

2021-22 Federal Budget

Initiatives for the mental health and suicide prevention workforce

The members of this critical workforce support people across the full mental health continuum and frequently face challenging situations such as lack of access to resourcing, highly distressed patients and compassion fatigue. Ensuring our mental health workforce is supported to provide compassionate safe care is a critical enabler for our system and service reform.

The Budget seeks to increase capacity and improve capability of our mental health workforce. It recognises the importance of our GP's, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and allied health professionals. Most importantly it recognises and supports investment in our peer workforce.

We encourage you to read the full mental health and suicide prevention budget available at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/budget-2021-22-stakeholder-pack>

Key Budget initiatives for the workforce:

- **\$58.8 million** for growing and upskilling the mental health workforce, critical measures including:
 - **\$8.3 million** to support greater representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the mental health workforce through additional mental health-specific scholarships and provide training to support healthcare workers to deliver culturally safe care,
 - **\$11 million** to boost the psychiatrist workforce by increasing the number of training places available, including in regional and remote areas,
 - **\$27.8 million** to increase the number of nurses, psychologists and allied health practitioners working in mental health settings through 280 scholarships and 350 clinical placements,
 - **\$3.1 million** to sponsor up to 390 peer workers to undertake vocational training,
 - **\$0.3 million** to identify opportunities to boost the skills of those who work with children and families,
 - **\$1 million** to reduce the stigma associated with mental health among health practitioners, and promote mental health as a preferred career option,
 - **\$2.4 million** to continue mental health training for practitioners working in aged care and support professional collaboration through the Mental Health Professionals' Network.

There are over 53,500 people in Australia working as Psychiatrists, mental health nurses and Psychologists* and a further 36,938 General Practitioners.**



- **\$34.2 million** to support General Practitioners (GPs) in their role as a key entry point into the mental health system by expanding and implementing the Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) tool in primary care settings. The tool will deliver a consistent and culturally appropriate approach to clinical assessment and referral.
- **\$16.9 million** to fund mental health early intervention supports and preventative measures for migrants and multicultural communities, including addressing the cultural competency of the broader health workforce.
- **\$15.9 million** to support general practitioners (GPs) and other medical practitioners to provide primary mental health care by providing specialised training and resources to enhance their capacity to address the mental health concerns of their patients, including:
 - Reviewing prescribing practices and developing new prescribing guidelines for appropriate and safe use of antidepressants in young people and children
 - Subsidies for approximately 3,400 GPs to undertake training to provide focused psychological therapies under the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration
 - Reviewing, improving and developing new training options to embed and promote a person-centred approach to mental health and wellbeing
 - Developing a nationally recognised Diploma in Psychiatry for medical practitioners
 - Delivering the Equally Well program to support improvements to the physical health of those living with a mental illness.
- **\$2.6 million** to support the mental health of Australia's wider health workforce, including:
 - Implementing Every Doctor, Every Setting, a national framework to deliver a coordinated approach to support the mental health of doctors and medical students
 - Continuing The Essential Network (TEN) project, a multifaceted e-health hub for healthcare professionals delivered by the Black Dog Institute
 - Continuation of the DRS4DRS service which provides mental health consultations for doctors and medical students
 - Conducting an evaluation of the mental health and wellbeing services targeted at health practitioners to inform future measures to support this group.

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/>

*<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-contents/mental-health-workforce>

**<https://ama.com.au/article/general-practice-facts>



Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission