

Federal Budget 2021

Health priorities for Australia



Budget headlines

- A high performing economy, driving a high spending, stimulus-focused deficit budget.
- Framed for continued pandemic recovery with an eye to the next election
- Spending emphasis on structural reforms – such as digital transformation and services, and aged care
- Record investment in health: \$121.4 billion in 2021 and \$503 billion over the next four years
- **Winners:** additional funding for aged care (\$17.7 billion over 4 years) and mental health (\$2.3 billion over four years) – but only partly met the recommendations of two major inquiries to transform these areas to ensure 21st century care
- Essential spending continues the COVID response
- Primary care and prevention are the downside – only modest attention and reform. Major investment left wanting although some promising directions signaled e.g. a national health literacy strategy, MyGP
- Works in progress: private health insurance
- Implementation needs to ensure value for money: consumer co-design



Budget headlines

- **Aged care:** workforce measures (ratios and minimum times), home care packages, care finders
- **Mental health:** localised Head to Health adult mental health centres, headspace expansion, e-mental health, suicide programs
- **Digital health:** My Health Record and infrastructure to support My GP for voluntary patient registration, services (telehealth, Head to Health)
- **Women's health:** screening for breast and gynaecological cancers, pelvic pain and endometriosis, still-birth and pregnancy loss
- **COVID:** vaccine distribution, service continuation, onshore manufacture of mRNA, quarantine expansion



Stakeholder views

Mixed views with the underlying view that this is the beginning of the transformation of health and aged care. The funding has increased in many areas but more will be needed in the future so the gains are not lost. There needs to be a collaborative approach to changing the culture and how services are delivered and received.

- **ACOSS** supports funding for aged care, mental health and domestic violence services
- **COTA Australia** welcomes the aged care package but notes this is the beginning of the much-needed transformation. It particularly welcomes the additional 80,000 Home Care packages and the commitment to a single assessment service and a single Support at Home program
- **Dementia Australia** welcomes significant new funding for services for people living with dementia
- **Mental Health Australia** welcomes commitment to mental health, recognising the record funding commitment. This needs to be the start of systemic mental health reform



Stakeholder views

PHHA

- Welcomed acknowledgement of the significance of the Preventive Health Strategy, but disappointed that funding doesn't match the commitment
- Calls for preparation and investment to prevent or mitigate effects of future pandemics and public health emergencies

Stakeholder views

MTAA:

- Expresses optimism about the prostheses list and welcomes the commitment to consultation with the sector

Catholic Health Association:

- Welcomes moves to bring down the cost of devices but warns that cuts to some items will jeopardise access to appropriate care

PWDA:

- Concerns about projected cost of NDIS exceeding Medicare – this doesn't seem realistic
- Pleased with additional funding in Indigenous mental health



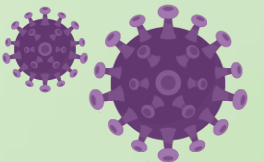
Stakeholder Views

RACGP:

- Welcomes many of the primary care measures, particularly those in aged care where there was an urgent need to improve access to primary health care services
- There needs to be more funding for general practice
- Warns that the gains made with telehealth during the COVID pandemic could be lost if a permanent model is not forthcoming

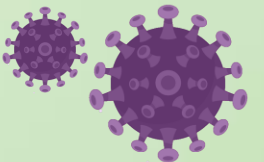
COVID-19 measures

- Extend dedicated Commonwealth respiratory clinics to manage and diagnose COVID-19 cases
- Extension of the Home Medicines Service and dispensing arrangements to support access to PBS and RPBS medicines
- Continue remote response to COVID-19 to support regional and remote Indigenous communities
- Extend Beyond Blue COVID-19 Mental Wellbeing Support Service



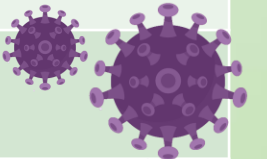
COVID-19 measures

- Expand quarantine services in the NT
- Extend activities under National Partnership on the COVID-19 response
- Expand activities of the National Incident Centre and the National Medical Stockpile
- Vaccine purchases and rollouts including investment in local capacity to manufacture mRNA vaccines
- Communications support



