

A U S T R A L I A N

Medicine

The national news publication of the Australian Medical Association

Budget delivered

Time for an election



AMA

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In this issue

Budget news 3-12

Member services 13

This is a special post-budget mini edition of *Australian Medicine*.

These articles will also appear in a regular forthcoming edition of the publication.

Cover: AMA President Dr Tony Bartone speaks to journalists at Parliament House about the Budget.



AMA welcomes Health Budget as a good start to election



Treasurer Josh Frydenberg delivering his Budget Address in Parliament House

The Government has delivered a welcome boost to general practice, with an almost \$1 billion investment detailed in the Federal Budget.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg has delivered his first Budget, which is also the first Budget under the Prime Ministership of Scott Morrison, and has announced a \$7.1 billion surplus.

But AMA President Dr Tony Bartone said it was obvious that Health Minister Greg Hunt had been listening to the AMA and has delivered a strong Health Budget, which has a particular emphasis on primary care.

Dr Bartone said the Government's Budget announcements have set up a genuine health policy competition for the upcoming election.

"Australia's hardworking GPs will be happy to see a commitment of almost \$1 billion to general practice. This includes matching Labor's promise to bring forward by a year the lifting of the freeze on rebates for a range of Medicare GP items," Dr Bartone said.

"Overall, the Government has delivered a much-needed significant investment to general practice – the driving force of quality primary health care in Australia."

The GP package includes:

- \$448.5 million to improve continuity of care for patients over 70 with chronic conditions;
- Quality Incentive Payments for general practices (\$201.5 million);
- \$62.2 million for rural generalist training; and
- \$187.2 million for lifting of the freeze on GP items.

The AMA also welcomes:

- Funding for new Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS) medicines;





AMA welcomes Health Budget as a good start to election

... from p3

- Retention of the Aged Care Access Incentive (ACAI); and
- A rural workforce program.

But Dr Bartone said there were obvious gaps in mental health, prevention, Indigenous health, pathology, and public hospital funding to improve all hospitals.

“We expect to hear more on these key areas from all parties before the election,” he said.

“Health Minister Hunt has worked closely with the AMA, especially on the primary care element of this Budget.

“Overall, the Government has produced a good start for a quality health policy platform for the election.

“We look forward to the Opposition making health a real contest when they roll out all their policies.”

Dr Bartone said there is still unfinished business with the Private Health Insurance reforms as they are implemented from this month, and with the ongoing work of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review, which must return any savings to new and improved MBS items.

In his speech to Parliament, Mr Frydenberg said the Budget built on the Government’s plan to for a stronger economy.

Specifically on health, the Treasurer said it was front of mind for all Australians and this year the Government will spend more than \$80 billion.

“An amount that has increased every year we have been in Government,” Mr Frydenberg said.

“More MRI machines. More life-changing medicines on the PBS. More funding for mental health. Better access to dental services. Better access to hospitals. And better access to regional GPs.

“In this Budget, we are: funding upgrades to regional hospitals, the first being in Townsville; establishing Australia’s first comprehensive children’s cancer centre in Sydney; helping to build a new Brain and Spinal Ward in South Australia.

“In this Budget, we also list more medicines on the PBS to treat kidney, bladder, liver and skin cancer.

“And tonight, we announce the listing of Besponsa, a medicine for people with acute Leukaemia.



Dr Bartone discussing the Budget on Sky News

“Instead of costing \$120,000 a course, patients will now have access to the medicine at a cost of only \$6.50 per script for concession card holders and around \$40 for general patients.

“This brings the total number of new listings to more than 2,000 since we came to government, costing more than \$10 billion.

“A real and profound dividend from a strong economy, and done without increasing taxes.”

The Treasurer repeated the Government’s assurance that Medicare is guaranteed and new services are being added to the Medicare Benefits Scheme

A Heart Kids Project for new research to treat and prevent heart disease affecting thousands of Australian children is being established.

The Government will invest \$461 million in Australia’s most significant youth mental health and suicide prevention strategy, with 30 new headspace centres.

Support for Indigenous youth including through mentoring and peer support is also being funded.

