



## How the 2022–23 Budget is investing in the health and care workforce

The Australian Government is investing \$306.1 million to ensure we have a skilled and professional health and care workforce, to deliver Australia's *Long Term National Health Plan*.

The Government's investments in the 2022–23 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, aged care, mental health and suicide prevention, and rural and regional health.

The 2022–23 Budget includes health and care workforce spending in these areas:

- Growing the Regional, Rural and Remote Health Care Workforce - \$152.5 million
- Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Care Workforce - \$13.9 million
- Implementing the 10 year Mental Health Workforce Strategy - \$89.2 million
- Support for Clinical Placements and Training including the Aged Care and Mental Health Sectors \$32.8 million
- Investing \$6.9 million for a staged rollout of the national Co-operative and Mutual Enterprises (CME) Support Program
- Care and Support Sector Regulatory Alignment Next Steps - \$10.8 million

### Growing the Regional, Rural and Remote Health Care Workforce

The Government continues to invest in the regional, rural and remote health care workforce, including:

- \$36.2 million to establish two new University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) in the South West and Goldfields regions of Western Australia, as part of our support for allied health, nursing and medical training in the bush
- \$99.3 million for 80 new rural medical Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) in up to 8 medical schools, for a greater spread of training that will deliver full regional medical school education and training in more remote locations, and
- \$14.8 million to extend the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program rural clinical school funding to Charles Sturt University (CSU), enabling the university to deliver high quality rural clinical training to medical students beyond its existing campus in the Orange region.

- \$2.1 million over four years for the continuation of the National Rural Health Students Network of Rural Health Clubs in universities which have a RHMT program, encouraging students from the program to establish and grow their networks among fellow students.

### **Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Care Workforce**

The Government is investing \$13.9 million over two years from 2022–23 to deliver a total 150 additional scholarships each year under the Puggy Hunter Memorial scholarships Scheme.

The scholarships support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to gain care and support qualifications and entering the health workforce.

Over two years supports 300 students in health related disciplines for full time scholarships worth up to \$15,000 each per year and part time scholarships of up to \$7,500 each per year.

### **Implementing the 10 year Mental Health Workforce Strategy**

The Australian Government is investing \$89.2 million to implement key priorities of the *10 year National Mental Health Workforce Strategy*, and strengthen, grow and retain the mental health workforce. It builds on the \$77.3 million investment in the mental health workforce in the 2021–22 Budget.

Measures include:

- \$18.3 million to build a contemporary workforce and optimise the existing workforce through developing and piloting the National Mental Health Pathways to Practice Program. This includes:
  - \$10.8 million for the Allied Health and Nursing Stream providing up to 660 supervised nursing and allied health student mental health placements across rural, remote and metropolitan areas over three years
  - \$6.6 million over three years for the Psychology Stream, which will provide 75 internships for provisional psychologists in a range of settings, support the safe use of the provisional psychologist workforce to deliver services, provide 150 free Psychology Board of Australia endorsed supervisor training sessions, and identify and address barriers to psychology registration, and
  - \$917,000 for evaluation of the program.
- \$28.6 million to sustain growth in the psychiatry workforce and build on 2021–22 Budget investments, by continuing to support:
  - up to 30 additional training posts and supervisors per training year from 2023 to 2026
  - development of a rural and remote psychiatry training pathway and network, and
  - activities to encourage more medical graduates to pursue psychiatry through the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists' (RANZCP) Psychiatry Interest Forum.
- \$4.2 million to support headspace centres in regional, rural and remote areas to attract and employ GPs, enabling headspace services to deliver the complete model of enhanced primary care.
- \$6 million to optimise the existing workforce by enhancing workforce capabilities and allow them to work to the top of their scope, including:
  - trialing a free national support line service for GPs to access clinical advice and support from psychiatrists, and
  - building the capacity of the mental health workforce to respond to co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions.

- \$2.2 million to further support the mental health of the health workforce, through the *Hand-n-Hand* program to provide peer support to the healthcare sector, and the extension of the the Black Dog Institute's *The Essential Network (TEN)*
- \$409,000 for stigma reduction and career promotion activities to encourage students to choose a career in mental health
- \$904,000 to establish a mental health workforce strategic coordination and distribution mechanism with an appropriate mix of expertise in health, employment and education policy, to facilitate coordinated activity between governments and industry, and across sectors, and
- \$725,000 for more effective workforce planning by enhancing workforce data and tools.

