



# SARRAH

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health

## 2022-23 FEDERAL BUDGET: SUMMARY FOR MEMBERS

Dear SARRAH Members and friends,

You will be aware of much of the high level priorities and detail included in the Commonwealth Government's proposed 2022-23 Budget delivered on Tuesday night (29 March) and the Opposition response delivered on Thursday night (31 March)

This document provides a summary of announcements made in the Budget that are likely to be of most relevance to SARRAH members and our organisation's objectives. We use the original source material (copied where necessary) and links to importance sources.

The focus of the document is information dissemination. We have not undertaken a detailed analysis at this point, although note the following:

**The Budget as announced will not be passed or debated significantly in Parliament before the 2022 Federal election.** The Election is expected to be called within the next week and to be held on either 14 or 21 May.

- Therefore, the proposed forms the basis of the current (Coalition) Government's re-election campaign.
- The Opposition Budget reply set the tone for their campaign – with aged care clearly central.

Throughout the period ahead of the Election SARRAH will be aiming to influence the debate and increase support for SARRAH objectives on rural and remote allied health among all political aspirants.

**We would welcome your insights, suggestions and views on these things.** Please send to [allan@sarah.org.au](mailto:allan@sarah.org.au).

**As an overarching assessment of the Budget and what's known of the Opposition's position to date, there is very little substantial focus on allied health service access and capacity in the health, disability services or aged care space.** There are other initiatives that will improve service access generally and these deserve support. However, large amounts of funding are being directed to areas of health (for example a further \$706M over 4 years for the Specialist (Medical) Training Program – which favours rural training). As many stakeholders note, there is very little to progress the shift toward primary and preventive health care, genuine multidisciplinary care or to support service access and sustainability where access gaps, such as rural and remote allied health, are already severe.

[Key elements and links follow.](#)

**Department Health Budget papers:** <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/budget-2022-23>

From the above:

- **Ministerial statement** - <https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/record-investment-in-the-future-of-australias-health-system>
- **Budget at a Glance** - a **useful one page summary** of initiatives- <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022/03/budget-2022-23-budget-at-a-glance.pdf>
- **Aged care workforce related statements**- <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/budget-2022-23-residential-aged-care-quality-and-safety-assuring-access-to-multidisciplinary-care-and-maintaining-effective-quality-audits>

and

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/budget-2022-23-workforce-growing-and-upskilling-the-workforce-to-improve-care-for-senior-australians>

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**Email from the Commonwealth Chief Allied Health Officer - Dr Anne marie Boxall. (Highlights added)**

*Good evening,*

*The 2022-23 Federal Budget represents significant investment in the Health portfolio, including a number of measures benefiting the allied health sector. Those that have the most direct impact across primary care, aged care, rural health, mental health, indigenous health and disability are outlined below.*

*We are looking forward to working with you on these policies and welcome your valuable input as these measures are implemented.*

**Primary Care**

*Primary health services for flood-impacted Australians*

*The Government is providing \$4.7 million to ensure continuity of primary health care services for flood-impacted Australians, particularly in worst hit communities. This includes:*

- *\$2.5 million for primary health care emergency response teams to ensure urgent access to health services in flood-impacted regions.*
- *\$1.5 million to establish a shared temporary business premises in Lismore for displaced local primary health care providers to ensure delivery of health services for Lismore.*
- *\$700,000 to create a temporary surge workforce able to meet the current emergency need in Lismore and a longer-term capacity to meet demand if practices are inoperable or GPs need respite for the medium term.*

*Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan*

*The Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan has been released on 29 March as part of the 2022-23 Budget, through the work of the Primary Care Reform Steering Group and following extensive consultations across the sector, between November 2021 and November 2021.*

*Future focused primary health care: Australia's Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan 2022-2032 (the plan) is about strengthening primary health care as part of the health system and providing an agenda for primary health care reform over a decade.*

*The plan is about Australia's primary health care services provided through general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), community pharmacies, allied health services, mental health services, community health and community nursing services and dental and oral health services. The attached document provides extracts of allied health related initiatives proposed under the plan.*

*The well-regarded Quadruple Aim provides the overarching aims of this plan, to:*

- *Improve people's experience of care*
- *Improve the health of populations*
- *Improve the cost-efficiency of the health system*
- *Improve the work life of health care providers.*

