

# Summary: Australian Budget 2024-25

## Report Information

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## Background

### Key documents referenced

- [Budget Paper 2: Budget Measures](#) (pages referenced are for this document unless noted otherwise)
- Budget [Overview](#):
- [Health & Aged Care Portfolio Budget Statements](#)

## Key findings

### Department of Health and Aged Care

#### *Aboriginal-specific*

DoHAC has a Performance Measure to increase the percentage of annual Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP) funding directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations. The expected % for 2023-24 was 72%, with no result reported, and the aim is to increase this by two percentage points every year until 2017-28. (Pg.60, Health Portfolio Budget Statement)

Budget Paper 1 describes that "expenditure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is expected to increase from 2023-24 to 2024-25...expenses are expected to marginally decrease over the period 2024-25 to 2027-28, reflecting several terminating measures. Funding for terminating measures will be considered in future economic updates". (Pg.208)

This lack of planning shows a lack of commitment to closing the gap.

There is additional funding of \$94.8 million for the prevention, testing and treatment of bloodborne viruses and sexually transmissible infections, including:

- \$32.2 million over two years to promote vaccination uptake

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Weblink to full report	<a href="https://budget.gov.au/">https://budget.gov.au/</a>		

## Summary: Australian Budget 2024-25

- \$28.6 million over two years to expand syphilis and sexually transmissible infections
- A part of \$17.5 million over two years to implement culturally safe sexual health services for First Nations peoples
- \$16.5 million over two years to expand communicable disease point of care testing for rural and remote communities (Pg.118)

Funding of \$11.1 million over five years (from FY23-24), and then \$2.8 million/year thereafter, has been committed to expand coverage of the Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program to all PBS medicines.

According to NACCHO, this means that all First Nations people living with, or at risk of, chronic disease will have access to affordable PBS medicines. (Pg.124).

One-off funding of \$10 million in FY2024-2025 maintains funding to deliver culturally appropriate mental health supports for First Nations peoples. (Pg. 117) It appears this will go to NACCHO to disbursement (page 20, DoHAC Portfolio Budget Statements).

\$12.8m over four years to extend Indigenous Youth Connection to Culture program (Pg. 117).

Funding of \$5.8 million over two years has been committed to prevent preterm and early-term birth and reduce the number of babies born too early in First Nations communities (Pg.132).

One-off funding of \$4.6 million in FY2024-2025 to extend Custody Notification Services which provide culturally appropriate health and wellbeing checks when an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is taken into police custody. Not all States will receive a portion of this funding, however Victoria is listed as a recipient. (Pg.158)

Funding of \$12.5 million has been committed towards providing free menstrual hygiene products to rural and remote First Nations communities. This measure will be spread over four years and is intending to relieve cost of living pressures for vulnerable populations. (Pg. 132, Budget Paper 2) This measure will be delivered by NACCHO. (Pg.5, First Nations Budget Fact Sheet 2024-2025)

\$3.5million over four years (and then 0.4 million/annum thereafter) has been directed towards expanding Midwife Professional Indemnity Scheme for low-risk and out-of-hospital settings, including entities providing [Birthing on Country](#) models of care. (Pg.133) VACCHO notes this could have an impact on the success of the Birthing on Country models of care currently being trialled in Galiwin'ku, NT; Waminda, NSW and at the Mater Mothers' Hospital in Brisbane, QLD.

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024-25

There's an additional \$4.7 million over five years (from FY23-24) for the Northern Territory Medical Program to increase the number of First Nations medical practitioners and \$4.0 million over four years (from FY24-25) to support the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association to continue its work supporting First Nations doctors to become medical specialists. (Pg.111)

*Aged Care – major announcements* (Page 112-113. Budget Paper 2)

The new Aged Care Act has been deferred, again, to 1 July 2025 with \$2.2b to be provided over 5 years from 2023-24 to deliver key aged care reforms, which includes:

- \$1.2b to improve aged care digital systems
- \$531.4m in 2024-25 to release 24,100 additional home care packages
- \$174.5m over 2 years to implement Support at Home program
- \$110.9m over 4 years for Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- \$65.6m over four years to attract and retain aged care workers
- \$37m for My Aged Care Contact Centre
- \$30.4m over three years to continue to deliver the Specialist Dementia Care Program
- \$21.6m over three years to extend the Home Care Workforce Support Program in thin markets (which would include serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
- \$7.8m over two years to extend funding to providers in thin markets to accommodate the new Australian National Aged Care Classification funding model.

