

Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association

**APNA Budget Highlights
Federal Budget 2021-2022**





APNA supports the increased investment in health in the 2021-2022 Commonwealth Budget. This is a step in the right direction to address some of the issues that restrict Australians from receiving timely, best practice care. APNA will be seeking additional detail on many of the budget measures, including how they will be administered to ensure greatest patient benefit.

The Government needs to be mindful that:

- **The increased aged care funding is significant and welcome.** However, it is only the starting point to addressing decades of under investment and systematic neglect in the aged care system. Enabling older Australians to remain at home for longer and enhancing quality and safety in aged care settings is paramount. The key areas of investment for nurses focus on retention in the sector and programs that contribute to a skilled workforce. It will be important to ensure these initiatives result in improved health outcomes and enhanced provider experience.
- **The commitment to the Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan** and its Voluntary Patient Registration Initiative is pleasing, however it is disappointing to note that telehealth access for nursing services has not yet been committed to beyond 2021 and we are yet to see a clear strategy to ensure better utilisation of the nursing workforce. **The ongoing commitment to Mental Health** must continue to grow in order to meet the increasing demand for these services and we welcome the commitment to training and recruiting more nurses in this area.
- **The COVID-19 Vaccine rollout and the containment of COVID-19** is essential and needs to be flexible based on the evolving nature of the rollout and the complexity of the pandemic.

Federal Budget Highlights	What is in it for primary health care nurses?	The APNA view
<i>Primary Care</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$50.7 million to continue to develop an ICT system that will enable a Voluntary Patient Registration Initiative, to be known as MyGP, as part of the Government's 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$204.6 million to extend telehealth access to general practitioners (GPs), specialists, nursing, midwifery, allied health, and mental health services until 31 December 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APNA welcomes the Government's commitment to Voluntary Patient Registration and looks forward to seeing the detail around this model. • There is currently no commitment to continue telehealth access for nursing



		services beyond 2021.
Aged Care		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$365.7 million to enhance primary care for older Australians, including improved access to General Practitioners and better coordination of health services • \$13.4 million to strengthen governance of aged care by creating a local network of Department of Health aged care staff. • \$135.9 million for implementing a new, transparent funding model for residential aged care • \$698.3 million to improve the governance across the aged care system – establishing new governance and advisory structures and drafting of a new <i>Aged Care Act</i> • \$6.5 billion for an additional 80,000 Home Care Packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.9 billion to increase the amount of front line care (care minutes) delivered to residents of aged care and respite services, mandated at 200 minutes per day, including 40 minutes with a registered nurse • \$135.6 million additional financial support for registered nurses working for the same aged care provider over a 12 month period. • \$27.2 million to expand the number of available places in the Aged Care Transition to Practice Program and Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APNA believes the investment in Aged Care is a welcome starting point towards reform. • Ensuring older Australians remain in their homes for longer is vital and APNA welcomes additional support for Home Care Packages. • It will be important to ensure that funding increases result in improved outcomes to residents and older Australians • It is unclear if funding increases will be passed on to aged care nurses in the sector • APNA welcomes the new Aged Care Act and the greater governance for the sector – however we need further detail to ensure that this significant investment results in better care and health outcomes for those in aged care.
COVID-19		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.5 billion to extend a range of health responses, to keep Australians protected alongside the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines – this includes continued telehealth funding. • \$1.9 billion for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out which includes funding to distribute and administer vaccines, record and monitor progress, community key public messages and support states and territories in the roll-out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary roles for nurse immunisers and nurses with experience in infection control and immunisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent APNA COVID Pulse-Check April 2021 survey highlights that primary health care nurses play a strong role in providing vaccine education and addressing hesitancy among patients. • APNA welcomes the investment in responding to the pandemic, however it is unclear how primary health care nurses will be enabled and supported to continue to deliver care to patients during the pandemic.
<p><i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$79 million for key initiatives under a renewed National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy • \$8.3 million to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the mental health workforce and offer training for culturally safe treatment • \$22.6 million to reform the Practice Incentives Program – Indigenous Health Incentive, encouraging 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APNA welcomes the investment to contribute to Closing the Gap, particularly culturally supportive aged care and ageing in place for first nations people. However the investment isn't a significant increase to reach the overall goal of parity in health outcomes. • Reforms to the Practice Incentives Program should include establishing a clear accountability framework.



<p>continuity of care and extending the program to children under 15 years and for GP mental health care plans</p>		
<p><i>Mental Health</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$248.6 million for mental health prevention and early intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$58.8 million to grow the mental health workforce by providing \$27.8 million to increase the number of nurses, psychologists, and allied health practitioners in mental health settings through scholarships and clinical placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APNA is asking the government for more detail on enhancing the recruitment and retention of nurses working in primary health care mental health settings. • APNA's 2020 Workforce Survey indicates that just over 30% of primary health care nurses would like to undertake mental health activities more often. • Nurse-led clinic models, such as the SKIP into LIFE clinic, which aim to improve the health and wellbeing of people with mental illness could be scaled up to facilitate greater access to mental health services.
<p><i>Digital Health</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$421.6 million for the next phase of My Health Record and support the Australian Digital Health Agency's work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APNA has partnered with the Australian Digital Health Agency on a project that builds digital health capability among nurses. There is a potential for increased digital health education and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APNA welcomes the investment in digital health for a connected healthcare system.



	support for the nursing workforce.	
<i>Research</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$228.1 million in new grants and funding programs to assist researchers around the country to tackle health problems, including COVID-19, burn injuries and silicosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APNA has supported a number of primary care research initiatives including the Bond University 'Activating Primary Care COPD patients with multi-morbidity study'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APNA would like to see a greater focus on research that centres around team based patient-centred models of care including nurse-led interventions in primary health care.

APNA is bold, vibrant and future-focused. We reflect the views of our membership and the broader profession by bringing together nurses from across Australia to represent, advocate, promote and celebrate the achievements of nurses in primary health care.

Our vision is a healthy Australia through best practice primary health care nursing. Our mission is to improve the health of Australians through the delivery of quality, evidence-based care by a bold, vibrant and well-supported primary health care nursing workforce.

Contact us

APNA welcomes further discussion about this response.

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