



## How the 2022–23 Budget is investing in the health of women and girls

The Australian Government is investing more than \$333 million to strengthen health services and support available to women and girls, through a range of new and continuing initiatives, including a focus on endometriosis, cancer screening, prevention and maternal, sexual and reproductive health, and women's safety.

These initiatives align with the priorities of the *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030*, and are part of the Australian Government's commitment to addressing the health issues that most affect women and girls throughout their lives.

The 2022–23 Budget includes spending on women's and girls' health in these areas:

- Support for women living with endometriosis - \$58.1 million
- Maternal, sexual and reproductive health - \$103.7 million
- Supporting families who have experienced the loss of a baby - \$23 million
- Commitment to women's safety and recovery from violence - \$142.6 million
- Investing in priority populations of women - \$4.2 million
- Addressing cancer screening, prevention, and health awareness - \$24.9 million
- Guiding and understanding improvements in women's health - \$3.1 million
- Growing women's sport through major sporting events and legacy programs - \$16 million

### Support for women living with endometriosis

The Australian Government is investing \$58.1 million to support women experiencing endometriosis, a painful and debilitating condition which affects around one in 9 Australian women with potentially major impacts on health, education and employment, and yet is frequently under-diagnosed.

- \$16.4 million over four years to establish endometriosis and pelvic pain GP clinics in primary care settings, improving access to diagnostic, treatment and other support services for women with endometriosis and other conditions resulting in pelvic pain.
- \$5.1 million over three years to develop an Endometriosis Management Plan to support patients in primary care.
- \$5.1 million over four years towards the National Endometriosis Clinical and Scientific Trials Network to continue growing research capacity and address research gaps in the *Australian Clinical Practice Guideline for the Diagnosis and Management of Endometriosis*.

- \$2 million over two years for the Endometriosis Living Guideline to support new and ongoing research into the diagnosis and management of endometriosis.
- \$2 million over four years to the Australian Coalition for Endometriosis for activities including increasing awareness of endometriosis amongst priority populations, implementing a Mentor Program to support those newly diagnosed with endometriosis and implementing a Workplace Assistance Program to support employees and employers navigate discussions in the workplace.
- \$1.4 million over three years for the EndoZone digital platform, providing consumer access to evidence-based information.
- \$500,000 over two years for promotion of the *Australian Clinical Practice Guideline for the Diagnosis and Management of Endometriosis*.
- \$300,000 over two years to promote access to the suite of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) items for diagnosis, and treatment of endometriosis.
- \$25.2 million for a new MBS item for pelvic MRI for investigation of infertility from 1 November 2022.

### Maternal, sexual and reproductive health

- \$14.8 million for new and amended items for obstetrics and gynaecology – amending one item and introducing six new ultrasound items to help improve the health outcomes of pregnant women and help ensure the birth of healthy babies at term.
- \$81.2 million for universal genetic testing to determine carrier status of cystic fibrosis, spinal muscular atrophy and fragile X syndrome (FXS) in people who are planning pregnancy or who are already pregnant and their reproductive partners, embedding Mackenzie’s Mission within our health system.
- \$1.2 million for a Senior Midwifery Advisor to improve the quality of policies and programs implementing the *Woman-Centred Care: Strategic Directions for Australian Maternity Services*, as part of the Government’s commitment to improving access to maternity services in rural and remote communities.
- \$6.6 million for abdominoplasty for surgical repair of postpartum rectus diastasis (separation of the large abdominal muscles) following pregnancy.

### Supporting families who have experienced the loss of a baby

- \$23 million in maternal health and bereavement support for women and families which have experienced the tragic loss of a child to stillbirth or miscarriage in line with the *National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan*.
  - \$5.1 million over four years for new grants for stillbirth and miscarriage front line services to offer bereavement support for vulnerable and high risk families.
  - \$4.2 million over four years for the Hospital to Home (H2H) program through Red Nose Australia, offering targeted support to assist in ensuring healthy grieving, reducing isolation and validating the impact of grief, while supporting healthy relationships within and around bereaved families.
  - \$13.7 million over three years to increase the numbers of autopsies and investigations undertaken following stillbirth, by supporting transport and accommodation costs for families, as well as addressing workforce shortages in perinatal pathologists through a Perinatal Pathologist scholarship and establishing a dedicated Perinatal Pathologist in each state and territory.

## Commitment to women's safety and recovery from violence

The Australian Government is prioritising women's safety with a range of measures as part of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*. In addressing the poorer health and mental health outcomes for women who have experienced intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence, our Government has committed \$142.6 million for health-related measures.