*Medicare – major announcements*

A funding package of \$1.2 billion over five years (from FY23-24) and then \$14.8 million/annum thereafter, to support early discharge from hospital for older Australians, improve access to services and modernise digital health infrastructure (pg. 126). All the components below are part of this \$1.2bn funding.

Funding of \$227 million to strengthen existing, and create an additional 29 new, Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, bringing the total number of Urgent Care Clinics nationally to 87. (pg. 128 and Pg. 44, Budget Overview). It is unclear how many of these new Urgent Care Clinics will be in Victoria. In FY23-24, the [Commonwealth committed to establishing 10 Urgent Care Clinics in Victoria](#).

Earlier discharge for older people:

- Initiatives to address long stay older patient challenges (\$610.4 million over 4 years)

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024-25

- Extension and redesign of the *Transition Care Programme* (\$190 million over three years from FY25-26)
- Expansion of the *Acute to Residential Care Transition Service* dementia program (\$56.8 million over five years from FY23-24)
- Continuation of the *Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care Program* (\$24.9 million over two years) (Pg.126)

### Improving access to services:

- The Royal Flying Doctor Service will receive \$73.8 million to deliver essential services to people living in remote communities. (Pg.127)
- Healthdirect Australia to receive \$47.5 million over four years (and \$14.1 million/year thereafter) to provide national and state-based virtual health services. (Pg.127)

### Financial sustainability of general practices and improve digital health:

- One-off funding of \$57.4 million in 2024-2025 to continue initiatives under the Health Delivery Modernisation Program and to update My Health Record. (Pg.127)
- The Practice Incentive Program Quality Improvement incentive payments will be extended with a commitment of \$57.4 million over two years. (Pg.127)
- \$16 million over four years (and \$0.2 million/year thereafter) to implement system changes to MyMedicare to support general practitioners and general practices to support wrap around primary care for frequent hospital users. (Pg.127)
- An efficiency of \$33.6 million will be realised over three years (from FY25-26) by reducing the timeframe during which Medicare bulk billed services can be lodged from two years to 12 months after the date of service. (Pg.127)

### Mental Health – major announcements (Page 116-117, Budget Paper 2)

\$888.1m over 8 years to response to *the Better Access* evaluation including:

- \$588.5 over eight years (and \$113.4m per year ongoing) to establish low intensity digital mental health service that is free of charge and does not need a referral
- \$71.7m over four years (and \$24.4m per year ongoing) to provide wraparound care for severe and complex needs in primary care settings
- \$35.9m over four years to extend lapsing mental health measures
- \$29.9m over four years for Head to Health services and expand access to free community based mental health services to adults
- \$29.7m over three years to improve child and youth mental health services
- \$7.1m over four years for lived experience peer mental health workforce.

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024-25

Aboriginal-specific funding for mental health is noted in the section on Aboriginal-specific funding.

The National Mental Health Commission and National Suicide Prevention Office will transfer into DoHAC before 1 October 2024 after which there will be deliberation about the structure of it going forward.

### *Other major announcements*

\$22.1 million has been committed for two years (from FY24-25) to support preventative health and chronic disease research including for Australians, in line with the *National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030* (Pg.121).

Funding of \$41.6 million over two years (from FY24-25) to support alcohol and other drugs treatment services in areas of identified need and FASD diagnostic and support services in remote and rural regions as well as other initiatives (Pg.121).

