



**Mental Health
Australia**

2023-24 Federal Budget Summary

9 May 2023

Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

mhaustralia.org

Overview

Mental Health Australia welcomes the Albanese Government's focus on supporting the community to meet spiraling cost of living expenses and increasing the base rate for Job Seeker payments. Our financial security is intrinsically linked to mental health.

Beginning the process of Medicare reform and funding to boost access to bulk billing will start to improve primary care, through which we know many people will seek assistance for their mental health. Bolstering the aged care sector and improving childcare support provisions are also much needed investments.

We also welcome the budget's focus on responding to some of the urgent service gaps in our mental health system, and reaching those community members who are in greatest need – including funding \$260.2 million over two years for psychosocial support for people with severe mental illness, who are not eligible for NDIS, and \$136.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 and \$36.0 million ongoing to deliver better mental health support for survivors of torture and trauma and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

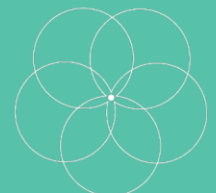
The Government has also started to invest in building the pipeline of the mental health workforce, including a \$91.3 million package to increase the psychology workforce and \$17.8 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to upskill the broader workforce. Missing however is funding to strengthen the broader mental health workforce with a specific focus on peer workers, and a genuine, long-term, funded roadmap for reform.

We also support the continued funding to support the National Workplace Initiative that supports creating mentally healthy workplaces with \$2.1 million in 2023–24 and the \$10.5M to support the mental health of First Nations people in the lead up to, during, and following the referendum to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the Constitution.

Notably missing from the Budget is the Government's response to the Better Access evaluation, which showed that we need to both improve access to services for people with more complex mental health conditions, while also improving equity across the entire mental health system. While the budget papers note that future funding has been provisioned for this response, Mental Health Australia urges the Government to act both quickly and comprehensively, and work with the sector and communities to co-design a more equitable, integrated and community-focused mental health system.

Of course, like all budgets, the devil is in the detail, and over the coming days we look forward to reviewing the budget papers in detail to try and identify which existing mental health funding is offsetting new investments, and determine what impact this will have on the community and the mental health sector.

More specific detail from the Budget papers is provided below.



Mental health specific measures

Lived experience peak bodies

As previously announced, the Government will provide \$8.7 million over 3 years from 2023–24 to establish and operate 2 independent national mental health lived-experience peak bodies to advise on mental health policies and programs and to support lived-experience research.

Psychosocial support

Commonwealth psychosocial programs

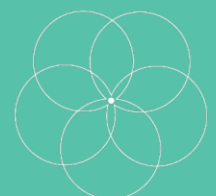
The Government will provide \$260.2 million over two years from 2023–24 to extend Commonwealth psychosocial supports for over 18,000 people with severe mental illness who are not in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Previously, in the 2021-22 Budget the Australian Government allocated \$171.3 million over 2 years until 30 June 2023 for Commonwealth psychosocial support services.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

As a first step towards ensuring a sustainable NDIS, the Government will provide \$732.9 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to support participant outcomes and the effective and sustainable operation of the Scheme. Funding includes:

- \$429.5 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to invest in the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA's) capability and systems, to improve processes and planning decisions
- \$73.4 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to better support participants to manage their plan within budget, including assistance from NDIA during the year and holding plan managers, support coordinators and providers to account
- \$63.8 million over two years from 2023–24 to take a lifetime approach to ensure plans are more transparent and flexible for life events
- \$56.4 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to strengthen supported independent living decisions, including by introducing a home and living panel with highly trained staff to improve consistency across decisions and updating guidelines for planners to improve participants' ability to live independently
- \$48.3 million over two years from 2023–24 to invest in the NDIA's ability to detect, respond to, and reduce fraud and non-compliant payments, and to develop a business case for new IT platforms and systems to detect and prevent fraud and non-compliant payments
- \$29.3 million over two years from 2023–24 to support the quality and effectiveness of services provided to participants, through improving oversight of services and increasing take up of evidence-based supports
- \$24.6 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to work with participants and providers to trial blended payment models, to increase incentives for providers to innovate service delivery and improve outcomes



- \$7.6 million over two years from 2023–24 to partner with communities to pilot alternative commissioning approaches to improve access to supports in remote and First Nations communities
- The Government will also provide additional funding of \$142.6 million over two years from 2023–24 to support the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission (the Commission) in carrying out its role of safeguarding NDIS participants.

