

2021 FEDERAL BUDGET SUMMARY

Mental Health
Australia

11 May 2021

Overview

The Australian Government has provided a welcome \$2.3 billion down payment on its response to the recommendations made by the Productivity Commission's Inquiry in Mental Health and the Advice to the National Suicide Prevention Adviser's Final Report.

It is very positive that the Government acknowledges that this is only the first instalment of their response to the PC Report. It has now publicly supported in full, in part or in principle all of the 21 recommendations of the PC Report and the eight recommendations of the NSPA Final Advice.

Investments in prevention and early intervention, child, youth and adult treatment services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention, broader suicide prevention initiatives and the mental health workforce will make a real difference for people seeking support for their mental ill health.

This includes \$1.4 billion in person-centred treatment, and specifically the development of a national network of community based service hubs including up to 57 additional mental health treatment centres and satellites for adults, youth and children, through the Head to Health and headspace programs.

Research funding has been provided for the Mental Health Australia General Clinical Trial Network (MAGNET) that Mental Health Australia is a partner to, which will enhance treatment access and improve the health of communities across Australia. This and new research funding for eating disorders is also welcomed as these programs will help generate new therapies with lived experience leadership.

The funding for psychosocial services for two years provides funding security for now but is well below recommendations made by the Productivity Commission. The expectation is that additional funding will result from the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement negotiations between the national, state and territory governments.

The Productivity Commission recommendation that independent consumer and carer peaks be established has been progressed with the investment of 0.3m to scope and work with the sector to "investigate and codesign future national peak body arrangements to provide consumers and carers with a greater say in the future of the mental health system" with further funding to support the training for 390 new peer workers.

While the details for the implementation of all these new investments is to be outlined it is clear that the Primary Health Networks will play a major role. It is imperative that they engage consumers and carers early in the design and delivery of these new services and that there is broader sector engagement to ensure service integration and to inform appropriate accountability and evaluation processes.



We warmly welcome the important aged care reform package which tonight sets a new tone for the way we respond to the health and care needs of older Australians and we look forward to working with provider members in and connected to our sector to ensure that mental health care responses are front and centre both in aged residential care and in community based care.

Further details on the 2021 Budget investments are provided below while a more detailed Budget analysis will be provided to the sector on 28 May.

Source note: unless otherwise specified, all references and tables in this document are drawn from [Australian Government \(2021\). Budget 2021-22: Budget Measures: Budget Paper No. 2: 2021-22](#), retrieved 11 May 2021 from:

Mental health specific measures

The Government “will provide \$2.0 billion over four years from 2021-22” (Budget Paper 2, p117) for mental health. Funding includes:

- **Lived experience**
 - “\$0.3 million to work with mental health stakeholders to investigate and co-design future national peak body arrangements to provide consumers and carers with a greater say in the future of the mental health system” ([Health portfolio papers](#), p168).
 - “\$3.1 million to sponsor up to 390 peer workers to undertake vocational training” (Health portfolio papers, p167).
- **Mental health hubs**
 - \$487.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish a network of Head to Health adult mental health centres and satellites to provide accessible, coordinated, multidisciplinary care. This includes a central intake and assessment service to triage and refer people to the most appropriate services.
 - \$278.6 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand and enhance headspace youth mental health services, in conjunction with the states and territories (Budget Paper 2, p118).
- **Psychosocial support**
 - “\$171.3 million to ensure continued access to Commonwealth psychosocial support services for 2 years, from 2021–22, under a single consolidated program” (Department of Health – Budget 2021-22 Overview).
- **Suicide prevention**
 - “\$158.6 million over four years from 2021-22 to work with states and territories to achieve universal aftercare services for all Australians discharged from hospital following a suicide attempt and to trial initiatives to provide aftercare services to those that may not have presented to a hospital.
 - “\$61.6 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand the National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program to increase investment in whole-of-population suicide prevention activities.



