



Budget 2024–25

Strengthening Medicare and the care economy

Building a better health system that improves outcomes

High-quality health services through Medicare

Boosting access to essential health services

Building a better healthcare system

The Government is investing \$2.8 billion to continue its commitment to strengthen Medicare. This includes the \$1.2 billion package to address pressures facing the health system, which provides:

- \$882.2 million to support older Australians avoid hospital admission, be discharged from hospital earlier and improve their transition out of hospital to other appropriate care.
- \$227 million to deliver a further 29 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics and boost support for regional and remote clinics. This will increase the total number of clinics across Australia to 87. Since commencing last year, existing clinics have already provided almost 400,000 bulk-billed visits.
- \$90 million to address health workforce shortages by making it simpler and quicker for international health practitioners to work

in Australia.

Rohan's daughter Zoya has been off school with a runny nose and a cough. By 6pm, she is lethargic and has a fever.

Rohan is concerned because his regular GP is now closed. Instead of waiting for hours at the emergency department, he takes Zoya to a Medicare Urgent Care Clinic, without having to make an appointment.

During the bulk billed visit, Zoya is diagnosed with an infection by the doctor and prescribed appropriate medication. Rohan and Zoya leave within an hour of arrival. Zoya makes a full recovery.

Improving health outcomes

Almost half of Australians live with a chronic condition. This Budget will provide \$141.1 million for research and services for people living with chronic conditions, including bowel and skin cancer, diabetes and dementia.

To improve health outcomes, the Government is providing:

- Support for Australians to enjoy healthier, more active lives by investing \$132.7 million in sport participation and performance programs.
- \$825.7 million to ensure Australians can continue to access testing for and vaccinations against COVID-19. The Government is also ensuring continued access to oral antiviral medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
- \$41.6 million over two years to continue funding for alcohol and other drug treatment and support services, including the Good Sports alcohol management program for community sporting clubs.

The Government is allocating an additional \$411.6 million (for a total \$1.6 billion over 13 years) through the Medical Research Future Fund

to continue existing research and introduce two new research missions for low-survival cancers and reducing health inequities.

Improving access to medicines

The Government is investing \$3.4 billion for new and amended listings to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which means eligible patients can save on treatment costs.

By expanding the Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program, eligible First Nations patients will have free or cheaper access to all Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines.

Australians will benefit from \$141.1 million to support and expand the National Immunisation Program.

Mental health support

The Government's \$888.1 million mental health package over eight years will help people get the care they need, while relieving pressure on the Better Access initiative and making it easier to access services.

A free, low-intensity digital service will be established to address the gap for people with mild mental health concerns. From 1 January 2026, Australians will be able to access the service without a referral and receive timely, high-quality mental health support. Once fully established, 150,000 people are expected to make use of this service each year.

The Government is improving access to free mental health services through a network of walk-in Medicare Mental Health Centres, built on the established Head to Health network. The upgraded national network of 61 Medicare Mental Health Centres will open by 30 June 2026. They will provide clinical services for adults with moderate-to-severe mental health needs.

For Australians with complex mental health needs, funding will be provided for Primary Health Networks to partner with GPs to deliver multidisciplinary, wraparound support services and care coordination.

Improving the aged care system

Providing quality care

The Budget provides \$2.2 billion to deliver aged care reforms and continue implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The new Aged Care Act will put the rights and needs of older people at the centre of the aged care system. The new Act will provide the framework for fundamental change within the aged care sector.

More Home Care Packages

The Government is investing \$531.4 million to release an additional 24,100 Home Care Packages in 2024–25. This will help reduce average wait times and enable people to age at home if they prefer to do so.

Improving aged care regulation

Funding of \$110.9 million over four years will support an increase in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's regulatory capabilities.

The Government is investing \$1.2 billion in critical digital systems to support the introduction of the new Aged Care Act and contemporary IT systems.

The My Aged Care Contact Centre will receive \$37 million to reduce call-waiting times for people seeking information and access to aged care.

Higher wages for aged care workers

The Government has committed to fund the Fair Work Commission decision to increase the award wage for direct and indirect aged care workers once the final determination is made. This will build on the \$11.3 billion already allocated to support the interim 15 per cent wage increase for aged care workers.

The Government is providing \$87.2 million for workforce initiatives to attract nurses and other workers into aged care.

Reforming the disability sector

Better and more sustainable services

Getting the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) back on track

A further \$468.7 million is being provided to support people with disability and get the NDIS back on track. This includes:

- \$214 million over two years to fight fraud and to co-design NDIS reforms with people with disability, announced earlier this year
- \$160.7 million to upgrade the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's information technology
- \$45.5 million to establish a NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee
- \$20 million to start consultation and design on reforms to help NDIS participants and people with disability navigate services.

This builds on \$732.9 million provided in the 2023–24 Budget.

In December 2023, National Cabinet agreed to work together to improve the experience of participants and restore the original intent of the Scheme to support people with permanent and significant disability, within a broader ecosystem of supports. This builds on an earlier decision by National Cabinet to ensure Scheme sustainability and achieve an 8 per cent growth target by 1 July 2026, with further moderation as the NDIS matures.

Improving employment for people with disability

A \$227.6 million investment will support a new specialised disability employment program to replace the existing Disability Employment Services program by 1 July 2025. This includes a modern digital platform for providers and participants. These reforms will support more people with disability into sustainable work, through a program with greater flexibility, increased individual supports, and better service quality. Eligibility will be expanded to include volunteers outside the income support system and those with less than eight hours per week work capacity.

Delivering essential services

Investing in reliability and security

Strengthening resourcing for Services Australia

The Government is delivering safer and more efficient government services for all Australians.

A \$1.8 billion provision will support delivery of customer and payment services. This includes funding for frontline and service delivery staff to manage claims, respond to natural disasters and improve the cyber security environment. The Government is providing \$314.1 million over two years to strengthen safety and security at Services Australia centres.

The Government is investing \$580.3 million over four years and \$139.6 million per year ongoing to sustain the myGov platform and identify potential enhancements. A further \$50 million will improve usability, safety and security of the myGov platform and ensure Services Australia can support people to protect their information and privacy.

Strengthening the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) against fraud

There will be \$187.4 million to better protect taxpayer data and Commonwealth revenue against fraudulent attacks on the tax and superannuation systems. Funding will upgrade the ATO's information and communications technologies and increase fraud prevention capabilities to manage increasing risk, prevent revenue loss, and support victims of fraud and cyber crime.

Looking after our veterans

Veterans' claims processing is prioritised with an additional \$186 million for staffing resources and \$8.4 million to improve case management and protect against cyber risk. The Government will provide \$222 million to harmonise veterans' compensation and rehabilitation legislation.

A further \$48.4 million will be available for Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing programs and \$10.2 million to provide access to funded medical treatment for ill and injured veterans while their claims for liability are processed.