- \$48.7 million over four years, to support victims and survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence and child sex abuse to navigate the health system. This funding will expand the existing Family and Domestic Violence Primary Health Network (PHN) pilot and establish a pilot in each state and territory to prevent and respond to child sex abuse; to provide increased support to primary care providers to assist in the early identification and intervention of family, domestic and sexual violence and child sex abuse, and ensure coordinated referrals to support services
- \$67.2 million over four years for the Trauma-informed Recovery Care - pilot program, to pilot multidisciplinary care teams and a model of care through PHNs in six locations delivering trauma-informed mental health therapies designed to meet the needs of victim-survivors.
- \$25 million over five years, to support the Illawarra Women's Centre to establish a women's trauma recovery centre.
- \$1.7 million to address the impacts of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) which primarily affects migrant women in Australia, including a competitive grant opportunity for community-led approaches for the prevention of FGM/C and support for the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to establish a number of initiatives across the nation, and develop and delivery community training to increase the health workforce's ability to address the health impacts of FGM/C.

## Investing in priority populations of women

- \$4.2 million over four years for the priority populations health promotions grant opportunity, which aims to improve health outcomes for groups including, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, migrant and refugee women, ageing women and women with disabilities.

## Addressing cancer screening, prevention, and health awareness

- \$9.7 million for surge capacity for BreastScreen Australia, to screen women who missed or delayed breast cancer screening as a result of COVID-19.
- \$4.1 million for allowing nurses and other providers to deliver cervical screening through providing funding to laboratories to process tests.
- \$10.6 million for an amendment to the current MRI of the breast item for patients at high risk of developing breast cancer, raising the age limit from 50 to 60.
- \$500,000 over three years towards the Her Heart Hub to improve education and treatment of cardio-vascular disease risk in women.

## Guiding and understanding improvements in women's health

- \$1.6 million over four years to support the establishment of a National Women's Health Advisory Council to lead on monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Strategy.
- \$1.6 million over three years for the *Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health's Mothers and their Children's Health* survey to provide significant insights such as the adolescent experience of COVID-19, and the intergenerational impact of maternal abuse and family violence.

## Growing women's sport through major sporting events and legacy programs

The Australian Government is investing \$10.3 million to promote and create leadership, safety, and long term employment opportunities for women and girls in sport, including:

- \$6.3 million over three years for an expanded Women Coaches Program to identify, develop and empower more than 200 women coaches per year from grassroots to elite, and
- \$4.1 million over four years for Community Sport Leaders, to implement women's leadership programs at the community level

The Australian Government has also pledged to support the delivery of the Women's Rugby World Cup 2029, should the current hosting bid be successful. This support will extend to the related legacy programs that will be leveraged to promote sport for women and girls in both Australia and the Pacific region.

\$5.7 million will be invested in legacy programs to drive increased community engagement, gender equality and physical activity participation through major sporting events such as the FIFA Women's Football World Cup 2023.

### Why is this important?

Women and girls make up more than half of the Australian population and their health is critical to their overall wellbeing and ability to participate in society.

We know that women, in particular, have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This investment will ensure women and girls in Australia can thrive – physically, mentally, socially and economically.

The Government's *National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030* outlines Australia's national approach to improving health outcomes for all women and girls, particularly those at greatest risk of poor health.

Maternal, sexual and reproductive health is a priority for the Australian Government. Pregnant women and their children are identified priority populations in the Strategy.

Violence against women is recognised as a serious and widespread problem in Australia, with enormous individual and community impacts, including significant health impacts. Women who experience intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence are more likely to report poorer mental health, physical function and general health as well as higher levels of bodily pain.

Women and girls who experience violence and/or abuse are also priority population of the Strategy.

The Strategy recognises that investment in primary and secondary prevention and early intervention can lead to better health outcomes across the course of people's lives. The pandemic saw delays and disruptions to routine health checks, screening and services, with the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health finding that 46% of women surveyed had delayed access to at least one health service since COVID-19 began.

### Who will benefit?

The approximately 12.8 million women and girls in Australia will benefit from the additional investment in measures to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Australian Government's national approach to support the goals and outcomes of the Strategy maintains a sustained, strong focus on addressing the health issues that affect women and girls throughout their lives.

Priority populations will benefit from targeted investment, including women and girls who are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- pregnant or who have miscarried or experienced a stillbirth
- from rural and remote areas
- from low socio-economic backgrounds
- living with disability, and their carers
- veterans
- culturally and linguistically diverse
- from LGBTIQ+ communities
- survivors of violence, and
- affected by the criminal justice system.

### How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$333 million over five years, 2022–23 to 2026–27.