

2021–22 Federal Budget

Mental Health initiatives for Older Australians

Mental health and wellbeing is as important in older age as any other time of life. A key to ensuring older people live a good quality of life as they age, is their ability to support access to preventative mental health services.

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 older Australians:

- **\$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 (including older Australians) in 12 regions across Australia with high rates of suicide.
- **\$0.3 million** to work with mental health stakeholders to investigate and co-design future national peak body arrangements to provide consumers and carers with a greater say in the future of the mental health system.

In 2007, the Australian National Mental Health and Wellbeing survey found 13% of older people reported symptoms of mental ill-health in the past month. While males aged 85 and over have the highest age-specific rate of death by suicide in Australia.¹

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.
- **\$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.
- **\$117.2 million** to establish a comprehensive evidence base to support real time .
- **\$58.8 million** for growing and upskilling the mental health workforce, critical measures include:
 - **\$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,
 - **\$1 million** to reduce the stigma associated with mental health among health practitioners, and promote mental health as a preferred career option,
 - **\$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,
 - **\$2.4 million** to continue mental health training for practitioners working in aged care and support professional collaboration through the Mental Health Professionals' Network

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/>

1. Trollor, J.N. (2007). Prevalence of mental disorders in the elderly: The Australian National Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey. *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 15(6), 455-466.



Australian Government

National Mental Health Commission