



STRENGTHENING MEDICARE AND REBUILDING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Summary of package

The 2022–23 October Budget is the first step to delivering on the Australian Government’s commitment to strengthen Medicare and help boost general practice through a \$2.9 billion investment so all Australians can expect affordable, prompt and world-class medical care.

The investment in this Budget will start to rebuild the nation’s primary health care system, taking pressure off our hospitals and increasing affordability and access to care.

The Australian Government will address the crisis in primary care, the cornerstone of the Australian health system. Across Australia and through every stage of life, access to general practitioners, nurses, pharmacists and allied health professionals is central to keeping Australians healthy.

The establishment of 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, that are available after-hours, will help Australians access care when and where they need it while reducing pressure on the hospital system. The new Strengthening Medicare GP Grants Program will provide a much-needed boost to local GP practices and improve care.

This Budget invests in critical health infrastructure, including new Comprehensive Cancer Centres to improve patient outcomes. There is also funding for ongoing mental health and suicide prevention supports, including for young Australians.

The Government is investing more in telehealth, the health of women and families, support for LGBTQI+ Australians, as well as making important new investments in preventive health to support Australians at all stages of life.

Total value of package

**\$2.9
billion**

\$229.7m

towards Strengthening Medicare
GP grants program

\$235m

towards 50
Medicare Urgent Care Clinics

\$452m

towards new cancer centres

Who benefits

All Australians, particularly the most disadvantaged, will benefit from access to affordable and world class medical care. No matter where they live, it will be easier for Australians to see a doctor or nurse. The \$2.9 billion commitment in this Budget signals the Government's commitment to deliver urgent investment to general practice while the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce develops recommendations on priority investments through our commitment to the \$750 million Strengthening Medicare Fund. By protecting and strengthening Medicare we ensure no one is left behind.

The Government will provide \$235 million to commence the roll out of 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, including \$100 million to co-develop and pilot innovative models with states and territories to improve care pathways and inform program roll out. The new models of care will make it easier for Australians to see a healthcare professional when they have an urgent, but not life-threatening, need for care. In 2020–21, 47 per cent of presentations to emergency departments were classified as semi-urgent or non-urgent.

Nine out of 10 Australians see a general practitioner at least once a year, and the \$229.7 million investment through the Strengthening Medicare GP Grants Program will support GPs to provide better care and see more patients. One-off grants of up to \$50,000 will be available for innovation, training, equipment and minor capital works to improve patient access. This funding also recognises the additional pressures placed on GPs through the COVID-19 pandemic.

There will be \$8.6 million for new and expanded listings on the Medicare Benefits Schedule, including for nuclear medicine, genetic testing and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans.

The Government will work collaboratively with states and territories to deliver \$638.8 million in critical health infrastructure and ensure access to essential services.



\$638.8 for critical
million health
infrastructure

The Budget includes measures to improve the health of Australian women and families. \$26.2 million will fund a new national network of perinatal mental health and wellbeing centres. \$19.8 million will strengthen women's health during and after pregnancy, including support for families bereaved by stillbirth. Australia's Newborn Bloodspot Screening (NBS) programs will be restored to world-leading status through \$39 million to increase the number and consistency of conditions screened across the country.

Recognising the ongoing and growing need for mental health and suicide prevention supports and services, the Government is investing \$114 million in a number of initiatives. Funding includes \$23.5 million for an expansion of the headspace network to better support the approximately 630,000 young Australians with mild to moderate mental illness.

This Budget continues to build on the potential of telehealth with \$47.7 million to restore a loading to support bulk billed Medicare online psychiatry consultations for rural and regional patients. An additional \$3 million will support patients with rare and complex diseases to better navigate the health system through telehealth nurses.

Cancer patients and their families, medical professionals, and researchers will benefit from \$452 million in this Budget to deliver 2 new Comprehensive Cancer Centres. \$14.8 million will establish a Melanoma Nurses Program across Australia to help patients navigate the health system, access services and make informed decisions about their treatment.

The Government is investing \$1.3 million to improve health outcomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) people by addressing their unique health needs and experiences. Qlife will boost its volunteer peer support workforce with \$400,000 in funding.

The Government will make climate change a national health priority. A \$3.4 million investment in the Budget will establish a National Health Sustainability and Climate Unit and develop Australia's first National Health and Climate Strategy.

**\$114
million**

to support mental
health and
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measures



Funding details

- Commence roll out of 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics – \$235 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Strengthening Medicare GP Grants Program – \$229.7 million over 2 years from 2022–2023.
- MBS – New and Amended Listings – \$8.6 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Re-opening the Minor Accident and Illness Centre at Morayfield Health Hub – \$4.4 million over 2 years from 2022–2023.
- Hunter GP Access After Hours Service – \$17.5 million over 4 years from 2022–23.
- Expansion of Flinders Medical Centre – \$200 million over 6 years from 2022–2023.
- Queanbeyan Respite Care Facility – \$1.1 million in 2022–2023.
- Child Development Unit at Campbelltown – \$4 million in 2022–2023.
- New Bentley Hospital Surgicentre – \$75 million over 5 years from 2023–24.
- Brighton Walk-In After Hours Health Centre – \$1.6 million in 2022–2023.
- Comprehensive Cancer Centres in Queensland and South Australia – \$452 million over 6 years from 2022–2023.
- National Melanoma Nurse Network – \$14.8 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Rare Disease Telehealth Nurse Program – \$3 million over 3 years from 2022–2023.
- Restoring Loading to Regional Psychiatry Telehealth Service – \$47.7m over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Expanding and Strengthening the headspace Network – \$23.5 million over 5 years from 2022–2023.
- MATES in Manufacturing Program – \$750,000 over 3 years from 2022–2023.
- National Rollout of the Stay Afloat Program – \$1.6 million over 2 years from 2022–2023.
- Strengthening Women’s Health during pregnancy – \$19.8 million over 3 years from 2022–2023.
- National Network of Perinatal Mental Health Centres – \$26.2 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health – \$23.9 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Upgrading the World Wellness Group Multicultural Health Clinic – \$139,000 in 2022–2023.
- Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) people – \$1.3 million over 2 years from 2022–2023.
- Renewing Australia’s efforts to end the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) – \$5.9 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- World-class Newborn Bloodspot Screening Program – \$39 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Better Care for Australian Children with Hearing Loss – \$6.5 million over 3 years from 2022–2023.
- Establishing a National Health Sustainability and Climate Unit – \$3.4 million over 4 years from 2022–2023.
- Establish an Australian Centre for Disease Control – Preparatory work – \$3.2 million in 2022–23.



All information in this publication is correct as at October 2022

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