And the Budget includes an investment of \$725 million into aged care that aims to deliver 10,000 new home care packages.

The AMA Pre-Budget Submission 2019-20 is available at:

https://ama.com.au/sites/default/files/budget-submission/AMA_Budget_Submission_2019_20.pdf



Budget invests in patients, says Minister

Mr Hunt said the Budget guarantees Medicare, makes a range of life-saving medicines and services more accessible and affordable, reduces out-of-pocket costs, strengthens primary care and mental health and invests in breakthrough medical research.

Health Minister Greg Hunt has described the Health Budget as a “comprehensive, patient-focused investment” with a record \$104 billion in 2019-20 and a \$435 billion spend over the next four years.

But the Opposition says the Budget is “too little, too late” with “reheated announcements” that do not make up for years of inaction.

Mr Hunt said the Budget guarantees Medicare, makes a range of life-saving medicines and services more accessible and affordable, reduces out-of-pocket costs, strengthens primary care and mental health and invests in breakthrough medical research.

“The Budget consolidates and continues our health reform agenda. It reinforces the four pillars of our long term national health plan – guaranteeing Medicare and improving access to medicines, supporting our hospitals, prioritising mental health and preventive health and investing in health and medical research,” the Minister said.

“We are addressing community need through a range of investments under our \$1.25 billion landmark Community Health and Hospitals Program (CHHP) to keep people healthy and out of hospital. We are acting on aged care reform. Improvements to accessibility, quality and safety continue apace with a further investment of \$7 billion since the last Budget.”

Shadow Health Minister Catherine King, however, said with this

Budget, Prime Minister Scott Morrison had locked in cuts to hospitals that he had written into previous Budgets as Treasurer.

“This was Morrison’s last chance to fully reverse his savage hospital cuts – and he failed,” Ms King said.

“Budgets are about priorities. For six years, the Liberals have prioritised an \$80 billion tax handout for the top end of town over Medicare, schools, hospitals...”

“Patients will suffer because of these cuts as they are confronted with longer emergency department and elective surgery waiting times, or are forced to travel far from home for treatment.”

But Mr Hunt said the Government had increased funding for public hospitals by \$5 billion, up from \$13.3 billion in 2012–13, to \$21.7 billion in 2018–19, to \$26.2 billion in 2022–23.

On other Health Budget initiatives, the Minister said the Government was committed to reducing out-of-pocket costs and supports all the recommendations of, and will implement the first stage of its response to, the report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Out-of-Pocket Costs.

And, he said, the Government was delivering a \$1.1 billion ‘Strengthening Primary Care’ package, building on the \$512 million package in the 2018–19 MYEFO, to support Australia’s doctors and specialists to deliver improved access and outcomes for patients.



Investing in medical research

Funding of \$6 billion over the forward estimates for medical research is being committed to in this Budget, with \$3.5 billion for the National Health and Medical Research Council, \$0.5 billion for the Biotechnology Translation Fund, and \$2.3 billion for the Medical Research Future Fund.

The Government insists its 10-year investment plan will give researchers and industry certainty and direction through the four key areas:

Patients

A further \$931.0 million for a total of \$1.3 billion allocated under the Investment Plan to improve the health of Australians through the development of new treatments and cures informed by the latest research and using cutting edge technology, which includes:

- Clinical Trials for Rare Cancers, Rare Diseases and Unmet Needs – a further \$354.0 million for a total of \$614.2 million;
- Emerging Priorities and Consumer Driven Research – a further \$554.0 million for a total of \$633.0 million; and
- Global Health – Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance and Drug Resistant Tuberculosis – a further \$23.0 million for a total of \$28.4 million.

Researchers

A further \$444.6 million for a total of \$792.8 million allocated under the Investment Plan to support our best health and medical researchers to make breakthrough discoveries, develop their skills and progress their careers in Australia, which includes:

- Frontier Health and Medical Research – a further \$330.0 million for a total of \$570.0 million;
- Industry Researcher Exchange and Training – existing allocation of \$32.0 million; and
- Clinical Researchers – a further \$114.6 million for a total of \$190.8 million.