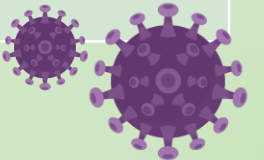
COVID-19 measures

Spending	Measures
\$77.3 million	To continue support for existing digital mental health services, and to provide additional funding in 2021–22 for support services that manage increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2019–20 summer bushfires.
\$87.5 million	Extend dedicated Commonwealth respiratory clinics to manage and diagnose COVID-19 cases
\$87.5 million	Extension of the Home Medicines Service and dispensing arrangements to support access to PBS and RPBS medicines
\$204.6 million	Extension of temporary telehealth MS services to December 2021
\$11.2 million	Continue remote response to COVID-19 to support regional and remote Indigenous communities
\$7.1 million	Extend Beyond Blue COVID-19 Mental Wellbeing Support Service
\$6.5 million	Communication activities



COVID-19 measures

Spending	Measures
\$487 million over 2 years	Expand quarantine services in the NT
\$271.5 million 2020-21	Extend activities under National Partnership on the COVID-19 response
\$86.8 million over 2 years	Expand activities of the National Incident Centre and the National Medical Stockpile
\$1.9 billion over 5 years	Vaccine purchases and rollouts

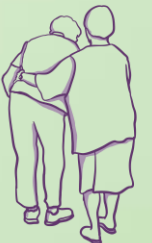


Aged care and older people's health

\$17.7 billion in investment in aged care for the 5 Year - 5 Pillar Aged Care Reform Plan which is a major reform for all aspects of aged care.

Key aspects include:

- Additional 8,000 home care packages made available over next two years will eliminate the current waiting list.
- Mandating time with front line care staff and specifying time with a registered nurse should improve quality of care.
- \$365.7 to improve access to primary care, including when they transition between home and hospital and for improved medication management is an important measure to improve quality of life of older people.



Aged Care and Older People's Health

- Introduction of a new star rating system for quality will let people make more informed choices about services
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to remain as regulator but a new Inspector General for Aged Care will be introduced
- New Aged Care Act
- Workforce reforms are critical but do not go far enough to address quality of training. There is nothing to address the very low wages for many aged care staff
- Additional funding for services in regional, rural and remote areas welcome news

Aged care and older people's health

Spending	Measures
\$17.7 billion over 5 years	5 Pillar response to the Royal Commission
\$7.5 billion	<p>Pillar 1 Home Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• additional 80000 home care packages• design a new support in home care program• Support for informal carers• Support to navigate the aged care system
\$7.8 billion	<p>Pillar 2 residential Aged care Services and sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase amount of front line care including mandating time with registered nurse• New Daily Fee supplement for providers• Assign residential aged care places to older people not providers• New funding model and classification
\$942 million	<p>Pillar 3 Residential Aged care Quality and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve access to primary health care and medication management• Increased funding for Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission



Aged care and Older People's Health

Spending	Measures
\$652.1 million	<p>Pillar 4 Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New assessment workforce• More VET training places through Jobtrainer• Financial support for nurses in aged care
	<p>Pillar 5 Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New governance and advisory structures-moving towards establishing an Inspector general of aged care• New Aged Care Act



Mental health

- Mental health support for new and expectant parents, through PANDA helpline, screening and data collection
- Support for people with eating disorders and their families
- Health and mental health services and supports for veterans and their families



Mental health

Suicide prevention:

- Working with states and territories to achieve universal aftercare services following hospital discharge (\$158.6 million)
- Expand National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program (\$61.6 million)
- Establish a national Distress Intervention Program trial and develop national accreditation and standards for safe space services (\$31.2 million)
- Continue postvention services nationally to support people who are bereaved by suicide (\$22 million)
- Establish the National Suicide Prevention Office (\$12.8 million)
- Extend the National Suicide Prevention Trial for one year (\$12 million)



Mental health

Suicide Treatment:

- Establish Head to Health adult mental health centres and satellites to provide accessible, coordinated, multidisciplinary care. This includes a central intake and assessment service to triage and refer people to the most appropriate services (\$487.2 million).
- Expand Headspace (\$278.2 million).
- Continuity of psychosocial support for people not eligible for NDIS (\$112.4 million).
- Support the take up of group therapy sessions and participation of family and carers in treatment provided under therapy sessions and participation of family and carers in treatment provided under the Better Access initiative (\$111.4 million over 3 years)
- Establish child mental health and wellbeing hubs to provide multidisciplinary care and preventive services
- parenting education and support to parents and carers with children aged under 12 years and to develop national guidelines to assist with early identification of emerging emotional difficulties
- Additional support for people with eating disorders and their families, and to establish a National Eating Disorder Research Centre
- Continue to provide up to ten free trauma and distress counselling sessions for those impacted by the bushfires



Mental health

Supporting the vulnerable

- \$79.0 million over four years from 2021-22 to implement initiatives under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy providing crisis and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- \$16.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to provide mental health services and support to Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including for survivors of torture and trauma
- \$11.1 million over two years from 2021-22 to improve outcomes for people with complex mental health needs including people with cognitive disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.



