

FEDERAL BUDGET 19-20: HEALTH OVERVIEW

The main items related to health professional education/health workforce in the 2020-2021 Federal budget are:

- \$50.3 million over four years from 2020–21 (and \$11.0 million per year ongoing) for capital works and expansion of the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program to improve training for students across a range of health disciplines. This is new/additional RHMT program funding.
- \$10.8 million over five years from 2020–21 to further upskill Enrolled Nurses and Registered Nurses working in aged care through:
 - expanding the Australian College of Nursing Scholarship Program;
 - establishing an Aged Care Transition to Practice Program to help graduate nurses transition to the aged care workforce; and
 - establishing a skills development program for nurses and personal care workers working in residential aged care.
- Components of the additional \$903.5 million over four years from 2020–21 to provide more places and support for people wanting to access higher education due to the impact of COVID-19, to establish new quality protections for the higher education system, and for the *Job-ready Graduates* reforms. Those relating more specifically to health professions education include:
 - creating disciplines of Professional Pathway Psychology and Professional Pathway Social Work to reduce the student contribution amounts for students studying units as part of a pathway to professional qualifications
 - \$251.8 million over two years from 2020–21 for an additional 50,000 subsidised higher education short course places across a range of discipline areas including health;
- \$298.5 million over four years from 2020–21 for an additional 12,000 Commonwealth-supported places in 2021 in national priority areas (which potentially include health) to further meet demand for higher education;
- \$10.3 million over three years from 2020–21 to support the Aged Care Workforce Industry Council to implement the Aged Care Workforce Strategy.
- \$3.3 million for new models of primary care to address rural workforce shortages (this is part of the broader \$550 million investment into a Stronger Rural Health Strategy)

In addition to the announcement of an additional \$1 billion in 2020–21 through the Research Support Program to support universities' costs of research and continued delivery of world class research, the Budget also includes a number of measures to support health and medical research:

- \$2.3 billion investment into Covid-19 treatments and vaccines
 - \$1.7b Securing COVID-19 vaccine access for all Australians.
 - National Vaccine and Treatment Strategy to guide strategic investments to access and manufacture COVID-19 vaccines.
 - \$123.2m Initial investment to access COVID vaccine doses through the Gavi COVAX Facility.
 - \$95.2m Funding for life-saving research into treatments for COVID-19 via the MRFF.
- \$6.6 billion over 4 years into medical research and clinical trials including:
 - \$424.3m in MRFF grants and new program openings.
 - \$1.3b re Patients – clinical trials for innovative treatments, delivering more advanced health care and medical technology.
 - \$0.8b Researchers – Frontier Health and Medical Research.
 - \$218m for Rapid Applied Research Translation Centres;
 - \$605m for National Critical Infrastructure; and
 - \$80m for Research Data Infrastructure

- \$2.2 million to expand a free accredited professional development program that builds the mental health literacy of trusted business advisers so that they can better support small business owners in times of distress, delivered through Deakin University.
- \$10 million to the University of Melbourne under the Pathogen Genomics Grant Opportunity, to support work establishing a national genomic platform to analyse illness including major infectious diseases.
- \$725,000 to the University of Queensland under the Development Grants program, towards the development of a new drug to help prevent skin cancer in organ transplant recipients.

There were also significant investments in: **COVID-19 – strengthening primary care, mental health and hospital services, preventive health and aged care.** These broader health measures include:

- \$4.3 billion investment in COVID-19 Strengthening primary care
- \$6b additional for Medicare.
 - \$2.4b total investment in telehealth.
- \$5.7b for Mental Health including:
 - Doubling the Better Access psychological services from 10 to 20; and
 - \$165.9 million investment in COVID-19 supporting mental health
- \$6.6b for life-saving medical research.
 - \$20b MRFF reached maturity in July 2020.
 - \$424m in new MRFF grants and new program openings.
- \$8b additional for aged care.
 - 23,000 additional home care packages.
 - \$1.6 billion for COVID-19 Aged Care response plan including surge workforce
- \$4 billion over four years for prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- \$550 million investment for the Stronger Rural Health Strategy
- an additional \$798.8 million over four years from 2020-21 to the NDIA and NDIS to support NDIS implementation.
- \$8.4b for preventive health and sport over four years.
- \$1.9b for medicines over four years.
 - PBS New Medicines Funding Guarantee.
- \$33.6b additional for hospitals including:
 - \$3.3 billion investment into the national medical stockpile for PPE, medical supplies etc

Further details about the specific health, education and social services /NDIS budget measures are provided in the links below.

- Health measures: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/budget-2020-21>
- Education measures: <https://www.dese.gov.au/about-us/corporate-reporting/budget>
- Social Services/ NDIS measures: <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/publications-articles/corporate-publications/budget-and-additional-estimates-statements/budget-2020-21>

The full budget paper 2 statement is available here: [Budget Statement](#)