Workforce

Psychology

\$91.3 million over 5 years from 2022–23 for additional psychology placements, including 500 psychology post-graduate placements, 500 one-year internships, and 2,000 supervisor training sessions (1,000 of which will be refresher places), and a redesign of psychology higher education pathways.

Mental health training for health workforce

\$17.8 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to upskill the mental health capabilities of the broader health workforce through training, resources and professional development materials. This will include reviewing and improving undergraduate curricula for nursing, midwifery and allied health to ensure students are receiving contemporary training in mental health.

Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma

\$136.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$36.0 million ongoing) to support the mental health of survivors of torture and trauma before moving to Australia on humanitarian grounds, through the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, and other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Suicide prevention

The Government will provide:

- \$14.4 million over two years from 2023–24 to support the continuation of postvention services nationally for people experiencing grief and distress as a result of suicide loss.
- additional funding of \$2.0 million over two years from 2023–24 to continue the Department of Veterans' Affairs' mental health literacy and suicide intervention training program for the ex-service community, in response to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide
- \$0.8 million in 2023–24 to extend the Embrace Suicide Prevention Pilot.

Workplace mental health and wellbeing

The Australian Government will provide \$2.1 million in 2023–24 to continue the National Workplace Initiative to provide a centralised repository of evidence-based interventions to support employers to support the mental health of employees in the workplace.

The Australian Government will invest \$2.0 million over two years from 2023–24 to develop a targeted training package on workplace psychosocial hazards, to be provided to organisations that train health and safety representatives in the Commonwealth jurisdiction (funded through the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio).



Children and young people

The Government will provide \$6.9 million over two years from 2023–24 to continue child and youth mental health supports, including:

- Raise Foundation’s early intervention and prevention student mentoring program
- headspace youth programs in Newcastle
- headspace digital work and study program for young Australians whose mental health is a barrier to work and study.

Specific programs

- \$2.8 million in 2023–24 to extend mental health supports for Australians living with eating disorders and their families
- \$6.2 million in 2023–24 to support children to build and maintain a positive body image and reduce body dissatisfaction and appearance pressures
- \$8.7 million in 2023–24 to continue the current service capacity of digital mental health services and to maintain the Head-to-Health website
- \$0.9 million over two years from 2022–23 to support the continued operation of Head to Health services in Shepparton, Seymour, and Mildura.

Overall, mental health and suicide prevention measures will be partially offset by reducing funding available under the 2018–19 Budget measure titled *Prioritising Mental Health – Aftercare following a suicide attempt*, and the 2021–22 Budget measure titled *Mental Health*. Universal aftercare will continue to be provided under the 2021–22 Budget measure titled *Aftercare services for people discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt*. Measures will also be partially offset by redirecting funding from the 2023–24 Budget measure titled *Reinvesting in Health and Aged Care Programs*, which has identified \$1.7 billion over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$422.9 million ongoing) from health and aged care programs which will be reinvested in new or expanded health and aged care services.