Mental health

Spending	Measures
\$47.4 m	Mental health support for new and expectant parents, through PANDA helpline, screening and data collection
\$26.9 m	Support for people with eating disorders and their families
\$77.3 million	Continue support for existing digital mental health services, and to provide additional funding in 2021–22 for support services that manage increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2019–20 summer bushfires.
\$6.3 million	Increase mental health support services for fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workers
\$11.1 million	Improve the experience of and outcomes for people with complex mental health needs through a range of targeted initiatives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• funding for SANE Australia to pilot specialised mental health services and interventions for people with complex mental health needs, and• additional training and education for the mental health workforce to better meet the needs of people with cognitive disability and autism.



Mental health

Spending	Measures
\$16.9 million	Fund mental health early intervention supports and preventive measures for migrants and multicultural communities, and address the cultural competence of the broader health workforce through the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, and Mental Health Australia's Embrace Framework
\$111.2 million	Expand and enhance digital mental health services
\$150 million	Health and mental health services and supports for veterans and their families



Primary care

The 10 year Primary Health Plan has yet to be released so there is no major reform announcement. There are several individual initiatives and changes to MBS item numbers

Key measures include

- The introduction of systems to support the use of voluntary patient registration. This will improve the quality of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) services through MyGP
- Response to recommendations from the MBS Review Taskforce to align the MBS with contemporary practice, tighten clinical indicators, list new items, remove obsolete items and to restrict inappropriate co-claiming
- Improvements to diagnostic imaging, including to replacement costs of older equipment for private providers in rural and remote areas



Primary care

- Redesign the Practice Incentives Program – Indigenous Health Incentive
- List six new items on the MBS for allied health providers who participate in case conferencing
- Continue support for private radiation oncology providers under the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants Scheme to assist with the cost of linear accelerators
- Victoria to join *Healthdirect Australia*, and provide support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities through improved health helpline services



Primary care

Spending	Measures
\$288.5 million	Provide access to Medicare subsidised repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for the treatment of medication resistant major depressive disorder
\$71.9 million	Extend the Primary Health Network After Hours Program for one year
\$50.7 million	Systems to support the use of voluntary patient registration to improve the quality of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) services through MyGP
\$22.6 million	Redesign the Practice Incentives Program – Indigenous Health Incentive
\$14.2 million	List six new items on the MBS for allied health providers who participate in case conferencing
\$6.0 million	Continue support for private radiation oncology providers under the Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants Scheme to assist with the cost of linear accelerators
\$5.5 million	Victoria to join Healthdirect Australia, and provide support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities through improved health helpline services
\$5.1 million	Further capital investment for renal services at the Southern Fleurieu Health Service
\$3.8 million	Support the National Health Funding Body to improve compliance of payments for hospital services

Primary care

Spending	Measures
\$8 million	Compensation for ACT Asbestos Disease Assistance Scheme
\$11.3 million over 4 years	Autologous fat grafting by injection for defects arising from breast surgery, breast cancer treatments and congenital breast deformity
\$33.5 million over 4 years	Respond to recommendations from the MBS Review Taskforce to align the MBS with contemporary practice, tighten clinical indicators, list new items, remove obsolete items and to restrict inappropriate co-claiming
\$31 million over 5 years	Improvements to diagnostic imaging, including to replacement costs of older equipment for private providers in rural and remote areas (\$20.7 m)
(\$107 million over 4 years)	Savings from MRI funding
\$878.7 million over 5 years	PBS new and amended listings



Prevention

The National Preventive Health Strategy has not been released but there are some initiatives that address priorities identified in the draft strategy

- Improved screening through improvements to cervical and breast cancer, new tests on the MBS for pre-implantation genetic testing, improved diagnosis of hypertension, amended magnetic resonance imaging items for the diagnosis of prostate cancer.
- Support for the continued operation of the National Cancer Screening Register, including additional service provider costs and data integration, and facilitating alternative delivery pathways for bowel cancer screening kits to Indigenous populations.
- Measures to help prevent premature labour and to reduce preterm birth rates.
- Proton beam therapy to treat paediatric and rare cancers.

Prevention

- Preventive health research and scoping activities, including a national health literacy strategy.
- Continue the Australian Government's contribution to the Health Star Rating System in collaboration with the states and territories.
- Mental health prevention activities.
- Achieve universal perinatal mental health screening across public antenatal and postnatal care settings, extend funding to the centre of perinatal excellence to continue to provide the digital infrastructure to support screening and to Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia.
- Increase support services for fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workers.