### Department of Education

#### *Aboriginal-specific*

\$110.0 million over four years from 2024-25 (and \$11.0 million per year ongoing) (partially met through savings and already existing funding): Funding includes:

- \$32.8 million over two years from 2024-25 for the Clontarf Foundation (WA) to extend its existing program for the 2025 school year to support school engagement for at-risk First Nations young men (Pg.87).
- \$29.1 million over four years from 2024-25 (and \$8.7 million per year ongoing) to support national First Nations peak organisations National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children to partner with Government on matters affecting First Nations children (Pg.87).
- \$27.5 million over three years from 2024-25 to extend the existing programs, Australian Indigenous Education Foundation Scholarship Program, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership’s Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative and English Language Learning for Indigenous Children which aim to improve educational outcomes of First Nations students (Pg. 87).
- \$18.2 million over four years from 2024-25 (and \$2.2 million per year ongoing) to develop a new First Nations education policy and engage with First Nations stakeholders (Pg.87).
- \$2.4 million over three years from 2024-25 to finalise and implement the First Nations Teacher Strategy to improve the attraction and retention of First Nations teachers (Pg. 87).

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024–25

A needs-based funding system is intended to be implemented from 1 January 2026 to better support First Nations students, students from low socio-economic status backgrounds, students with disability and students studying in regional and remote Australia, as part of the University Accord Package (Pg.87).

### *Other major announcements*

- \$239.7 million over five years from 2023–24 (and an additional \$250.5 million from 2028–29 to 2034–35) to limit the indexation of the Higher Education Loan Program (and other student loans) debt to the lower of either the Consumer Price Index or the Wage Price Index, effective from 1 June 2023, subject to the passage of legislation, will save the average person around \$1200 (pg.63).
- \$427.4 million over four years from 2024–25 (and an additional \$1.2 billion from 2028–29 to 2034–35) to establish a new Commonwealth Prac Payment of \$319.5 per week (benchmarked to the single Austudy rate) from 1 July 2025 for tertiary students undertaking supervised mandatory placements as part of their nursing (including midwifery), teaching or social work studies (Pg.62).
- \$4.0 million over two years from 2024–25 to support Together for Humanity to deliver initiatives aimed at strengthening intercultural and interfaith understanding and building culturally safe school (pg.89).
- \$88.8 million to deliver 20,000 new fee-free TAFE places including pre-apprenticeships in courses relevant to the construction sector (Pg.37 Budget Overview).

### Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

#### *Aboriginal-specific*

\$76.2m over five years (and \$18.7, ongoing) to implement voluntary prison to employment transition program for First Nations people aged 15 and over pre- and post-release. This will include supporting First Nations organisations deliver assistance, provide funding to support the National Indigenous Employment and Training Alliance and establish a grant process to support small-scale prison-to-work projects (pg. 93)

\$3.7m to extend Broome Employment Services (pg. 92). \$30.2m over five years to co-design and establish Remote Training Hubs in Central Australian communities. (p.g. 16, Portfolio Budget Statement)

#### *Other major announcements*

\$6.4m over 5 years to improve mutual obligation systems for 'certain recipients of income support payments'. (p.g. 15, Portfolio Budget Statement)

\$26.1m over four years to improve VET system. Includes:

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024–25

- \$10.6m over four years for the implementation of a reporting solution for the Australian Skills Guarantee,
- \$9.5m in additional funding for Jobs and Skills Australia,
- \$6.1m in additional funding for the National Careers Institute,
- \$2.9m in reprofiled funding on the 5-year National Skills Agreement. (p.g. 94, Budget Paper 2)

\$4.4m to promote TAFE and VET pathways (p.g. 95, Budget Paper 2)

### Department of Social Services

#### *Disability - major announcements*

There were no Aboriginal-specific announcements.

The Government will provide \$253.6 million over five years from 2023–24 (and \$19.0 million per year ongoing) to reform employment services and supports for people with disability., including (pg. 168):

- \$227.6m over 5 years (and \$11.4m ongoing) into a new specialised disability employment program
- \$23.3m over four years (and \$7.6m per year ongoing) to establish a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence
- \$2.6m over three years to extend National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service.