- “\$31.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to work with states and territories to establish a national Distress Intervention Program trial and to develop national accreditation and standards for safe space services.
 - “\$22.0 million over four years from 2021-22 to work with states and territories to continue postvention services nationally to support people who are bereaved by suicide.
 - “\$12.8 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish the National Suicide Prevention Office which will oversee the national approach to suicide prevention.
 - “\$12.0 million in 2021-22 to extend the National Suicide Prevention Trial for one year to continue the delivery of local suicide prevention initiatives across Australia” (Budget Paper 2, p118).
- **Service navigation**
 - “\$34.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand and implement the Initial Assessment and Referral tool to assist health practitioners to consistently assess and refer consumers in the mental health system” (Budget Paper 2, p119).
- **Digital mental health**
 - “\$111.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand and enhance digital mental health services to provide Australians easier access to high quality digital mental health services (Budget Paper 2, p117).
- **Group therapy and family and carer participation**
 - “\$111.4 million over three years from 2022-23 to support the take up of group therapy sessions and participation of family and carers in treatment provided under therapy sessions and participation of family and carers in treatment provided under the Better Access initiative” (Budget Paper 2, p119).
- **National database and governance**
 - “\$117.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish a national database on service delivery, performance and outcomes across the mental health system and conduct longitudinal surveys on the mental health of children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians” (Budget Paper 2, p119).
 - “\$7.3 million over four years from 2021-22 to enhance the capacity of the National Mental Health Commission to provide national leadership on mental health and suicide prevention reforms” (Budget Paper 2, p120).
- **Alcohol and other drugs**
 - “The Government will provide \$24.2 million over two years from 2021-22 to improve health outcomes through alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and support services. Funding includes:
 - “\$16.8 million over two years from 2021-22 to continue financial support to AOD services currently funded under the Social and Community Services Wage Supplementation, which ceases on 30 June 2021
 - “\$5.9 million in 2021-22 for the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to run the Good Sports program, which offers free support to community sports clubs to develop AOD and mental health policies
 - “\$1.5 million in 2021-22 to Hello Sunday Morning for its Daybreak program, which provides free online and mobile app services to



support Australians experiencing problematic use of alcohol to reduce their intake and related harms.” (Budget Paper 2, p122).

- **Workforce**

- The Government has committed \$58.8 million over two years from 2021-22 to grow the mental health workforce, including: measures to increase number of nurses, psychologists, and allied health practitioners in mental health settings through scholarships and clinical placements; growing the psychiatrist workforce with more training places, supporting regional and remote training pathways and promoting it as a career pathway; increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the mental health workforce and offering training for culturally safe treatment; boosting and supporting the mental health peer workforce through scholarships and professional collaboration; continuing mental health training for practitioners in aged care and supporting collaboration through the Mental Health Professionals’ Network; reducing mental health stigma among health practitioners; and identifying opportunities to boost the skills of the mental health workforce who work with children and families (Health Stakeholder pack, p7).
- “\$2.6 million over three years from 2021-22 to support frontline mental health workers and address the stigma around medical professionals seeking support” (Budget Paper 2, p120).
- “\$15.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to better equip General Practitioners in primary mental health care” (Budget Paper 2, p120).

- **COVID-19 Response Package**

- “\$7.1 million to extend the Beyond Blue COVID-19 Mental Wellbeing Support Service that provides support to Australians due to the pandemic” (Budget Paper 2, p106). “This funding is in addition to the Government’s investment of \$10 million over 2019–20 and 2020–21, and will ensure the program remains accessible until 31 December 2021.”

- **Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) included in MBS**

- \$288.5 million over five years from 2020-21 “to provide access to Medicare subsidised repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for the treatment of medication resistant major depressive disorder” (Budget Paper 2, p122).

Mental health support for specific population groups

New and expectant parents

“\$47.4 million over four years from 2021-22 to contribute to working with states and territories to achieve universal perinatal mental health screening across public antenatal and postnatal care settings, extend funding to the centre of perinatal excellence to continue to provide the digital infrastructure to support screening and to the Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia to meet higher demand for its helpline services” (Budget Paper 2, p117).

This includes a payment to the states and territories of \$20 million over three years “for a national perinatal screening program for new and expecting parents to improve perinatal mental health outcomes through early identification of risks” (Budget Paper 3, p.26).



Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

As previously announced, the Government will establish a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, with “\$174.2 million over two years from 2021-22”. The majority of this (\$145.3 million) is for the “Royal Commission to inquire into systemic issues relating to Defence and veteran deaths by suicide, suspected suicides and lived experience of suicide risks including the provision of support to eligible families and advocacy organisations to assist their participation in the Royal Commission” (Budget Paper 2, p78). The further \$28.9 million is for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to respond to information requests from the Royal Commission, and “to support timely responses to veteran suicide” (Budget Paper 2, p78).

Support for veterans

“The Government will provide \$12.1 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand support programs for veterans and their families”. This includes “\$2.3 million over four years from 2021-22 to provide veterans with streamlined access to vocational and psychological rehabilitation through a new non-liability rehabilitation pilot program” (Budget Paper 2, p195).

“The Government will provide \$302.8 million over four years from 2021-22 to support the Department of Veterans’ Affairs’ operations.” This includes “\$164.6 million over two years from 2021-22 to support departmental operations and processing of claims for rehabilitation, compensation and income support submitted by veterans and their dependants” (Budget Paper 2, p194).

“The Government will provide \$60.7 million over four years from 2021-22 to continue support for highly vulnerable veterans”. This includes “\$23.3 million to continue the Wellbeing and Support Program pilot as an ongoing program”, providing “medical, psychological and psychosocial support for highly vulnerable veterans who may be transitioning from the Australian Defence Force”, and “\$10.7 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish Veteran Wellbeing Centres in Tasmania and South-East Queensland” that will provide veterans with access to local services including health services, mental health support, community organisations, advocacy and wellbeing support” (Budget Paper 2, p197).

Child mental health

“\$54.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to work with the states and territories to establish child mental health and wellbeing hubs to provide multidisciplinary care and preventive services” (Budget Paper 2, p119).

“\$46.6 million over four years from 2021-22 for parenting education and support to parents and carers with children aged under 12 years and to develop national guidelines to assist with early identification of emerging emotional difficulties” (Budget Paper 2, p119).

Eating disorders

“\$26.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to provide additional support for people with eating disorders and their families, and to establish a National Eating Disorder Research Centre” (Budget Paper 2, p119).



Aboriginal and Torres Strait and Islander suicide prevention strategy

“\$79.0 million over four years from 2021-22 to implement initiatives under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy providing crisis and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (Budget Paper 2, p119). This will include:

- “\$27.3 million to implement culturally-sensitive, co-designed aftercare services through regionally-based organisations, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations being preferred service providers
- “\$23.8 million to support the establishment of regional suicide prevention networks and a lead commissioning officer in each jurisdiction, and
- “\$16.6 million to Gayaa Dhuwi and Lifeline to establish and evaluate a culturally-appropriate 24/7 crisis line governed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (Hunt, Colbeck, Coulton, Coleman Joint Press Release, 11 May 2021, p6).

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

“\$16.9 million to fund mental health early intervention supports and preventive measures for migrants and multicultural communities, and address the cultural competence of the broader health workforce through the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, and Mental Health Australia’s Embrace Framework” (Hunt, Colbeck, Coulton, Coleman Joint Press Release, 11 May 2021, p6).

Complex mental health needs and disability

“\$11.1 million over two years from 2021-22 to improve outcomes for people with complex mental health needs including people with cognitive disabilities and autism spectrum disorder” (Budget Paper 2, p119).

Fly-in fly-out workers

“\$6.3 million over three years from 2021-22 to increase support services for fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workers” (Budget Paper 2, p117).

Small business owners

“\$0.9 million over five years from 2020-21 to continue the Ahead for Business digital hub, supporting small business owners to take proactive, preventive and early steps to improve their mental health” (Budget Paper 2, p118).

Related health measures

Telehealth extension

The Government will provide “\$204.6 million for the extension of temporary telehealth MBS services from 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021, with revised billing arrangements from 1 July 2021” (Budget Paper 2, p.105).

Rural bulk billing - Incentives for rural GPs

The Government has committed “\$65.8 million to increase the Rural Bulk Billing Incentive for rural and remote medical practice” (Budget Paper 2, p.111).



Social determinants of mental health measures

National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse

“The Government will provide \$146.0 million over four years from 2021-22 for initiatives to prevent child sexual abuse. These initiatives will contribute to the First Commonwealth Action Plan (2021-2025) under the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2031 (the Strategy)” (Budget Paper 2, p. 174).