Missions

A further \$1.2 billion for a total of \$1.4 billion allocated under the Investment Plan for long term focused missions to address complex and sizeable health issues requiring a concerted effort

to transition great ideas through to proof-of-concept and beyond, which includes:

- Australian Brain Cancer Mission – a further \$2.0 million for a total of \$123.6 million (including \$65.3 million in philanthropic contributions, \$5.0 million in clinical trials funding and \$3.4 million in research funding);
- Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission – existing allocation of \$125.0 million;
- Genomics Health Futures Mission – a further \$430.2 million for a total of \$500.0 million;
- Ageing, and Aged Care and Dementia Mission – a new investment of \$185.0 million;
- Indigenous Health Futures – a new investment of \$125.0 million for a total of \$160.0 million;
- Stem Cell Mission – a new investment of \$150.0 million;
- Cardiovascular Mission – a new investment of \$220.0 million; and
- Traumatic Brain Injury – a new investment of \$50.0 million.

Translation

A further \$1.2 billion for a total of \$1.5 billion allocated under the Investment Plan to progress research ideas from the lab to the clinic, ensuring new medical discoveries are part of the clinical practice of GPs, specialists and hospitals, which includes:

- Preventive and Public Health Research – a further \$60.0 million for a total of \$260.4 million.
- Primary Health Care Research – a new investment of \$45.0 million;
- Rapid Applied Research Translation Centres – a further \$143.0 million for a total of \$218.0 million;
- Medical Research Commercialisation – a further \$254.0 million for a total of \$311.3 million;
- National Critical Infrastructure – a new investment of \$605.0 million; and
- Data Infrastructure – focus on registries, biobanks and linkage platforms – a new investment of \$80.0 million.



Medical students welcome rural generalist commitment



The \$62 million allocation in the Federal Budget for the rural generalist pathway is an important step forward to fill the gaps in Australia's healthcare system and address the bottleneck in vocational training pathways for Australia's junior doctors.

Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) President, Jessica Yang, attended the Department of Health Budget Briefing and welcomes the new national approach to rural doctor shortages.

"We have tried the same model for years, which is to train medical students in rural areas, and incentivise already-trained doctors to practice in rural areas. What has been missing is the link between these initiatives to complete the training pathway in rural Australia," Ms Yang said.

"Enabling all stages of training to occur in regional and rural Australia is how we will retain health professionals in areas of need.

"A national training program for rural generalist doctors is a big step in the right direction to address the doctor shortage in rural areas. Without the proposed funding, this program could not go ahead.

"I believe we will see real improvements in addressing Australia's areas of health need in the coming years with the rural generalist pathway."

AMSA Rural Health Chair, Jacoba Van Wees, agreed, saying: "Concrete funding for the national rural generalist pathway will enable students who are passionate about rural health to pursue this as a career without fear of having to leave that calling due to job security."

AMSA is the peak representative body for Australia's 17,000 medical students, many of whom wish to pursue a career in rural medicine.



Spotlight on aged care



Funding for aged care has increased by \$7 billion over the forward estimates, up from \$13.3 billion in 2012–13 to \$20.5 billion in 2018–19 to \$25.4 billion in 2022–23.

But the Opposition insists there are no new announcements for older Australians in this Budget.

Aged Care Minister Ken Wyatt said the Government has increased the number of home care packages from 60,308 in 2012–13 to 124,032 in 2018–19 and 157,154 in 2022–23 as part of an ongoing response to senior Australians’ “clear preference” to receive aged care in their own homes and live independently for longer.

“With the rapid growth in home care, the Government is providing

\$5.6 million to strengthen compliance to tackle the risk of poor quality service and fraud,” Mr Wyatt said.

“The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission – Australia’s new cop on the aged care beat – will have a key role, including increasing home care audits.

“The Commonwealth Home Support Program will be extended for a further two years to 30 June 2022, representing an investment of \$5.9 billion. This will give certainty to around 1500 organisations, such as meals-on-wheels, supporting almost one million older Australians as they age and start to require assistance while still living in their own home.

“In residential aged care, the Government has invested \$320 million in 2018–19 as a one-off increase to the general subsidy through to 30 June 2020. This will support the increase in residential places from 186,000 in 2012–13 to 212,000 in 2018–19 to 243,000 in 2022–23.”

