



Mental Health Australia

2022-23 October Federal Budget

Summary

25 October 2022

Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

mhaustralia.org

Overview

The first Budget brought down by the new Labor Government was never going to be the platform for tackling mental health reform. It has been widely reported that its main goal was to lay the foundation for the delivery of its election commitments and reset the Government agenda to align with future national aspirations as supported during the election.

Unfortunately, there were few election commitments in the area of mental health reform and in this context Mental Health Australia is now developing our Budget submission for December for the Budget in 2023. This is where comprehensive reform must be progressed.

While not a strong mental health budget there are important and welcome areas of investment and broader structural reform in the areas that we have been advocating for in relation to social determinants. Here there are some good signs: housing, First Nations health, cost of living, rural and regional health, aged care, climate, and the safety of women and children. We expect that this investment will build hope in the community for action in areas that people tell us are the things that worry them the most.

This Budget thereby sets expectations that the Government will in the future deliver measures that improve the well-being of all Australians. We will watch with interest!

The housing agenda is a welcome move and Mental Health Australia will be seeking to understand what measures may be put in place to provide support for disadvantaged people and those with psychosocial disability to access appropriate, safe and supported accommodation. However it has already been reported that only 20% of these houses will be deemed affordable housing so as with any new budget measures we will need to see the detail.

We welcome measures that respond to current issues and crises such mental health support in flood related areas, response to the interim report on Veterans suicide, school based funding for mental health of students following the disruption of COVID and funding to support First Nations people as the implementation of the Uluru Statement is initiated.

We note foundational investments in 12 perinatal mental health centres, new headspace centres and the continuation of telepsychiatry. These extend existing services as does the National Ice Action Plan extended for a further 3 years.

We welcome the investment announced to consult with LGBTIQ+ communities on access issues for health care and call for them to be appropriately targeted to understand access issues to mental health services.



Whilst the work to stabilise the National Disability Insurance Agency is welcome, the fact that psychosocial services funded through the health system finish at the end of June 2023 means that a funding ‘cliff’ that has been pushed out each year continues to create significant uncertainty.

We are excited by the investment of \$1m to conduct a review of Australia’s multicultural policy settings to “further strengthen social cohesion” and look forward to informing that work.

Outlined further below are a summary of specific mental health and social determinant related measures of the October 2022-23 Budget – taken directly from **Budget Papers 2 and 3** and Portfolio Budget Statements.

Mental Health Specific Measures

Restoring Regional Mental Telehealth Services

The Government will provide \$47.7 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to reinstate a 50 per cent loading for bulk-billed telehealth psychiatry consultations in telehealth eligible areas across regional and rural Australia.

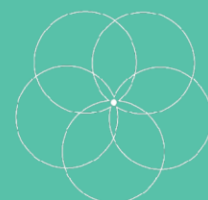
Perinatal mental health centres

The Government will provide \$26.2 million over 4 years from 2022–23 (with \$8.7 million per year ongoing) to establish 12 perinatal mental health centres across Australia to provide Medicare Benefits Schedule psychological counselling services to new and expecting parents.

Specific mental health programs

The Government will provide:

- **Headspace** - \$23.5 million over 4 years from 2022–23 (and \$6.6 million per year ongoing) to expand and strengthen the national network of headspace services with 3 new centres, and two satellite services
- **Student Wellbeing Boost** - \$203.7 million to help address the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on student wellbeing, the provision of additional mental health and wellbeing support for students - such as mental health professionals, sporting and social activities, and proven student wellbeing and mental health initiatives, and for a free voluntary mental health check tool to assist teachers and schools to identify students with, or at risk of, declining mental health



- **National Autism Strategy** - \$5.3 million over two years from 2022–23 to improve outcomes for people with autism, through funding the Autism Cooperative Research Centre Foundation for Children with Autism, the development of a National Autism Strategy and the National Roadmap to improve the health and mental health of people with autism
- **Mental Health Supports for Flood-affected Communities** - \$13.0 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to support communities impacted by flooding in New South Wales. This includes additional youth mental health services and continuation of a Head to Health pop-up clinic, as well as emergency response coordinators, wellbeing and resilience grants, and supports targeted to First Nations people
- **MATES in Manufacturing** - \$0.8 million over 3 years from 2022–23 for MATES in Manufacturing for field officers to run workshops aimed at preventing suicide in the manufacturing sector
- **NewAccess for Small Business Owners** - \$10.9million to extend BeyondBlue’s mental health coaching service for small business owners for another two years
- **Stay Afloat Program** - \$1.5 million over 2 years from 2022–23 to support the national rollout of Seafood Industry Australia’s Stay Afloat Program, which will establish up to 50 hubs in Australian fishing communities to provide mental health and wellbeing support for commercial fishers and seafood workers.

These measures will largely be funded by re-allocation of resources within the Department of Health and Aged Care.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Government has committed \$437.4 million over 3 years from 2022–23 to support people with disability and their families in additional funding to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) for operational funding, to support people with disability and their families with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) appeals and review NDIS design, operations and sustainability.

Disability Employment Services

The Government will provide \$19.4 million to extend Disability Employment Services for two years while further work is undertaken to build an improved future model for disability employment. Immediate adjustments to DES will be made to improve quality.



Veteran Wellbeing

The Government will provide:

- \$8.4 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to support Australian Defence Force personnel and veterans, including development and trial of an online tool to assist Australian Defence Force personnel with their transition to civilian life
- \$46.7 million to establish 8 new Veterans' and Families' Hubs (Hubs)
- \$24.0 million over 4 years to improve veteran employment opportunities.

Following the extension of the Royal Commission reporting date to 17 June 2024, the Government will provide \$15.5 million in 2023–24 to continue to support the Department of Veterans' Affairs and witnesses to engage with the Royal Commission.