Health system reform measures

Strengthening Medicare

The Government will provide \$5.7 billion over 5 years from 2022–23 as an initial investment to provide better access and more affordable care for patients in response to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report, including:

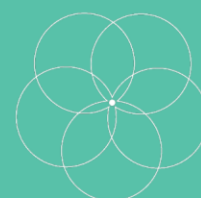
- \$3.5 billion over 5 years from 2022–23 to triple the bulk billing incentive benefits for consultations for Commonwealth concession card holders and patients aged under 16 years of age
- \$445.1 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to increase funding for the Workforce Incentive Program–Practice Stream, to support practices to expand multidisciplinary teams and employ more nurses, allied health and other health professionals in practices
- \$143.9 million over two years from 2023–24 to improve access to primary care after hours programs, including extending Primary Health Network (PHN) After Hours Programs, establishing a Homelessness Support Program, establishing a PHN Multicultural Access Program
- \$98.9 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to connect frequent hospital users to a general practice to receive comprehensive, multidisciplinary care in the community which will reduce the likelihood of hospital re-admission
- \$79.4 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to support PHNs to commission allied health services to improve access to multidisciplinary care for people with chronic conditions in underserved communities
- \$19.7 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$3.2 million per year ongoing) to implement MyMedicare to formalise the relationship between patients and their primary care providers
- \$429.0 million over two years from 2023–24 to modernise My Health Record (MHR) including by creating a new National Repository platform to support data sharing across all healthcare settings and targeted investment to increase allied health professionals' connection to MHR
- \$27.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to improve access to primary care and support services in thin markets by trialling integrated services and joint commissioning across primary health, First Nations health services, disability, aged care, and veterans' care sectors in up to 10 locations

Medicare Benefits Schedule changes

The Government will also provide \$137.2 million over 5 years from 2022–23 for Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) reforms, including \$10.9 million in 2023–24 to support the MBS Continuous Review program to ensure the MBS remains clinically appropriate.

The Government will also achieve efficiencies of \$461.3 million over 5 years from 2022–23, including:

- \$301.9 million over 3 years from 2024–25 by streamlining and modernising Chronic Disease Management planning items and improving associated regulations from 1 November 2024, consistent with recommendations from the MBS Review Taskforce



- \$99.1 million to establish a new MBS item for a longer consultation of 60 minutes or more to support improved access and service affordability for patients with chronic conditions and complex needs

Medicine affordability and community pharmacy

The Government will provide \$1.3 billion over 5 years from 2022–23, and deliver savings of \$1.3 billion over 4 years from 1 July 2023, to reduce patient costs and improve access to medicines and related services delivered by community pharmacies. This includes:

- savings of \$1.2 billion over 5 years from 2022–23 (and \$438.7 million ongoing) by allowing 2 months' worth of certain PBS medicines to be dispensed by pharmacies from 1 September 2023.
- savings of \$73.5 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$3.6 million ongoing) by revising the estimated uptake and changing the medication management arrangements for residential aged care homes previously announced in the 2022-23 March Budget.
- \$654.9 million over 4 years from 2023–24 (and \$168.4 million ongoing) for community pharmacy programs under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement

Urgent Care Clinics

The Government will provide additional funding of \$358.5 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to deliver Medicare Urgent Care Clinics by the end of 2023, including for 8 new Clinics. The Medicare Urgent Care Clinics are intended to reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments and improve access for urgent, but not life-threatening, care and will ensure that patients do not have out-of-pocket costs.

COVID-19 Response

The Government will provide additional funding over 5 years from 2022–23 to expand the COVID-19 vaccine strategy and provide Australians with COVID-19 treatments, including

- \$3.1 million in 2022–23 to support digital mental health services to meet increased demand driven by the COVID-19 pandemic

Preventive Health Reform

The Government will provide \$53.4 million over 5 years from 2022–23 (and \$0.4 million ongoing) for preventive and other health initiatives. Funding includes:

- \$26.4 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to extend support for research and data collection activities that support women and girls' health outcomes
- \$6.3 million over 3 years from 2023–24 to continue the Australian Burden of Disease Study and initiatives to monitor and improve the evidence base of health and wellbeing outcomes, in line with the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030
- 4.3 million over two years from 2023–24 to continue research that supports prevention and early intervention initiatives for chronic conditions



LGBTIQA+ Health and Wellbeing

\$0.9 million over two years from 2022–23 to develop a 10 Year National Action Plan to support the health and wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) people and establish a LGBTIQA+ Health Advisory Group. The Action Plan will provide a national framework to improve the health outcomes of, and address health disparities, experienced by LGBTIQA+ Australians. This builds on a 2022–23 October Budget measure.

