

Federal Budget 2022-23

Health priorities for Australia



Budget Context

Pre-election Budget so conventional wisdom is it's a spending one.

Cost of living pressures in community as inflation increases which has strongly influenced the Budget measures.

Economy growing with lower unemployment creating workforce shortages.

COVID still a pandemic, with international supply chains still disrupted.

Many key health stakeholders looking for significant investment in health.

Key reforms in primary health, mental health and prevention part of Government's agenda for this term. Some yet to be delivered on.



Budget Overall

From the consumers' health perspective, it's a solid Health Budget with additional expenditure of \$34 billion over four years. Despite this there are many gaps.

This is spread across the portfolio without a cohesive narrative.

It is a reactive Budget rather than being one that sets the agenda.

Much of the expenditure is for very specific programs and projects so does not encourage innovative approaches.

There is nothing groundbreaking and nothing transformational.



Stakeholder views

Overall health stakeholders' reception of the health budget has been lukewarm with many identifying major gaps and seeing this a lost opportunity to effect transformational change

AMA – welcomes spending on COVID response, but claims of record spending masks underfunding of public hospitals and primary care.

RACGP – does not deliver on the planned reform with much of the 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan still unfunded.

Suicide Prevention Australia - an opportunity lost to invest in local responses.

FECCA – disappointed in lack of health measures for CALD Australians

NACCHO – there is no structural reform and no significant increase in funding for the sector despite the one-off project-based initiatives

PHAA – extremely disappointing that the 2022-23 Budget lacks the sufficient funding which would signal the Government's commitment to the strategy and its goals.

Pharmacy Guild – rising cost of prescription medicines not addressed. Families are being forced to choose between medicines and immediate needs.

Stakeholder views

ACOSS – Welcomes lowering of PBS safety net threshold, giving concession card holders 12 free medicines a year. Ends Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment, leaving workers without access to sick leave. Temporary free RATs for concession card holders will be ending. Aged care measures unlikely to reduce workforce turnover.

Medicines Australia – PBS new and amended listings will improve access to new and innovative medicines, vaccines and treatments. Welcomes mRNA vaccine manufacturing.

PWDA – Extremely disappointed with no emergency support or greater protection for people with disability and their families/carers.

Cohealth – need secure housing and liveable income to support those most struggling from the effects of the pandemic. Current fee for service model doesn't support integrated, comprehensive care needed to support health and wellbeing.



Highlights



Primary Health Care 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan is released with \$632.8 million new funding.

- Centrepiece is making universal telehealth permanent.
- Voluntary Patient enrolment.
- After hours service enhancements through PHNs.

10 Year Stronger Rural Health Strategy (\$296.5 million)

- Emphasis on workforce initiatives to improve access to services.
- Increased funding for Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Highlights



Affordable Medicines

- Reduction in thresholds for PBS Safety Net, down 12 scripts for concession card holders and 2 for general patients. This is well targeted at people who use the most medicines and least able to afford them. It is consistent with the findings in the Consumer Sentiment Survey and previous CHF positions.

Aged Care- Medication Management

- \$345.7million for onsite pharmacists and community pharmacy to deliver improved medication management in residential. CHF called for this as part of 7CPA discussions.

Highlights



Mental Health- overall package of \$3 Billion.

- Additional funding for prevention and early intervention.
- Additional funding for mental health supports for young people through
 - Early Psychosis Youth Services
 - additional funding for headspace.
- Mental health supports for people affected by natural disasters.
- Support for vulnerable Australians a good step acknowledging the need to address inequities and have targeted measures for some groups.

COVID

- Aged care support package of \$1.4 billion.
- Support to manufacture mRNA vaccines in Australia.

Highlights



Preventive Health

- Down-payment of \$30.1 million for National Preventive Health Strategy welcome but not sufficient.
- Health communications campaign for CALD communities welcome but needs to be codesigned and developed with communities.

Women and Girls Health (\$333 million)

- Set of measures all welcome.

Research

- \$28.1 m to establish Genomics Australia.

Lowlights



- Overall funding increases but does nothing to address the need for substantive increased investment in primary health care. Without that the 10 Year plan will struggle to make a difference.
- Primary health appears to be a cluster of measures rather than a cohesive plan with much of the detail yet to be finalised. For example, voluntary patient enrolment is in the Plan, but details to be finalised over the next six (6) months through a co-designed process.
- No social prescribing in primary health is a missed opportunity to improve wellbeing of many people with chronic conditions and enhance their capacity to self-manage their care.
- Nothing new in digital health.

What is missing?

- No new dental health care with just an extension of existing National partnership Agreement with States and Territories for public dental services. This does little to address long waiting times and lack of affordable dental care for many Australians.
- No national organisation for disease surveillance and advice such as the Centre for Disease Control in the USA. This leaves Australia ill-prepared for future pandemics.
- Nothing to encourage innovative approaches to virtual care.

What is missing?

- No move to look at health in all policies approach despite the recent experience of COVID demonstrating the clear links between health and the economy
- Any significant increase in income support through Jobseeker and related payments
- Nothing to address housing affordability/reduce homelessness and housing stress
- Action on climate change to address health impacts. Climate change is ignored across the Budget not just in health
- Nothing to increase consumer capacity to participate in all aspects of the health system
- Any reforms to Private Health Insurance



More information

Health stakeholder pack including fact sheets on all Health and aged care measures:

[Budget 2022–23: Stakeholder pack | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

This has a comprehensive set of fact sheets as well as the Ministers' media releases.

The Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australias-primary-health-care-10-year-plan-2022-2032>

The official budget website: <https://budget.gov.au/index.htm>

Budget Paper No 2 which has all the expenditure measures:

<https://budget.gov.au/2022-23/content/bp2/index.htm>

Contact

Leanne Wells CEO l.wells@chf.org.au

Jo Root Policy Director j.root@chf.org.au

Tammy Wolffs Senior Policy Officer t.wolffs@chf.org.au