The Minister said the Government would also work to significantly improve monitoring and reporting of serious incidents involving residents, including incidents involving physical or chemical restraint.

Funding of \$7.7 million will help to ensure the use of medication, in particular inappropriate use of psychotropics and antibiotics, in residential aged care is brought into line with best practice and community expectations. Clinical pharmacists will work directly with aged care providers to better inform them about appropriate use. Providers will be obliged to provide medication management data.

But Shadow Minister for Ageing Julie Collins described the Budget as “cruel hoax” on older Australians.

Ms Collins said seniors had been left behind with this Budget, they are now waiting years for care they have been approved for.

“There is nothing new in this Budget for older Australians – the Liberals are all out of ideas,” she said.

“128,000 older Australians are now waiting for a home care package but the Budget does not deliver one new package the Government hasn’t already announced.”



Extract of Budget Speech 2019-20

BY THE HONOURABLE JOSH FRYDENBERG MP TREASURER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Guaranteeing essential services

Mr Speaker, a strong economy is not an end in itself. It's what you do with it that counts.

With a strong economy, we can guarantee the essential services that Australians need and deserve.

Health is front of mind for all Australians, and this year the Government will spend more than \$80 billion on healthcare.

An amount that has increased every year we have been in Government.

More MRI machines.

More life-changing medicines on the PBS.

More funding for mental health.

Better access to dental services.

Better access to hospitals.

And better access to regional GPs.

In this Budget, we are:

Funding upgrades to regional hospitals, the first being in Townsville.

Establishing Australia's first comprehensive children's cancer centre in Sydney.

Helping to build a new Brain and Spinal Ward in South Australia.

In this Budget, we also list more medicines on the PBS to treat kidney, bladder, liver and skin cancer.

And tonight, we announce the listing of Besponsa, a medicine for people with acute Leukaemia.

Instead of costing \$120,000 a course, patients will now have access to the medicine at a cost of only \$6.50 per script for concession card holders and around \$40 for general patients.

This brings the total number of new listings to more than 2,000 since we came to government, costing more than \$10 billion.

A real and profound dividend from a strong economy, and done without increasing taxes.

Under the Coalition, Medicare is guaranteed.

Bulk-billing is at a record high.

And we are adding new services to the Medicare Benefits Schedule, including diagnostic imaging for breast cancer and heart health checks.

We're establishing a Heart Kids Project for new research to treat and prevent heart disease which affects thousands of Australian children.

Mr Speaker, mental health is an issue of deep concern to all Australians.

It is a national tragedy that we lose so many people to suicide and that so many people live a life of quiet desperation.

Tonight I say: we hear you and we are with you.

This issue demands our ongoing attention and resources.

We must work together to combat youth suicide as a national priority.

In this Budget, the Government will invest \$461 million in Australia's most significant youth mental health and suicide prevention strategy.

30 new headspace centres.

Reduced waiting lists.

More support for Indigenous youth including through mentoring and peer support.

Treatment for early psychosis.

A perinatal mental health program.

And extra counselling services for communities who have suffered from natural disasters.

All of this is about looking after each other.

It reflects the best of Australia and its values.

Looking after older Australians

Mr Speaker, a stronger economy also allows us to invest more in looking after older Australians.

Australians deserve to age with dignity and have earned the right to expect the highest standards of aged care services.



Extract of Budget Speech 2019-20 ... continued

In some cases, these services have badly let Australians down. That is why we established the Royal Commission into aged care.

This Budget includes a significant investment of \$725 million that will deliver:

10,000 new home care packages.

Bringing to 40,000 the number of new packages announced over the last 18 months.

Additional financial support for residential care.

A capital works program with a focus on regional Australia.

And a series of new measures to improve the quality and safety of aged care services.

We achieve this without new taxes and without raiding retirees' hard earned savings.

Mr Speaker, we also recognise the pressure energy bills place on those who can least afford it.

That's why we are providing additional cost of living relief for pensioners through a one-off Energy Assistance Payment of \$75 for singles and \$125 for couples.