*The plan covers three reform streams, each grouping actions by short term (1-3 years), medium term (4-6 years) and future state (7-10 years):*

- *Stream 1 – Future focused health care*
- *Stream 2 – Person-centred primary health care, supported by funding reform*
- *Stream 3 – Integrated care, locally delivered.*

*In parallel, and as part of the plan, the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability was also developed and released in August 2021.*

*Allied health initiatives announced in this Budget under the plan include:*

*Free Interpreting Services for allied health*

- *\$1.95 million over 4 years from 2022-23 to allow allied health professionals to access the Australian Government's Free Interpreting Services (FIS) to support the provision of services to targeted populations with low English proficiency.*

*Auslan services in primary health*

- *\$0.633 million over 1 year from 2022-23 to fund a scoping study to identify the supply and demand for Auslan and spoken language services for those who are deaf.*

*Allied health digital readiness*

- *\$0.479 million over 1 year from 2022-23 to work with the allied health sector to identify and understand the technical, legislative and cultural barriers to greater adoption of digital health tools, such as My Health Record and Secure Messaging.*

**Mental Health**

*Mental Health Workforce*

*In anticipation of the release of the 10-year National Mental Health Workforce Strategy, the Government is investing \$60.7 million to deliver a sustainable, skilled, supported and equitably distributed mental health workforce to meet Australia's current and future needs. This includes:*

- *Funding under the National Mental Health Pathways to Practice Program for:*
  - *660 supervised nursing and allied health student and graduate mental health placements across rural, remote and metropolitan areas;*
  - *75 internships for provisional psychologists in a range of settings; and*
  - *150 free Psychology Board of Australia endorsed supervisor training sessions.*
- *Stigma reduction and career promotion activities to encourage students to choose a career in mental health.*
- *Funding to build the capacity of the mental health workforce to respond to co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions.*
- *Funding to further support the mental health of the health workforce, through the Hand-n-Hand program to provide peer support to the healthcare sector, and the extension of the Black Dog Institute's The Essential Network (TEN).*

#### *Mental Health services through the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS)*

*In the 2022-23 Budget, the Government announced \$15.1 million to improve access to multidisciplinary, coordinated mental health care through the MBS.*

- *From July 2023, patients being treated under the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the MBS (Better Access) initiative or with an eating disorder treatment and management plan will have access to new time-tiered MBS items enabling eligible allied health professionals to participate in up to four mental health case conferences per calendar year to organise, coordinate and review their care.*
- *The new items will not impact existing MBS items introduced in November 2021 to facilitate participation by allied health professionals in case conferences for patients with chronic or terminal conditions – rather, they will ensure equitable access to multidisciplinary care for patients with mental health conditions to those with chronic or terminal health condition and help improve outcomes.*
- *Resources for allied health professionals to support uptake of the new MBS items will be made available closer to their commencement date, including on MBS Online.*

#### *Mental Health support for East Coast Floods*

*The Government is providing \$31.2 million over two years for additional mental health support:*

- *\$16.6 million for local mental health services to meet immediate psychological needs of communities, including:*
  - *\$13.5 million to boost availability of psychological therapies delivered by local service providers.*
  - *\$2.4 million for local Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations to deliver culturally appropriate, locally designed mental health services in impacted communities.*
  - *\$200,000 to assist the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma provide psychological support for current clients impacted by the floods.*
  - *\$500,000 to ensure the Australian Psychological Society can continue to deploy its Disaster Response Network of over 500 trauma-trained psychologists.*
- *\$9 million to support the mental health of children and young people, including:*
  - *\$4.5 million to fund headspace services currently impacted by the floods, including funding to rebuild or relocate headspace Lismore and provide outreach services to Ballina and surrounding regions.*

- \$4.5 million to provide dedicated services to impacted children and young people, with a focus on working through school communities, provided by Royal Far West.
- \$1.2 million to accelerate the establishment of a Head to Health centre in Lismore, with a particular focus on trauma recovery and PTSD treatment.
- \$3 million towards Wellbeing and Resilience Grants that allow communities the opportunity to choose their response to the loss, anxiety and distress they have experienced, as well as actively participate in their recovery

### **Aged Care**

Following on from the previous budget, the Government has announced further measures for the aged care sector in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality.