Response to Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

“The Government will provide \$698.3 million over five years from 2020-21 as part of the \$17.7 billion whole-of-government response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Royal Commission) to improve safety and quality and the availability of aged care services” (Budget Paper 2, p99).

Of the \$698.3 million, “\$630.2 million to improve access to quality aged care services for consumers in regional, rural and remote areas including those with First Nations backgrounds and special needs groups” (Budget Paper 2, p99).

“Over 5 years we will invest \$250 million in 2020–21, \$2.1 billion in 2021–22, \$4.4 billion in 2022–23, \$5.5 billion in 2023–24 and \$5.5 billion in 2024–25, for a total of \$17.7 billion” (Hunt, Colbeck, Coulton, Coleman Joint Press Release, 11 May 2021, p1).

"The Morrison Government is, therefore, responding to the Royal Commission with its five year – five pillar aged care reform plan addressing:

1. Home care – at home support and care based on assessed needs
2. Residential aged care services and sustainability – improving service suitability that ensures individual care needs and preferences are met
3. Residential aged care quality and safety – improving access to and quality of residential care
4. Workforce – growing a bigger, more highly skilled, caring and values based workforce; and
5. Governance – new legislation and stronger governance.

Pillar 1 of the Royal Commission Response - Home Care: \$7.5 billion towards supporting senior Australians who choose to remain in their home, including \$798.3 million to support the 1.6 million informal carers, including additional respite services for 8,400 senior Australians each year” (Hunt, Colbeck, Coulton, Coleman Joint Press Release, 11 May 2021, p2).

Domestic and family violence prevention and support services

“\$77.1 million over four years from 2021-22 for the National Legal Assistance Partnership to support the early resolution of legal problems for those experiencing mental illness and for mental health workers in Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice Partnerships to support women who have experienced family violence” (Budget Paper 2, p117).

“\$60.8 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$1.7 million per year ongoing) to reform family law case management processes to improve outcomes and better meet the needs of families by delivering a safe, child centred, accessible and efficient system” (Budget Paper 2, p62).

“\$29.0 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$8.5 million per year ongoing) to improve information sharing between the family law and the family violence and child protection



systems, to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families interacting with the family law system, including managing risk to family safety” (Budget Paper 2, p62).

“\$6.3 million in 2021-22 to the Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme to continue to protect victims of family violence in family law proceedings” (Budget Paper 2, p62).

“The Government will provide \$998.1 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$2.3 million in 2025-26) for initiatives to reduce, and support the victims of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) against women and children. These proposals form the Government's transitional strategy ahead of the development of the new National Plan to replace the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*” (Budget Paper 2, p83).

“Funding of \$507.3 million over four years from 2021-22 will be provided to implement and enhance a range of programs and initiatives that directly support women and children who have been subjected to FDSV” (Budget Paper 2, p83).

“Funding of \$92.4 million will be provided over four years to support programs aimed at the prevention of FDSV, to support education on consent and respectful relationships and to improve training outcomes for those who may encounter FDSV” (Budget Paper 2, p84).

“Funding of \$320.1 million over four years will be provided to further support services that assist vulnerable women and children to engage with the legal system, increase access to Children's Contact Services and support the development of improvements in the legal system in dealing with FDSV” (Budget Paper 2, p84).

“Funding of \$80.6 million over five years will also be provided to improve data collection and to further enhance research capability into FDSV to better support the development of future policy responses including the development of the next National Plan to reduce Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia” (Budget Paper 2, p85).

Housing and homelessness

“The Government will provide \$124.7 million over two years from 2021-22 to support workers in the housing and homelessness sector. The funding will be provided to states and territories under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement to assist them to bolster public housing stocks, or to meet wage requirements under the 2011 Fair Work Australia decision on social and community services wages, where that requirement has not already been met” (Budget Paper 2, p183).

Employment support

“\$5.7 million over three years from 2021-22 to build on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program to assist people with mental illness to participate in the workforce, including to pilot the IPS program in Adult Mental Health Centres and to trial Youth Vocational Peer Support Workers in two IPS headspace sites” (Budget Paper 2, p117).

Climate change and natural disasters

“\$4.0 million in 2021-22 to continue to provide up to ten free trauma and distress counselling sessions for those impacted by the bushfires” (Budget Paper 2, p119).

