteria for privately practising midwives, opening access to the Midwife Professional Indemnity Scheme to all endorsed midwives irrespective of their employment status
- \$14.2 million will be invested in the MBS for allied health professionals participating in case conferences organised by a patient's GP, improving coordinated, multidisciplinary care
- \$123 million towards the rural health workforce to improve access to health services outside metropolitan areas, including:
  - \$65.8 million to increase the Rural Bulk Billing Incentive, providing doctors in rural and remote areas with higher incentive payments per bulk billed consultation for vulnerable patients
  - \$12.4 million to introduce the John Flynn Prevocational Doctor Training Program which will increase rural primary care rotations from 440 in 2022, to 800 by 2025, and expand eligibility to prevocational doctors in their first 5 postgraduate years
  - \$9.6 million to add 90 workplace training packages through the Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway, with 30 allocated to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, and

- \$29.5 million to establish an innovative funding pool for non-GP medical specialist training from 1 January 2022.

For further information, refer to the relevant fact sheets.

### **Why is this important?**

Australia's healthcare workforce is the powerhouse of health service delivery across the country. The Australian Government is supporting a range of workforce measures through the 2021–22 Budget to improve service delivery with a focus on aged care, mental health and suicide prevention, and rural and regional health.

### **Who will benefit?**

Hundreds of thousands of health care workers will benefit including clinicians, GPs, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, allied health workers, aged care workers and those delivering health services to rural and regional Australia.

### **How much will it cost?**

Combined, the Australian Government will invest around \$972.5 million to build and support our health workforce.