

2021–22 Federal Budget

Mental health initiatives for Rural and Remote Communities

Australians living in rural and remote regions face unique challenges due to their geographic location and often have poorer health outcomes than people living in metropolitan areas.

The reported prevalence of mental illness in rural and remote Australia appears **similar to that of major cities**. However, access to mental health services is substantially more limited than in major cities. Rates of self-harm and suicide increase with remoteness.

The expansion of the Head to Health network and satellite services and the investment in digital supports will increase the opportunity to provide interventions earlier in life and in illness for people living in rural and regional areas.

We encourage you to read the full mental health and suicide prevention budget available on our website to appreciate the following information in context.

Key budget initiatives for rural and remote communities:

- **\$12 million** to maintain support to the former National Suicide Prevention Trial sites to continue delivery of local suicide prevention initiatives across Australia. Commencing in 2016, the Trial funded Public Health Networks to develop and implement a local, systems-based approach to suicide prevention for at-risk populations in 12 regions (including rural and remote) across Australia with high rates of suicide.
- **\$6.3 million** to increase specialised early intervention mental health support and suicide prevention services available to fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in, drive-out (DIDO) workers.
- The government has indicated that much of the community based multidisciplinary centres in the point below will be expansion into rural and remote communities.

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Key Budget initiatives for everyone:

\$487.2 million to deliver critical community-based multidisciplinary, coordinated care for adults experiencing mental ill-health, including Head to Health adult mental health treatment centres to improve access to community-based mental health services.



This includes: the initial establishment of 8 new centres, 24 new satellite centres, and ongoing funding for 8 existing centres, as well as the establishment of a dedicated phone service to support intake, assessment and referral. The Government will also work in partnership with state and territory governments to continue to expand the network of community-based adult mental health services.

\$278.6 million headspace youth treatment centres to continue to safeguard the wellbeing of young Australians aged 12–25 by strengthening, enhancing, and expanding the headspace network including: expanding the national headspace network by establishing 10 new headspace centres and upgrading 5 satellite services, bringing the total number of headspace services across Australia to 164, and working jointly with states and territories to boost clinical capacity at existing headspace services.

- **\$158.6 million** for universal suicide aftercare services to all Australians discharged from hospital and pilot broader referral pathways to anyone who has attempted suicide or experienced suicidal distress that may not have presented to a hospital.
- **\$111.2 million** to create a world-class digital mental health service system. This includes:
 - **\$11.6 million** to commence the transformation of the existing Head to Health gateway into a comprehensive national mental health platform. This will provide Australians with greater choice and access to high quality, free and low cost digital mental health services and treatment.
- \$100.9 million towards supporting Australian children aged 0-12 years by increasing access to multidisciplinary mental health and wellbeing care for them and their families, strengthening support for parents and improving early intervention. This includes:
 - **\$54.2 million** towards working with states and territories to create a network of up to 15 new Head to Health Kids mental health and wellbeing centres for children aged 0-12 years. These centres will provide multidisciplinary support for infants, children and their parents, and improve early intervention outcomes for children’s mental health,
 - **\$42.3 million** to enable access to parent education and support programs to build parenting strategies, and teach parents and carers how to identify and respond to problem behaviours,
 - **\$0.5 million** to develop national guidelines to support states and territories to include social and emotional wellbeing indicators in early childhood health checks, so any emotional difficulties can be identified early and in a nationally consistent way.

National FREE 24/7 Crisis Services

[Lifeline](#) | 13 11 14

[Suicide Call Back Service](#) | 1300 659 467

[Kids Helpline](#) | 1800 55 1800

[Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#) | 1800 512 348

[Beyond Blue](#) | 1300 22 4636

<https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

National Rural Health Alliance: <https://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sites/default/files/publications/nrha-mental-health-factsheet-dec-2017.pdf>



Australian Government

National Mental Health Commission