



REBUILDING OUR HEALTH AND AGED CARE WORKFORCE

Summary of package

The Australian Government is beginning to repair and rebuild our overworked and under pressure health and aged care workforce, committing \$185.3 million in the 2022–23 October Budget to help ease the crisis and address critical shortages.

Through investments in this Budget the Government will focus on meeting the needs of older Australians, First Nations people and those living in rural and regional areas.

A workforce package will support more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to work in regional and rural communities and improve treatment and care for patients. There is new funding to attract, support, and retain rural health professionals.

This Budget invests in additional training in obstetrics, palliative care, paediatrics and mental health skills for rural generalists and general practitioners (GPs) delivering extended care for their rural and remote communities. There is also additional support for nurses and midwives.

These measures complement the Government's investments in Medicare Urgent Care Clinics and Strengthening Medicare GP Grants, which will take financial and workload pressures off GPs and hospital emergency departments. They are in addition to our significant investment in this Budget to grow and strengthen the aged care workforce and increase the number of First Nations health professionals.

The Government is also committed to growing and strengthening the aged care workforce by supporting the case for better aged care pay at the Fair Work Commission and the commitment to fund the outcome of this case. Aged care homes will be required to have a registered nurse on site at all times and mandatory care time requirements will be lifted.

The Budget will support additional skills and training to grow the skilled health workforce now and into the future. More nurses, pharmacists and other health workers will be a key priority of the 20,000 extra university places and 180,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education places, announced by the Australian Government.

Total value of package

**\$185.3
million**

\$103.4m

towards the Workforce
Incentive programs

\$25.2m

towards additional support
for nurses and midwives

\$27.9m

towards improved skills
and training

The investments in the health workforce in this Budget will help address the inequities in health outcomes between First Nations people and non-Indigenous Australians, and between people living in rural, regional and remote areas and those in our capital cities.

This Budget begins the difficult task of rebuilding and retaining Australia's health and care workforce. The Government is committed to making further investments to ease the pressure on existing health workers, and improve access to essential health care for all Australians.

Who benefits

Funding of \$2.5 billion will see aged care residents benefit from the requirement for aged care homes to have a registered nurse on site at all times and an increase in care minutes. The Government will support aged care providers to adjust to the new Australian National Aged Care Classification funding model, implement increased care minutes and deliver enhanced reporting.

Australians living in rural and regional areas will benefit from a \$185.3 million workforce package that will support more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to work in regional and rural communities and improve treatment and care for patients.

There is \$24.7 million in funding to attract, support, and retain rural health professionals through the successful Innovative Models of Care program. The program supports health care professionals and communities to implement sustainable and comprehensive solutions tailored to their unique local health care needs.

More GP and rural generalist registrars training in regional, rural and remote Australia will be able to take advantage of Single Employer Model trials, allowing them to maintain the benefits of being employed by one body throughout their training, including accruing leave.

Funding of \$74.1 million will provide incentive payments of up to \$10,500 to GPs and rural generalists with advanced clinical skills to practice in rural and remote communities.

More health workers will be eligible for salary support through the Workforce Incentive Program thanks to a \$29.4 million expansion in this Budget. This will allow practices to employ a greater range of health workers as part of high quality multidisciplinary teams.

Nurses and midwives will also receive more support through the \$25.2 million National Nurse and Midwife Health Service (NNHMS). The NNHMS will provide free, confidential and independent advice, support, information, treatment and specialist referrals for nurses, midwives and undergraduate nursing and midwifery students.



The Government is establishing 20 new Commonwealth-funded medical training places at the James Cook University rural medical training campus in Cairns. This \$13.2 million investment is part of a long-term approach to alleviate medical workforce shortages in the North Queensland.

The John Flynn Prevocational Doctor Program, which commences in 2023, will be expanded to 1,000 places by 2026 through an additional \$5.6 million investment. The program offers more junior doctors the opportunity to experience rural primary care practice at an early stage of their career, and helps create end to end rural medical training pathways for the next generation of regional doctors.

The number of highly skilled rural GPs and rural generalists will be boosted thanks to \$11.7 million for 15 new advanced skills training posts. Training will focus on obstetrics, anaesthetics, surgery and emergency care, as well as mental health, palliative care, and paediatrics.

Growing and strengthening Aged Care Workforce by **supporting the case for better pay**



Funding details

- Expanded Innovative Models of Care Program – \$24.7 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Additional Workforce Incentives for GPs – \$74.1 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Improved Access to Nurses and Allied Health – \$29.4 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Single Employer Models for Rural General Practice Trainees – \$800,000 over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Expansion of the John Flynn Prevocational Doctor Program – \$5.6 million.
- Boost for Rural Health in Northern Queensland – James Cook University – \$13.2 million over 3 years from 2023–24.
- Advanced Skills Training Posts for Rural Generalists and GPs – \$11.7 million over 5 years from 2023–24.
- National Nurse and Midwife Health Service – \$25.2 million over 5 years from 2022–2023.
- 24/7 nurses and 215 care minutes – \$2.5 billion over 4 years from 2022–23.



All information in this publication is correct as at October 2022

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