Prevention

- Build on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program to assist people with mental illness participate in the workforce, including pilot IPS program in Adult Mental Health Centres, and trial Youth Vocational Peer Support Workers in two IPS headspace sites.
- Continue the Ahead for Business digital hub, supporting small business owners to take proactive, preventive, and early steps to improve their mental health.
- National Legal Assistance Partnership to support the early resolution of legal problems for those experiencing mental illness.
- Mental health workers in Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice Partnerships to support women who have experienced family violence

Prevention



Spending	Measures
\$100.4 m	Improvements to cervical and breast screening programs
\$13.7 m over 4 years	Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance to reduce preterm birth rates
\$95.9 m	New tests on the MBS for pre-implantation genetic testing
\$40.5 m over 4 years	Services associated with Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring for improved diagnosis of hypertension

Prevention



Spending	Measures
\$18.8 m over 2 years	Proton beam therapy to treat paediatric and rare cancers
\$11.4 m over 4 years	Amend the multi-parametric Magnetic Resonance Imaging items for the diagnosis of prostate cancer
\$24.2 million over 2 years	Drug and alcohol treatment and support services
\$111.2 million	Expand and enhance digital mental health services
\$77.1 million	National Legal Assistance Partnership to support the early resolution of legal problems for those experiencing mental illness, and for mental health workers in Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice Partnerships to support women who have experienced family violence.
\$47.4 million	Working with states and territories to achieve universal perinatal mental health screening across public antenatal and postnatal care settings. Extend funding to the Centre of Perinatal Excellence to continue providing digital infrastructure to support screening and to Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia.

Prevention



Spending	Measures
\$6.3 million over 3 years	Increase support services for fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workers
\$5.7 million over 3 years	Build on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program to assist people with mental illness to participate in the workforce, including to pilot the IPS program in Adult Mental Health Centres and to trial Youth Vocational Peer Support Workers in two IPS headspace sites
\$0.9 million over 5 years	Continue the Ahead for Business digital hub, supporting small business owners to take proactive, preventive and early steps to improve their mental health
\$23.1 million over 5 years	Preventive health activities
\$480.9 million over 5 years	Range of preventive health measures

Prevention



Spending	Measures
\$1.9 million in 2021-22	Preventive health research and scoping activities, including a national health literacy strategy, to inform a National Preventive Health Strategy
\$7.5 million in 2021-22 (and \$1.5 million per year ongoing)	Support continued operation of the National Cancer Screening Register, including additional service provider costs and data integration, and facilitating alternative delivery pathways for bowel cancer screening kits to Indigenous populations
\$6.9 million in 2021-22	Five lung cancer care nurses to provide support to patients and their families and for lung cancer related research activities
\$0.9 million over two years from 2021-22	Continue the Australian Government's contribution to the Health Star Rating System, in collaboration with the states and territories
\$0.4 million over three years from 2021-22	Polio Australia to continue to provide support for the polio-affected community

Women's health



- Improvements to cervical and breast screening programs.
- Oriprio (progesterone) PBS listing to prevent premature labour.
- New tests on the MBS for pre-implantation genetic testing.
- Funding Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance to reduce preterm birth rates.
- Mental health support for new and expectant parents, through PANDA helpline, screening and data collection.

Women's health



- Support for people with eating disorders and their families.
- New MBS gynaecology items to support assisted reproductive technology and long term, reversible contraception.
- Funding women's health initiatives, including Jean Hailes for Women's Health and the Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia for the Periods, Pain and Endometriosis Program (PPEP-Talk).
- Additional funding for Breast Cancer Network Australia's helpline, rural and regional information fora and consumer representative training program.

(see also Prevention, Mental health, Rural Health)

Women's health



Spending	Measures
\$100.4 m over x years	Improvements to cervical and breast screening programs
\$19.3 m	PBS listing Oripuro (progesterone) to prevent premature labour
\$13.7 m	Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance to reduce preterm birth rates
\$95.9 m	New tests on the MBS for pre-implantation genetic testing
\$47.4 m	Mental health support for new and expectant parents, through PANDA helpline, screening and data collection
\$26.9 m	Support for people with eating disorders and their families
\$22 m	New MBS gynaecology items to support assisted reproductive technology and long term, reversible contraception

Women's health

Spending	Measures
\$21.6 m	Funding women's health initiatives, including Jean Hailes for Women's Health and the Pelvic Pain Foundation of Australia for the Periods, Pain and Endometriosis Program (PPEP-Talk)
\$6.6 m	Additional funding for Breast Cancer Network Australia's helpline, rural and regional information fora and consumer representative training program
\$77.1 million	The National Legal Assistance Partnership to support early resolution of legal problems for those experiencing mental illness, and for mental health workers in Domestic Violence Units (DVU) and Health Justice Partnerships (HJP) to support women who have experienced family violence.

