



Federal Budget Summary

The RACP's 2023-2024 [Pre-Budget Submission to the Australian Treasury](#) called on the Australian Government to prioritise measures to enhance the wellbeing of all Australians, reduce health inequities for priority population groups and address long standing and emergent social determinants of health that affect our nation's health.

The [Budget delivered by the Australian Treasurer on 9 May 2023](#) adopted many recommendations the RACP has been advocating for. This document provides a high-level overview of wins in key advocacy areas and briefly outlines priorities for the RACP's ongoing engagement with the Government.

- To **close the gap** in the health outcomes of First Nation communities, the Government will:
 - Commit \$17.1 million over four years to increase uptake of First Nations people's Health Checks and national rollout of Deadly Choices health promotion program.
 - Commit \$28.2 million in 2023 toward improving renal services for First Nations people.
 - Commit \$238.5 million over four years to build the capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to support cancer care.
 - Commit \$8.2 million in 2023 to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to grow capacity to ensure on Country services.

What the RACP asked for:



- *Continue to promote MBS Item 715 for preventive health checks in First Nations and regional, rural and remote communities.*
 - *Work with key stakeholders such as National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) and The Coalition of Peaks to align nation-wide health advocacy and promotion for First Nation communities.*
- To **improve access to and quality of primary care** for an ageing, increasingly chronically ill patient population and support underserved patient groups in accessing primary care, the Government will:
 - Commit \$3.5 billion over five years toward tripling bulk billing incentives from November 2023 for priority populations. This will assist 11.6 million people to access primary care in metropolitan, rural, regional, and remote communities, as well as support access for underserved groups with concession cards.
 - Commit \$98.2 million over the forward estimates to rebate longer consultations of 60 minutes or more for patients with chronic conditions, complex needs, and mental health issues.
 - Invest \$79.4 million over four years for PHNs to commission multidisciplinary care from allied health, nurses and midwives to support smaller primary care practices, to increase patient access and improve the management of chronic conditions.

- Commit \$46.8 million over four years to increase patient Medicare rebates for care provided by nurse practitioners.
- Commit to a 4 per cent rise in Medicare rebates through indexation to deliver one of the biggest cash injections into the healthcare system in 30 years.

What the RACP asked for:



- *Index Medicare rebates without freezes so that they are appropriately aligned with inflation and support equitable patient access.*
- *Ensure Medicare supports equity of access for low-income families, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas.*

- To **reduce pressure on our hospitals** and improve the responsiveness of care patients can access within the community, the Government will:
 - Commit \$358.5 million over five years to strengthen existing Urgent Care Clinics and establish eight more Urgent Care Clinics in 2023.

What the RACP asked for:



- *Provide long-term sustainable funding for Urgent Care Clinics and resource effective co-piloted multidisciplinary team-based care models*

- To **improve disease surveillance and control**, national capacity and coordination in response to pandemics and other national health hazards, the Government will:
 - Commit \$91.1 million in 2023 to establish an Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and replenish the National Medical Stockpile.
 - Commit \$26.9 million over 2 years to the National Incident Centre and to support its Transition to the Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC).

What the RACP asked for:



- *Provide sufficient funding to support CDC sustainability over the longer term, recognising a significant funding contribution will be required to support its operations, or support Centre operations.*

- To **prevent and manage** harms arising from vaping, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, the Government will:
 - Introduce stronger regulation and enforcement for all e-cigarettes, including new controls on importation, contents and packaging.
 - Commit \$68.3 million over four years for a new public health information campaign to discourage smoking and vaping and encourage people to quit.
 - Commit \$29.5 million over four years to expand specialised programs and health services to support people to quit smoking and vaping.
 - Commit \$263.8 million over four years for a new national lung cancer screening program to better prevent lung cancer through early diagnosis and treatment.
 - Commit \$141.2 million over four years to extend and widen the Tackling Indigenous Smoking program to include vaping.

- Increase tobacco tax by 5%, and tax all tobacco at the same rate.
- Commit \$5 million over two years to support Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention, diagnosis and support activities.
- Commit \$1.4 million over two years to promote FASD awareness among First Nations communities.
- Commit \$33.6 million over two years to bolster alcohol and other drug prevention and treatment programs.

What the RACP asked for:



- *Reduce the harms of conventional tobacco products and strengthen regulations for novel and emergent nicotine products, including e-cigarettes and vapes.*
- *Invest adequately in evidence-based interventions to prevent and treat harms arising from alcohol and other drugs. These interventions should have crucial roles in multidisciplinary team care, general and mental health care systems.*

- To **support** people with opioid dependence to access **opioid substitution therapies**, the Government will:

- Commit \$377.3 million over four years so that more affordable treatments can be accessed at the local pharmacy level. This is expected to benefit 50,000 Australians.

What the RACP asked for:



- *Commit funding to increase access and affordability of opioid pharmacotherapies for people with opioid dependency.*

- To **support our social care system** to provide timely, quality care to a growing number of older people, including culturally safe care for older First Nations people, the Government will:

- Invest \$11.3 billion to fund the Fair Work Commission's decision of a 15% award wage increase for many aged care workers. The wage increase will take effect from 30 June 2023.
- Commit \$59.5 million over five years to progress the National Worker Registration Scheme.
- Commit \$166.8 million in 2023-24 to fund an additional 9,500 home care packages for older people to continue to live independently in their own home.
- Commit \$77.3 million over four years to support First Nations Elders in aged care.
- Commit \$98.7 million over two years to support the viability of local aged care providers in rural, regional and remote areas.
- Commit \$1.6 million in 2023 to appoint an interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner.

What the RACP asked for:

- *Urgently implement the aged care workforce-focused recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal Commission. Workforce planning, qualifications, training and professional development should be prioritised per*

the report.



- *Increase the availability of Home Care Packages to eliminate delays in access which frequently lead to progressive impairment and loss of independence.*
- *Urgently fund and implement Recommendations 58 and 51 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety: Access to specialists and other health practitioners through Multidisciplinary Outreach Services and Support employment and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care workers.*

• **To address the rise of silicosis and silica related diseases**, the Government will:

- Commit \$10 million over four years (and \$1.9 million per year ongoing) to address the rise of silicosis in workers and develop a national strategy for the prevention of silicosis and silica-related diseases. This includes \$4.7 million over four years (and \$0.8 million per year ongoing) to establish a dedicated occupational lung diseases team to oversee implementation and investigate long-term reforms for an improved national framework for occupational lung diseases.

The RACP has strongly and widely advocated for:



- *A priority National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry and establishing a dedicated cross jurisdictional governance mechanism with clinical leadership to oversee implementation.*

We look forward to continuing to work with the Government as it implements its key funding commitments and to further promoting the contribution and views of the RACP, Trainees, Fellows and patient communities to inform the proposed reforms.

We will continue to strongly advocate for:

- The inclusion of specialists in the Government's My Medicare reforms, within Urgent Care and after-hours service initiatives, and in digital health transformation reforms.
- System reforms to support equity of access to specialists and connectivity for underserved patients via telemedicine, telehealth and video technology packages.
- Innovative and integrated models of care that include physicians, as well as other pathways for specialists to offer expertise in the management of chronic and complex diseases within the community.
- Additional measures to address specialist workforce shortages, including an increase in the number of Specialist Training Program places for rural and regional communities.
- Centring of obesity prevention and treatment to deliver better health outcomes for children, adults, and reduce the burden on the health system.
- Full funding and implementation of the National Climate, Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

For more information or to provide feedback, please contact policy@racp.edu.au