The Government will provide \$468.7 million over five years from 2023–24 (and \$37.9 million per year ongoing) to support people with disability and the NDIS, including:

- \$160.7m over four years (and \$24.6m per year ongoing) to upgrade NDIS quality and safeguard Commission's IT systems.
- \$129.8m over two years for design and consultation work to respond to the findings of the Independent NDIS Review.
- \$83.9m over two years to boost fraud detecting technology and \$23.5 million over two years from 2024–25 to continue fraud investigation and response activities
- \$45.5m to establish NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee. \$20m to start consultation and design on reforms
- \$20.0 million over two years from 2024–25 for initial design and consultation work on reforms to help participants and people with disability navigate services
- \$5.3 million in 2024–25 for the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority to work with the Department of Social Services and the NDIA to undertake initial work to reform NDIS pricing arrangements

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024–25

### *Housing - Aboriginal-specific*

- NT Homelands and Housing: \$839.4 million over five years from 2023–24 (and \$2.1 billion over ten years from 2024–25) to accelerate housing delivery in remote NT communities and increase investment in homelands. This will reduce overcrowding and improve housing quality. Funding is already partially met and includes:
  - \$698.4 million over four years from 2024–25 (and \$2.0 billion over ten years from 2024–25) to enter into a 10-year remote housing agreement with the Northern Territory Government to reduce overcrowding in remote Northern Territory communities. The Northern Territory Government has committed to match the Commonwealth’s remote housing investment, bringing the total investment to \$4.0 billion (Pg.161).
- \$120 million over three years from 2024–25 to continue the delivery of urgent repairs and maintenance of existing housing and essential infrastructure through an extension of the Northern Territory Homelands Federation Funding Agreement (Pg.161).
- \$20 million in 2023–24 to deliver an additional 49 houses under the existing Remote Housing Northern Territory Federation Funding Agreement, in partnership with and jointly funded by the Northern Territory Government, delivering a total of 206 houses under the one-year agreement (Pg. 161).
- \$1.0 million over two years from 2024–25 to develop a sustainable Community-Controlled Housing Model to improve housing delivery and management in remote Northern Territory communities (Pg.161).
- \$2 million over three years from 2024–25 to build the financial capability of community housing providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing (Pg.75).

### *Other major announcements*

- \$1.9 billion over five years to increase maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by a further 10 per cent (Pg.167).

Subject to states and territories signing the new National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (Pg.74):

- \$423.1 million over five years from 2024–25 in additional funding to support the provision of social housing and homelessness services by states and territories under a new National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness. The additional funding will increase annual funding under the new agreement to \$1.8

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## Summary: Australian Budget 2024-25

billion per year from 2024-25, with over \$9.28 billion provided to states and territories over the life of the agreement

- \$1.0 billion in 2023-24 for states and territories to support enabling infrastructure for new housing through a new Housing Support Program – Priority Works Stream

### Other Major Aboriginal-specific Announcements

The Government will redirect \$20.0 million over two years from 2023-24 towards other priorities within the Indigenous Australians portfolio by not proceeding with Local and Regional Voice arrangements (pg. 159)

\$53.8 million over four years from 2024-25 (and \$17.8 million per year ongoing) to establish two new First Nations language centres, increase funding for existing language centres and for community language learning (pg. 151)

\$17.7 million over three years from 2024-25 to support administration of complex cultural heritage applications under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 and progress the reform of Australia’s cultural heritage laws (pg. 72)

\$10.3 million over four years from 2024-25 (and \$2.7 million per year ongoing) (funding already partially met) to AIATSIS to extend the Return of Cultural Heritage program to continue the facilitation of the return of First Nations cultural heritage material held in overseas collections to traditional owners and custodians (pg. 158)

The Government will provide \$777.4 million over five years from 2023-24 (and \$255.5 million per year ongoing) to establish the Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program. The cost of this measure will be partially met from a reprioritisation of funding from the 2023-24 Budget measure titled Closing the Gap – further investment and within the existing resources of the National Indigenous Australians Agency through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. (Pg. 162)

The Government will provide \$68.0 million over four years from 2023-24 to support First Nations digital inclusion (redirected funding) (pg. 148).

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