### Support for Clinical Placements and Training including the Aged Care and Mental Health Sectors

As part of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety response, the Australian Government committed \$802.1 million to workforce aged care reforms. The 2022–23 Budget further invests \$99 million in this area, with the total aged care commitment growing to \$129.9 billion over the next four years. The Government is continuing to support the workforce and delivery of quality care across the aged care, disability and veterans' care sectors.

The Australian Government will invest \$32.8 million to further grow and support the care and support and mental health sectors including:

- \$14.9 million to increase clinical placements for nurses in the care and support sector -
  - working with higher education providers and care and support providers to facilitate new, quality clinical placements for up to 5,250 students, with a target of 2.86% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, and
  - providing access to a nursing clinical facilitator to care and support sector providers, where they are unable to provide one.
- \$14.3 million to expand the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program to an additional five locations in the Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales and remote Queensland, to:
  - enhance the quality of aged care services in rural and remote areas
  - create opportunities for 150 nursing and allied health students, and Indigenous students to experience clinical placements in the care and support sector each year, and
  - highlight the benefits of working outside metropolitan locations.
- resources to support students undertaking clinical placements - developing critical resources for Bachelor of Nursing students and allied health students undertaking clinical placements in the care and support sectors

The Australian Government is also providing \$1 million as a matching co-contribution for the Bullwinkel Scholars, establishing 21 scholarships through the Australian College of Nursing which will support nurses seeking to further their professional development in leadership.

The Government is also investing \$6.9 million for a staged rollout of the national Co-operative and Mutual Enterprises (CME) Support Program, to:

- develop sustainable and coordinated approaches in growing a skilled workforce
- support the start-up of 6-7 CMEs that will delivery care services in areas of need, and
- delivery up to six additional projects to help grow existing CMEs.

## Care and Support Sector Regulatory Alignment Next Steps

The Government is investing \$10.8 million in the Cross-Agency Taskforce on Regulatory Alignment to progress alignment of regulation across the care and support sector – aged care, disability supports, and veterans' care.

Alignment will improve the quality and safety of care and support services, reduce duplication of obligations, and enable providers and workers to operate more seamlessly across the sector.

A roadmap for regulatory alignment will be developed through detailed analysis and further consultation, with early activities to include:

- improved information sharing between regulators
- opportunities for streamlined reporting processes, and
- developing options for alignment of standards and auditing or assessment.

### Why is this important?

The Australian Government is committed to creating jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of the care and support workforce, to address current and future needs, and contribute to equitable outcomes. Workforce initiatives such as the Puggy Hunter scholarships address the 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap and its 17 national socio-economic targets, across key areas that impact on life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Around Australia, demand for mental health support and treatment has steadily increased over time and outstrips the available supply. Compounding this shortage, mental health providers experienced substantial increases in demand throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government's *10 Year Mental Health Workforce Strategy* seeks to ensure the delivery of mental health treatment, care and support that meets the current and future population needs. The Government will partner with jurisdictions, industry, peak bodies and professional colleges to ensure investment in the mental health workforce is coordinated and remains a long-term priority area of reform.

The final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety found inadequate staffing levels, skill mix and training were principal causes of substandard care in aged care. Many of the issues, such as lack of investment in staff training and limited career progression, are shared with the broader care workforce. Workforce growth is expected to remain a challenge as the demand for services increases.

The Australian Government recognises the need to increase the skilled nursing workforce, particularly in aged care. Clinical placements support engagement between young health professionals and the care sector, highlighting the benefits of the sector early in the careers of student nurses.

CMEs are organisations that are owned and run by consumers, employees, users or residents. The member-driven model of CMEs means workers are engaged in decision-making and motivated to align services with consumer needs, leading to better care outcomes. A lack of awareness of CME models is a key barrier to their adoption in markets such as aged care and disability services.

In the 2019–20 financial year, about one-third of aged care providers were also operating in the NDIS and/or provide veterans' care services, and one third of veterans' care providers were operating across all three care and support programs. The overlapping of regulatory frameworks can cause inconsistency in quality and safety for consumers, and significant administrative costs to cross-sector providers.

**Who will benefit?**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caring and support and mental health workforces, rural communities and the broader health workforce and providers of care will benefit from the health and care workforce initiatives.

All Australians will benefit from a growing and strengthened mental health workforce that can provide mental health support when and where they need it.

For women, who represent the majority of the health, care and support workforce, these initiatives will provide an opportunity to increase workforce participation, earning potential and work conditions.

Approximately 5,250 nursing students will have the opportunity to experience care and support sector clinical placement, and see the unique benefits of working in these sectors.

**How much will this cost?**

The Australian Government will invest \$306.1 million over four years from 2022–23 to 2025–26.