#### Multidisciplinary Outreach Services in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs)

- \$21.2 million to trial expanded or new Multidisciplinary Outreach Services in RACFs. These trials will provide more comprehensive health care to those living in residential aged care with hospital-led access to specialists, allied health professionals, pharmacists, geriatricians and palliative care specialists. The trials will be funded through cost share arrangements between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments.

#### Residential aged care services and sustainability – improved funding for residential aged care

- The Government is proceeding with the implementation of the Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) funding model from 1 October 2022, including additional funding of \$3.9 billion announced in the 2020-21 Budget.
- The AN-ACC is a key reform that aligns residential aged care funding to the care needs of the individual resident. New quarterly reporting of staff care time and expenditure at the individual facility level from July 2022, including allied health, will give visibility over the use of allied health services during the transition to AN-ACC and into the future, and inform future policy decisions.
- Existing ACFI funding, which includes allied health care, will be rolled into the AN-ACC funding allocation from 1 October 2022, with providers still funded for and required to provide allied health services to residents in accordance with their obligations under the Aged Care Act 1997 and the associated Quality Standards.
- Unlike the ACFI, there is no requirement under the AN-ACC funding model for a resident to be reassessed and potentially reassigned to a lower payment class if the capability of a resident improves. This encourages providers to invest in restorative care and reablement services, including through the use of allied health services.
- Increased funding announced in the Budget under the two-year AN-ACC Transition Fund will support a smooth transition between the models, and ensure that no residential aged care facility will receive less funding under the AN-ACC than they would have received under ACFI.

### **Indigenous Health**

- \$13.9 million to Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme places in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people graduating with health, mental health or care focused qualifications through targeted support and mentoring for students during their studies and transition into the workforce.

## **Rural Health**

- *The Government is investing \$36.2 million over four years to establish two new University Departments of Rural Health (UDRHs) in the South West and Goldfields regions of Western Australia, as part of ongoing support for allied health and nursing training in the bush through the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training program.*
- *The Government is also investing \$14.3 million over four years for additional UDRH activities linked with Aged Care facilities, presenting opportunities for these regions to have better access to services for senior Australians and better training opportunities for health students, which research shows will be more likely to choose to continue their health careers in rural Australia, to better support Australia's aging population.*
- *The Government has invested an additional \$33.3 million over 4 years for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), in addition to their current funding of \$84 million per year, to establish a new 10 Year Strategic Agreement and address cost pressures.*
  - *The RFDS is funded to deliver emergency primary aeromedical evacuations, GP and community nurse primary health clinics, medical chests, remote (telephone) consultations, and dental and mental health outreach services in areas beyond the normal medical infrastructure and in locations of market failure.*

*We are looking forward to working with you to implement these measures. More information will be published on the Department of Health website in due course.*

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Dr Boxall also provided the **attached excerpt from the Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan** that we were advised was also released on Budget night.



PHC 10 Year Plan  
2022-2032 - Extracts

## **NDIS/disability services**

There are fewer detailed resources available from the Budget announcement with regard to the NDIS. We will seek more detailed information and provide it over coming days. Here is [Minister Reynolds' Budget Media Release](#) which includes the following:

### ***Care and Support Workforce Strategy***

*As part of the Morrison Government's commitment to increasing the quality, skills, size and attractiveness of the care and support workforce, \$249.1 million will be invested to enable, grow and sustain this critical workforce.*

*This initiative builds on existing sector-specific reforms, including the NDIS National Workforce Plan 2021-2025, and provides a framework for future initiatives to support sustainable growth, and innovative and efficient service provision, across aged care, disability, veterans and broader mental health services.*

## Other Stakeholder Reactions:

[The Australian Health and Hospital Association](#) suggested Australians were looking for an investment in their health

The [Consumer Health Forum](#) were subdued.

The [Public Health Association of Australia](#) gave the Budget an F.

The National Rural Health Alliance have put shifted their focus to push for commitments in the election campaign. Allied Health Professions Australia appear to have done the same.

The RACGP – noted lack of funding for the [Primary Health Care Plan](#) and welcomed the [aged care focus](#)

[NACCHO](#) noted another big spending Budget short-changed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The [Australian Dental Association](#) noted another Budget missed oral health

AHPA Budget response

The RFDS were understandably excited about securing a \$1B 10-year funding deal.

Universities who've benefited from rural health education spending were pleased.

Palliative Care peaks were generally underwhelmed.

*There are many hundreds more.*