This payment will be paid this financial year and comes on top of other actions the Government has taken to reduce power bills.

Mr Speaker, we know that Australia's carers are our nation's unsung heroes.

Their job is 24/7 and it's emotionally as well as physically demanding.

Many carers need and deserve a rest.

So tonight we are announcing \$84 million to enable carers to leave a loved one in safe hands and get a much needed break.

Mr Speaker, supporting people with disability is a moral imperative, recognised by both sides of politics.

Growing to \$22 billion, it takes a strong economy to fund the NDIS fully and sustainably.

This is what our Government has done.

In this Budget, we have also set aside half a billion dollars for a Royal Commission into the mistreatment of people with disability.

Affordable housing is also a priority for this Government.

Just over a week ago, the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation, established by this Government, successfully issued the largest social bond in Australia's history.

Over \$300 million was raised, providing a significant injection into the community housing sector.



AMA New occupational cancer e-learning module

In some Australian workplaces, employees are exposed to a diverse range of possible carcinogens at higher concentrations and for longer periods of time than the general public. It has been estimated that 3.6 million Australians are exposed to at least one carcinogen at work and about 5000 cancers each year are caused by workplace exposures.

It is essential GPs have the knowledge and skills to be able to assist patients in monitoring their health, identifying potential risks and be able to provide or direct patients to further information if working in high-risk jobs with known carcinogens.

Cancer Council has developed an e-learning module to increase GPs' awareness of workplace carcinogens and cancers. The module includes sections on occupational carcinogens in the Australian context, the role of an exposure history, common occupational cancers including lung, skin, bladder and mesothelioma, and the Australian compensation system.

The 60-minute module is accredited with both RACGP and ACCRRM. Visit www.elearning.cancer.org.au/courses for more information and to register for the module.



GOVERNMENT FACT SHEET: HEALTH

Investing in the health of Australians

The Government is investing in primary care, hospitals and medicines as the foundation of our world class healthcare system.

Total Commonwealth health spending is expected to increase from \$81.8 billion in 2019-20 to \$89.5 billion in 2022-23.

Guaranteeing and strengthening Medicare

The Government is guaranteeing Medicare and making record investments in the health system.

The Government is helping to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for patients by providing \$199 million to index diagnostic imaging items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) from 1 July 2020. To support about 14,000 breast cancer patients each year, a further \$32.6 million is being provided to reduce the cost of services for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

The Government is delivering a \$1.1 billion Strengthening Primary Care package, including \$448 million in increased funding to enhance the care and services GPs provide to high needs patients, and \$187 million to increase the patient rebate for a further 119 GP items on the MBS from 1 July 2019.

To help reduce the prevalence of heart disease, the Government will introduce a new MBS item for heart health checks, and providing funding for the Childhood Heart Disease National Action Plan.

The Government is investing \$152 million in new MRI licences, bringing total funding since 2018 to \$379 million for 53 new MRI licences nationally. This will give patients from around Australia better access to lifesaving scans, including at Mount Druitt Hospital in New South Wales, Ipswich Hospital in Queensland and Kalgoorlie Health Campus in Western Australia.

Delivering more health and hospital services

Commonwealth funding for public hospitals will exceed \$97 billion over four years from 2019-20.

Through the \$1.3 billion Community Health and Hospitals Program, the Government is boosting health services across Australia in the priority areas of hospital infrastructure; drug and alcohol treatments; preventative health, primary care and chronic disease management; and mental health. Funding includes:

- \$100 million for a Comprehensive Children's Cancer Centre in Sydney
- \$80 million to establish a Centre of Excellence in Cellular Immunotherapy in Victoria
- \$30 million for the construction of a new Brain and Spinal Ward in South Australia.

More affordable access to medicines

This Budget includes \$331 million for new and amended listings on the PBS, including life changing medicines to treat lung, bladder, kidney and skin cancer as well as leukaemia. Patients will be able to access these medicines for just \$40.30 per script, or \$6.50 with a concession card.

World-class research

The Government is committed to ensuring Australia is a leader in medical research through its Medical Research Future Fund - one of the largest medical research funds in the world.

