



Federal and State Health Budget 2024 Summaries

June, 2024

As an organisation which supports primary healthcare access in rural Victoria, RWAV has considered the Federal and state health budget announcements which may influence the rural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce, healthcare, and primary healthcare.

Federal Health Budget 2024- Relevant snapshot observations

Medicare

- \$227 mil for a further 29 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics to be added (to become a total of 87), and providing additional support for clinics located in regional, rural and remote areas
- \$313 mil for a one-year freeze on the maximum co-payment for a PBS prescription for everyone on Medicare, and five-year freeze for pensioners and concession card holders
- \$16 mil to implement system changes to MyMedicare
- \$57.4 mil to extend Practice Incentive Program Quality Improvement incentive payments.
- \$56.5 mil to implement recommendations from the MBS Review Taskforce, and \$23.1 million to extend the MBS Continuous Review program.

GPs and International Medical Graduates (IMGs)

- \$17.4 mil to extend the General Practice Incentive Fund until 30 June 2025 to improve access to primary care in thin markets
- \$90 mil to fund the implementation of the health-related recommendations of the Kruk Independent review of Australia's regulatory settings relating to overseas health practitioners Report over 3 years
- \$71.7 mil for Primary Health Networks to commission the services of mental health nurses, counsellors, social workers and others, to provide ongoing care to people with complex needs, in between their GP and specialist appointments
- Extending Single Employer Model (SEM) trials until December 2028 to attract and retain GPs in areas of workforce need

Rural Health

- \$17.4 mil to support health services at risk of closing. Primary Health Networks and Rural Workforce Agencies will work with local communities to support people.
- \$78 mil to fund the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).
- At least 30 of the 61 Medicare Mental Health Centres will be in rural and regional Australia.

Hospitals

- The Australian Government will provide more funding to state public hospitals from 2025-2030, increasing the Commonwealth contribution to the cost of care to 45 per cent, from around 40 per cent, over the next 10 years.
- \$882.2 mil will support states and territories to provide hospital outreach in the community, deliver virtual care to prevent avoidable hospitalisations and upskill the residential aged care workforce.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

- \$4.0 mil over four years from 2024–25 to the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association to continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors to become medical specialists.
- \$11.1 mil to expand access for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access Closing the Gap PBS co-payment which will make PBS medicines are either free, or co-payment of \$7.70.
- \$10 mil to maintain investments to the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) for targeted and culturally-appropriate mental health support services.
- \$94.9m over two years to support management of communicable disease control in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- \$12.5 mil for free period products for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls.
- \$3.5 mil for more access to professional indemnity insurance for midwives which will improve Birthing on Country services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers.

Women's Health

- \$56.6 mil for endorsed midwives to provide longer consultations under Medicare before and after the birth of a child.
- \$49.1 mil for women with complex gynaecological conditions like endometriosis to benefit from 2 new Medicare rebates for longer gynaecologist consultations.

Aged care

- \$88 mil for better career pathways for nurses in aged care.
- \$27 mil to support the government's response to the Aged Care Taskforce and develop the new Aged Care Act.
- \$190 mil will help older patients recover from a hospital stay with short-term care through the extended Transition Care Programme.

Mental health

- Primary Health Networks will be funded to work in partnership with general practice to provide mental health nurses and other allied health workers in general practice, for free wraparound care and support to patients with complex needs, in between GP and specialist appointments.
- \$588.5 mil to launch digital service for people with "mild health concerns" by 1 Jan 2025. The service will be free and will not need a GP referral.
- \$361.0 mil over four years to expand the range of free mental health services, so that Australians get the right level of care for their level of need.

Other health workforce announcements

- Nursing, midwifery, social work and teaching students will be eligible for weekly payments during mandatory practical placements - eligible students will receive a \$320 weekly payment from July 2025 during their placement.
- 11,000 scholarships for health professionals, including Nurse Practitioners, to undertake training in Menopause to improve women's health

Victorian State Health Budget 2024- Relevant snapshot observations

Rural health

- \$117 mil to operate and begin expanding facilities at health services, including the Latrobe Regional Hospital
- \$28 mil to deliver high-quality care in regional public sector residential aged care facilities.
- \$11 mil for Priority Primary Care Centres in regional areas.
- \$10 mil to provide additional mental health care to regional communities through support in Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (YPARC) beds, Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs, and suicide prevention services.
- \$5.7 mil to provide improved care to new mums in rural and regional areas, during and after their pregnancy.
- \$5.4 mil for the Ballarat Base Hospital, to build a mental health, alcohol and other drugs emergency department hub.
- \$1.6 mil to increase the number of people with cancer receiving early palliative care in regional communities.
- Funding will be provided to support Victoria's health workforce capacity through Registered Undergraduate Student of Nursing or Midwifery positions, nurse practitioner development, transition to practice support and capability development resources for nurses and midwives in regional Victoria.

GPs

- \$10 mil to support GPs through a co-designed grant program.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

- \$4.4 mil to Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation's (VACCHO) for delivery of the marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: the Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord (Accord). The Accord aims to improve the ethical standards of health, medical and wellbeing research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and self-determination.
- \$11 mil for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to deliver an expanded state-wide Culture and Kinship program and better support their clients.
- \$6.8 mil to support the extension of the Yoorrook Justice Commission as the formal truth-telling process with Aboriginal Victorians, and the Government's engagement with the process.
- \$4 million to deliver paediatric services by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service.

Mental health

- \$3.1mil to support workforce needs across the newly established Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals by building a pipeline of clinical and wellbeing graduates within each service.
- Approximately \$5 mil to progress mental health reform and key legislative requirements as recommended by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.
- \$0.4 mil to support the operations of the Mental Health Tribunal

Women's Health

- \$9.1 mil provided to further support 12 women's health organisations across Victoria to provide preventative health promotion and education to Victorian women, with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health, cervical cancer screening, chronic illness, family violence and other health promotion initiatives.



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About RWAV

RWAV improves access to quality primary care health services and other health services for rural, regional and First Nations communities across Victoria. We improve health outcomes through effective and customised health workforce solutions that are informed through partnerships, workforce and population health data, and collaboration with communities.