Measures related to social determinants of mental health

Affordable Housing

The Government has announced a new national Housing Accord between governments, investors and industry to build one million new, 'well located' homes over five years from 2024.

This includes \$350 million in Government funding for 10,000 new affordable homes (in addition to previous commitments). State and territory governments will add a further 10,000 affordable homes, with governments looking to work with institutional investors to fund the majority of the supply.

Education and training

The Government will provide \$921.7 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to strengthen Australia's Vocational Education and Training system and address skills shortages. This includes 480,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education places in industries and regions with skills shortages.

Cheaper Medicines

The Government will provide \$787.1 million over 4 years from 2022–23 (and \$233.4 million per year ongoing) to decrease the general patient co-payment for treatments on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from \$42.50 to \$30.00 on 1 January 2023.

Support for Community Sector Organisations

The Government will provide \$560.0 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to support Community Sector Organisations at need of funding supplementation due to additional staff wages pressures and higher inflation outcomes.



Childcare

The Government will provide \$4.7 billion over 4 years from 2022–23 (and \$1.7 billion per year ongoing) to deliver cheaper child care. This measure is expected to make early childhood education and care more affordable for more than 1.2 million Australian families, and reduce barriers to workforce participation.

Rural and Regional Health

The Government will provide \$143.3 million over 4 years to support access to healthcare in rural and regional areas by investing in primary care services, training, workforce incentives and trials for innovative models of care.

The Government will also provide \$61.8 million over 6 years from 2022–23 to fund local health investment projects in rural and regional locations to improve primary care outcomes and reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments.

Strengthening First Nations Health

The Government will provide \$314.8 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to support the Government's commitment to close the gap for First Nations peoples' health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Government will also provide \$99.0 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to support improved justice outcomes for First Nations peoples.

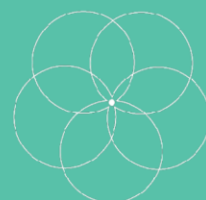
The Government has committed \$75.1 million over two years from 2022–23 to prepare for the delivery of a referendum to enshrine a First Nations Voice to Parliament in the Constitution, and \$5.8 million over 3 years from 2022–23 to commence work on establishing an independent Makarrata Commission to oversee processes for agreement making and truth telling.

Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People

The Government will provide \$1.3 million over two years from 2022–23 to fund peak community organisations to undertake consultations with LGBTIQ+ people to understand barriers to accessing health services. The Government will also provide additional funding to QLife to recruit volunteer peer support workers.

Multicultural Australia

The Government will provide \$1.0 million over two years from 2022–23 to conduct a review of Australia's multicultural policy settings to support efforts to further strengthen social cohesion.



Aged Care

The Government will provide \$2.5 billion over 4 years from 2022–23 for aged care system reforms. This includes requirements for all facilities to have a registered nurse onsite 24 hours per day, improved infrastructure, establishment of the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, new financial reporting requirements, supporting better food for aged care recipients and establishing a national registration scheme and code of conduct for personal care workers in the aged care sector.

The Government will also require aged care providers to preference direct employment for their staff, strengthen regulation of aged care providers, and cap administration fees charged by providers.

The Government will provide \$540.3 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to improve the delivery of aged care services and respond to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Measures include:

- aged care information and communication systems
- expanding the Regional Stewardship of the Aged Care outreach model
- extending the Disability Support for Older Australians Program to 31 December 2023
- expand eligibility for the Australian National Aged Care Classification Transition Fund
- establishing the Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care as a Statutory Agency
- and activities to support implementation of the Support at Home Program.

The Government will also extend existing grant arrangements for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme for a further 12 months, reflecting the new start date of 1 July 2024 for the Support at Home Program.

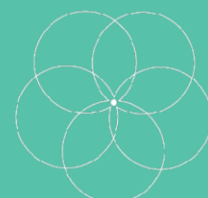
Disaster Readiness, Resilience and Preparedness

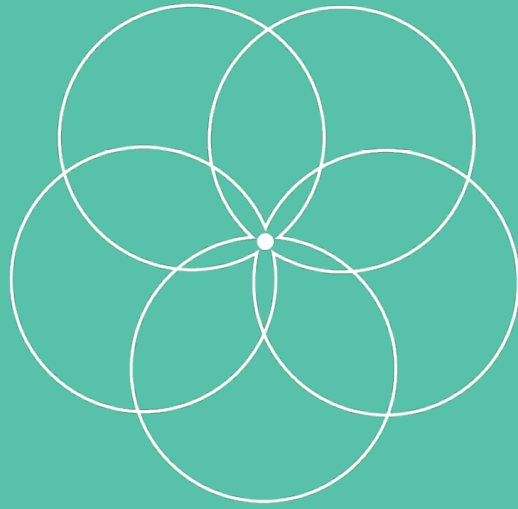
The Government will provide

- \$630.4 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to strengthen Australia’s resilience to disasters, through the Disaster Ready Fund
- \$38.3 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to Disaster Relief Australia to expand its capacity to deliver disaster relief and recovery activities
- \$20.8 million over two years from 2022–23 to support Australia’s readiness to respond to drought events
- \$51.5 million in 2022–23 to support communities impacted by natural disasters
- \$25.3 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to the National Emergency Management Agency for initiatives to improve insurance affordability and availability

National Health Sustainability and Climate Unit

The Government will provide \$3.4 million over 4 years from 2022–23 (and \$0.7 million per year ongoing) to develop a National Health and Climate Strategy and establish a National Health Sustainability and Climate Unit. This unit will address emerging health risks resulting from climate change and coordinate climate change responses across the health system.





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Mental Health Australia is the peak independent national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

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