Alcohol and Other Drug support services

The Government will provide \$33.6 million over two years from 2023–24 to extend existing alcohol and drug programs in the community.

Social determinants of mental health related measures

Cost of living measures

Health costs

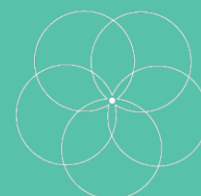
- As outlined above, the Government has announced \$3.5 billion in investments over 5 years to make it easier and cheaper to see a doctor and strengthen the foundations of Medicare, and a further \$358.5 million for Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, including for 8 new Clinics on top of the \$235 million committed in the October Budget.
- The Government will support more than 300 Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines to be dispensed in greater amounts, phased in from 1 September 2023.
- The Government is providing \$2.2 billion over 5 years for new and amended listings to the PBS

Financial security

- The Government will invest \$1.9 billion over 5 years in more support for eligible single parents who are the principal carers (see further information below under 'Financial security and Employment').
- The Government is increasing the base rate of income support payments by \$40 per fortnight to eligible people, delivering a boost in support to those most in need (see further information below under 'Financial security and Employment').
- The Government is expanding eligibility for the existing higher rate of JobSeeker to recipients 55 and over who have received the payment for 9 or more continuous months, which currently applies to those 60 and over.
- The Government will invest \$11.3 billion to support the Fair Work Commission's decision to provide an interim increase of 15 per cent to award wages for many aged care workers.

Parenting costs

- From July this year, the Government is delivering Cheaper Child Care, cutting the cost of care for around 1.2 million families. (mentioned under 'Early Childhood' below)
- The Government is investing \$72.4 million to build and support the skills of the early childhood education and care workforce. (mentioned under 'Early Childhood' below)



Other social determinant measures

Early childhood

The Government will provide funding of \$27.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to undertake additional pilots of early interventions for infants with signs of autism, and further progress the Government’s election commitment to deliver a National Autism Strategy.

From July this year, the Government is delivering Cheaper Child Care, cutting the cost of care for around 1.2 million families.

The Government is investing \$72.4 million to build and support the skills of the early childhood education and care workforce.

Financial security and employment

The Government will reprioritise unspent funding of \$34.3 million over two years from 2022–23 to continue a range of activities under the Financial Wellbeing and Capability sub-program. Funding includes:

- \$32.8 million over two years from 2022–23 to provide additional financial wellbeing and capability supports for vulnerable individuals, families and communities in financial crisis
- \$1.5 million in 2023–24 to undertake a review of the Financial Wellbeing and Capability sub-program.

The Government will provide \$57.0 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to support the evolution of the supported employment sector, following the recent Fair Work Commission decision on the Supported Employment Services Award 2020 and other changes impacting the sector.

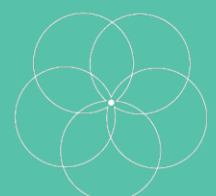
The Government will provide \$26.3 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to boost employment services for young Australians in the care economy, continue pre-employment services for First Nations people who are incarcerated, trial a new regional employment service approach and support workers and communities through enhancements to the Local Jobs Program.

Housing and homelessness

The Government will provide additional funding of \$67.5 million in 2023-24 to boost homelessness funding to states and territories. The funding will be used to support the provision of homelessness services through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement in 2023-24. The current National Housing and Homelessness Agreement provides over \$1.6 billion to states and territories, with Government committing to a one year extension for the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement to 30 June 2024 in the 2022-23 October Budget, while negotiations are underway with states and territories.

The Government will also

- support expansion of Australia’s housing supply by accelerating tax deductions to encourage investment and construction in the build-to-rent sector
- increasing the Government-guaranteed liability cap of the National Housing and Finance Investment Corporation (NHFIC) by \$2.0 billion to \$7.5 billion to enable NHFIC to increase its support for social and affordable housing through loans from the Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator



- expand the eligibility of the Home Guarantee Scheme
- redirecting interest earnings on unallocated NHFIC funds to support more social and affordable housing and delivery of housing priorities.