The Government's \$5 billion Ten Year Investment Plan for the Medical Research Future Fund is providing support for world class medical research, more clinical trials and the development of health innovations. The Plan includes \$614 million for rare cancers and diseases; \$220 million for cardiovascular health; \$605 million for clinical infrastructure; and \$150 million for stem cell research.



GOVERNMENT FACT SHEET: HEALTH

Investing in the health of Australians ... continued

Prioritising mental health

It is estimated that 1 in 5 people in Australia experience a mental health disorder in any given year. The Government is delivering more services for people living with mental illness and to tackle youth suicide.

Additional funding of \$111 million is being provided for 30 new headspace services by 2021, to support young people.

The Government is providing \$152 million to reduce waiting lists for headspace, \$110 million to extend the Early Psychosis Youth Services program for two years, and \$115 million to trial eight adult mental health centres. The Government is also

providing \$54 million to establish four specialist residential facilities for eating disorders.

More active Australia

The Government is providing \$386 million to build on Sports 2030 by encouraging Australians to increase their participation and upgrading sporting infrastructure.

This includes \$150 million for female change room facilities at sporting grounds and community swimming facilities; and \$41 million to continue and expand the Sporting Schools Program to provide free sport-based activities for school students.



AMA Have your say on new medical device regulations

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is consulting on proposed new regulations for a wide range of medical devices to make Australia more consistent with the European Union regulatory framework. AMA members whose practice involves medical devices are encouraged to make a submission directly to the TGA by April 29, 2019.

The TGA is reviewing regulation of: active implantable devices; devices that administer medicines or biologicals by inhalation; devices for human cells, tissues and organs storage solutions and IVF media; devices that introduce substances into the body via an orifice or through the skin; and devices used in direct contact with the heart, central circulatory or central nervous systems.

More information about the proposals, including detailed discussion papers and how to lodge a submission, is available through the links below.

- Consultation: Proposed changes to the classification of active implantable medical devices and their accessories
<<https://www.tga.gov.au/consultation/consultation-proposed-changes-classification-active-implantable-medical-devices-and-their-accessories>>
- Consultation: Proposed new classification rule for medical devices that administer medicines or biologicals by inhalation

<<https://www.tga.gov.au/consultation/consultation-proposed-new-classification-rule-medical-devices-administer-medicines-or-biologicals-inhalation>>

- Consultation: Proposed medical device classification for human cells, tissues and organs storage solutions and IVF media
<<https://www.tga.gov.au/consultation/consultation-proposed-medical-device-classification-human-cells-tissues-and-organs-storage-solutions-and-ivf-media>>
- Consultation: Proposed new medical device classification for substances introduced into the body via a body orifice or applied to the skin
<<https://www.tga.gov.au/consultation/consultation-proposed-new-medical-device-classification-substances-introduced-body-body-orifice-or-applied-skin>>
- Consultation: Proposed changes to the classification of medical devices used in direct contact with the heart, central circulatory or central nervous systems
<<https://www.tga.gov.au/consultation/consultation-proposed-changes-classification-medical-devices-used-direct-contact-heart-central-circulatory-or-central-nervous-systems>>

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MJA Journal: The Medical Journal of Australia is Australia's leading peer-reviewed general medical journal and is a FREE benefit for AMA members.



Fees & Services List: A free online resource for AMA members. The AMA list of Medical Services and Fees provides an important reference for those in medical practice to assist in determining their fees.



Career Advice Service and Resource Hub: This should be your "go-to" for expert advice, support and guidance to help you navigate through your medical career. Get professional tips on interview skills, CV building, reviews and more - all designed to give you the competitive edge to reach your career goals.

www.ama.com.au/careers



Amex: As an AMA member, receive no-fee and heavily discounted fee cards with a range of Amex cards.*



Mentone Educational: AMA members receive a 10% discount on all Mentone Educational products, including high quality anatomical charts, models and training equipment.



Volkswagen: AMA members are entitled to a discount off the retail price of new Volkswagen vehicles. Take advantage of this offer that could save you thousands of dollars.



AMP: AMA members are entitled to discounts on home loans with AMP.



Hertz: AMA members have access to discounted rates both in Australia and throughout international locations.



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