

Federal Budget 2024-25 – Summary Snapshot

This document provides a snapshot of key announcements in the Federal Budget 2024-2025 for AADC members.

Health

Alcohol and other Drugs

The budget allocates \$41.6M over two years to extend funding for 20 treatment and prevention services, including the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (SA) and the Aboriginal Health Council of SA. This measure is primarily focused in South Australia, where a number of AOD services were facing the cessation of current funding at the end of the 2023-24 financial year. The Alcohol and Drug Foundation's *Good Sports* program, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder diagnostic and support services in remote and rural regions, have also had funding extended for two years as part of this budget allocation.

Other budget measures in the AOD portfolio include:

- An alcohol and other drug treatment priority within a \$1.4B allocation for new research as part of the Medical Research and Future Fund.
- \$5M over two years to continue delivery of the *Every Moment Matters* awareness campaign to support women who are planning pregnancy to achieve alcohol-free pregnancies and reduce the incidence of babies born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

In addition, \$4.8M has been allocated to alcohol treatment services in Northern Territory through the National Partnership Agreement. It is unclear if this is new money, as in the 2023-24 Federal Budget, \$6.1M was allocated in the 2023-24 year for treatment services, yet reporting in this year's budget papers shows that only \$3.4M was actually expended. This may just be a funding roll over with a small increase.

Blood Borne Viruses

There were a range of budget measures related to HIV and hepatitis C and making progress on the implementation of the new National BBV and STI Strategies.

A total of \$43.9M has been allocated to support progress towards the goal of eliminating HIV transmission in Australia by 2030. This includes:

- expanded access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), including for those who are Medicare ineligible

- more free self-test kits
- a national multicultural peer navigation pilot program which will have a focus on prevention and testing
- continued funding for the Emen8 online information hub
- national roll out of the HIV testing vending machines currently operating only in South Australia

Hepatitis C point of care testing will also be expanded through an allocation of \$9.9M over two years. Funding for peak bodies to support implementation of the new National BBV and STI Strategies has been continued with \$7.9M over two years. This includes AIVL, Scarlet Alliance, NACCHO, ASHM, Hepatitis Australia, Health Equity Matters (formerly AFAO) and National Association of People with HIV Australia.

There is also \$28.6M in funding over two years to expand syphilis and sexually transmissible infections testing and \$32.3M over two years to promote vaccination uptake in First Nations communities.

Mental Health

The budget allocates \$888M over 8 years to improve access to mental health support both through Medicare and existing mental health treatment pathways. This includes:

- \$588.5M over eight years (and \$113.4 million per year ongoing) to establish a national low intensity digital mental health service that is free of charge and free of need for referral. This service will start in 2026.
- \$71.7M over four years (and \$24.4 million per year ongoing) to provide wrap around care for people with severe and/or complex needs in primary care settings, through design and delivery of mental health multidisciplinary services
- \$35.9M over four years to extend existing mental health measures, to enhance the delivery of mental health and suicide prevention services and to provide greater funding certainty for service providers
- \$29.9M over four years for Head to Health services to expand access to free community based mental health services for adults with moderate to severe mental health needs. The number of sites will be expanded to 61, with at least 30 being in rural and regional Australia. The 'Head to Health' service will also be re-branded and now known as 'Medicare Mental Health Centres'.
- \$29.7M over three years to improve child and youth mental health services through increasing workforce capability and co-designing new models of care
- \$12.8M over four years to extend the Indigenous Youth Connection to Culture program which supports First Nations youth in 12 communities through place-based activities to reduce suicide rates and improve mental health outcomes
- \$10M in 2024–25 to maintain funding to deliver targeted and culturally appropriate mental health supports for First Nations Australians
- \$7.1M over four years to build and support the lived experience peer mental health workforce, through the establishment of a national professional association for peer workers, delivery of a workforce census and the exploration of further training pathways.

Primary Care

The budget provides funding for a number of new and expanded primary care initiatives:

- \$6M for a trial of outreach health care in women's crisis accommodation and services to support women and children fleeing family, domestic and sexual violence
- \$17.4M to support health services in rural and regional areas at risk of closing
- \$227M to grow the national network of Medicare Urgent Care Clinics by 29 (to a total of 87) and provide additional support for clinics located in regional, rural and remote areas

Gender-based Violence

The budget provides funding for a range of new measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. These include:

- Funding for a leaving violence program which supports victim-survivors to leave violent relationships, with payments of up to \$5,000 and access to other support services
- \$152.3M to expand existing payment trials for temporary visa holders experiencing violence to leave unsafe environments until the new permanent program becomes available in 2025
- The budget also re-directs \$1B of spending for social housing already listed in the mid-year economic and fiscal outlook towards crisis and transitional accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Social Services, Employment and Housing

Income support

The budget provides funding for small increases to select income support streams. These are:

- Increasing the Rent Assistance maximum payment by \$19 per fortnight. This only applies to people already receiving the maximum rate and is not applicable for people receiving part payments
- Introduction of a one-off \$300 energy rebate for all Australians, applied directly to power bills.

Employment

The budget provides \$700m over five years to deliver a new Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) Program in the second half of 2024 that provides people in remote communities with employment. The RJED program is being developed in partnership with First Nations people and will initially fund 3,000 jobs over three years.

Housing

The budget makes a ten-year commitment to improve housing in remote Northern Territory communities and make progress on Closing the Gap targets. Measures include:

- A ten-year \$4B joint investment between the Australian and NT Governments to support delivery of up to 270 houses each year, and deliver repairs and maintenance to existing housing.
- \$120M over three years to continue delivery of housing improvements and essential infrastructure upgrades to NT Homelands.
- A Partnership Agreement, to be established between the Australian and NT Governments, Aboriginal Housing NT, and the four NT Aboriginal Land Councils.
- \$1M to Aboriginal Housing NT over two years, to support their role in the Partnership Agreement, and support development of a Community-Controlled Housing Model.

The budget also provides \$423M over five years in additional funding for new social housing and homelessness services, contingent on state and territory governments; and \$1B for states and territories to spend on housing-enabling infrastructure.

Budget Analysis from National Stakeholders

[*AIVL Investments Impacting the Health of People Who Use Drugs*](#)

[*ACOSS This is a budget that has a hole in its heart*](#)

[*NACCHO Some good news but the main challenge is closing the funding gap*](#)

[*PHAA Pandemic Amnesia as ACDC gets zero funding*](#)

[*National Rural Health Alliance Budget 2024-25: A missed opportunity for rural health equity*](#)

[*People with Disability Australia Some immediate relief but little for our future*](#)

[*LGBTIQ+ Health Australia Funding for LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing missing from Federal Budget*](#)

[*Mental Health Australia Funding for mental health falls short in Federal Budget*](#)