Healing trauma

The Government will provide additional funding of \$1.0 million over two years from 2022–23 to help remember mothers, adopted people and wider families affected by forced adoption on the 10 year anniversary of the national apology for forced adoptions.

The Government will provide additional funding of \$142.2 million over 5 years from 2023–24 for continued implementation of the National Redress Scheme for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

Community development

The Government will provide \$199.8 million over 6 years from 2023–24 to address entrenched community disadvantage, including through place-based approaches, engaging with philanthropy and promoting social impact investment.

Aged care

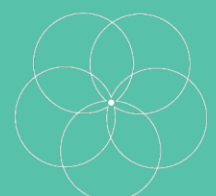
The Government will provide:

- \$515.0 million over 5 years from 2022–23 (and \$956.9 million over 10 years from 2022–23) to fund the outcome of the Fair Work Commission’s decision on the Aged Care Work Value Case, to increase award wages by 15 per cent from 30 June 2023 for many aged care workers
- \$591.3 million additional funding over two years from 2022–23 to continue the Government’s response to COVID-19 in aged care
- \$309.9 million additional funding over 5 years from 2022–23 to implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and other initiatives to strengthen the regulation of the aged care sector and improve the health and safety of older Australians receiving aged care
- \$338.7 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to improve the in-home aged care system, including release of an additional 9,500 Home Care Packages in 2023–24
- \$827.2 million over 5 years from 2022–23 to continue to improve the delivery of aged care services and respond to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, including extending the Disability Support for Older Australians Program
- \$7.3 million over 3 years from 2023–24 for a package of initiatives to further reduce the number of people under the age of 65 living in residential aged care.

First Nations People

The Government will provide \$492.7 million over 5 years from 2022–23 for a range of measures to support critical investment in infrastructure, employment, justice, education and housing initiatives for First Nations peoples.

The Government will provide \$363.1 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to support its commitment to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ health and wellbeing outcomes, and improve outcomes in aged care.



The Government will also provide \$10.5 million in 2023–24 to increase mental health supports for First Nations people during the period of the referendum, as part of \$364.6 million over 3 years from 2022–23 to deliver the referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in the Constitution through a Voice to Parliament.

Climate change

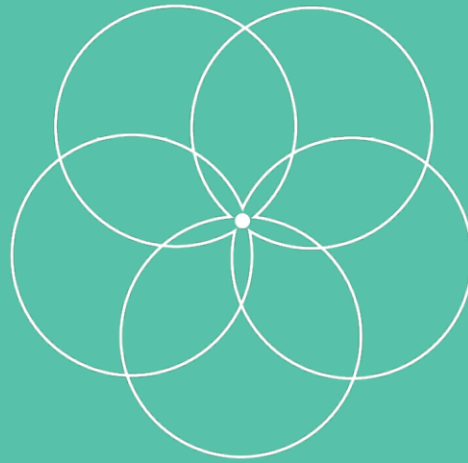
The Government will provide \$83.2 million over 4 years from 2023–24 to establish a national Net Zero Authority (the Authority) to promote orderly and positive economic transformation associated with decarbonisation and energy system change in regional areas, including support for impacted workers.

Disaster response

The Government will provide funding to improve Australia’s resilience to natural disasters and support recovery of impacted communities including:

- \$125.7 million over 5 years from 2022–23 (and \$28.3 million per year ongoing) to uplift the capacity of the National Emergency Management Agency to support Australians during, and following, a disaster
- \$9.8 million in 2022–23 to provide urgent mental health and mosquito-borne disease supports to communities impacted by flooding in Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales, including First Nations communities.
- \$7.2 million over two years from 2023–24 to extend mental health services supporting communities affected by disasters, for the Black Dog Institute’s National Emergency Workers Support Service and the Australian Psychological Society’s Disaster Response Network.





Mental Health Australia

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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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