Rural health

- Additional funding for Breast Cancer Network Australia's helpline, rural and regional information fora and consumer representative training program.
- Bulk billing rate incentives for rural, and remote GPs to enhance the financial viability of practices in rural and remote areas and reduce the gap paid by patients.
- Initiatives to support delivery of primary care and health workforce in rural and remote areas
- Expand the Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway (\$9.6 million)
- Continue development of the Bonded Return of Service System (\$3.8 million)
- Community supported rural primary care trials (\$1.8 million)



Rural health

Spending	Measures
\$6.6m	Additional funding for Breast Cancer Network Australia's helpline, rural and regional information fora and consumer representative training program.
\$65.8m from 1 Jan 2022	Rural Bulk Billing Incentive A new, progressive incentive schedule will be applied, that increases the value of the Rural Bulk Billing Incentive (RBI) based on remoteness.
\$111.2 million	to ensure Australians, including in regional, rural and remote areas, have greater access and choice for high quality, free and low cost digital mental health services
\$9.6 million	expand the Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway in regional and rural Australia



Rural health

Spending	Measures
\$2.2 million over 5 years	Trial local approaches to alleviate workforce shortages through an expansion of the Delivering Innovative Rural Health Models
\$12.4 million	John Flynn Prevocational Doctor Training Program will almost double the number of rural primary care rotations for prevocational doctors
\$29.5 million	Increase non-GP medical specialist training, in areas facing workforce shortages
\$80.9 million over 5 years	Initiatives to support delivery of primary care and health workforce in rural and remote areas



Private Health Insurance

- Modernise and streamline the Prostheses List with the intent to reduce the cost of devices and exert downward pressure of private health insurance premiums . The details of how this is to be achieved are to be developed in consultation with key stakeholders
- A range of work to look at some of the key policy settings and regulatory framework for private health insurance to make the system simpler, provide greater consistency and so more certainty for consumers when using their private health insurance



Private health insurance

Spending	Measures
\$ 22 million over 4 years from February 2022	Modernise and improve the Prostheses List which sets the price of medical devices in the private health system
\$8.7 million over 4 years	Measures to simplify and make private health insurance more affordable . A range of studies looking at key elements of the regulatory framework including the tax rebate, interaction with Medicare Surcharge Levy and the default benefits arrangements



Digital

- Combined, the Australian Government will invest around \$870.5 million in digital programs and innovations to our health care system.
- This is a mix of operational and implementation measures to try to improve access to health services and make the digital health systems work to integrate care and streamline processes for consumers.



Digital health

Spending	Measures
\$36 million over four years from 2021-22	Expand the Health Products Portal to provide a single digital channel for industry to manage applications to list products and services on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Medicare Benefits Schedule, Prostheses List and the National Immunisation Program
\$301.8 million	Next wave of My Health Record (MHR), strengthening connections and ensuring better coordinated healthcare
98.1 million	Transform the Head to Health gateway into a comprehensive national platform, enhancing the availability of high quality, free and low-cost digital mental health services
\$77.3 million	Continue support for existing digital mental health services, and to provide additional funding in 2021–22 for support services that manage increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2019–20 summer bushfires.
\$13.1 million	Support ReachOut Australia to continue delivering free and high quality digital mental health services to young Australians aged 12–25 as well as their parents, carers and schools.



Digital health

Spending	Measures
\$204.6 million	Extend telehealth services until 31 December 2021, for services including GPs, specialists, nursing, midwifery, allied health, and allied mental health attendances
\$45.4 million	Introduce electronic medication charts in residential aged care facilities, increasing utilisation and integration of MHR and establishing digital support for transitioning between aged care and hospital settings
\$50.7 million	Continue to develop an ICT system that enables a voluntary patient registration (VPR) initiative, to be known as MyGP, improving health outcomes and lifting the quality of services delivered to Australian patients through continuity of care
\$32.3 million	Continued funding for the 2018–2022 Intergovernmental Agreement on National Digital Health, ensuring interoperability within Australia’s national digital health infrastructure.
\$87.5 million	Operational funding for the Australian Digital Health Agency, with a focus on implementing lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic to help improve system preparedness and responsiveness



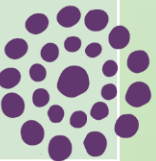
People with intellectual disability

- Package of measures to improve access to health services for people with an intellectual disability
- A national early childhood program for children with disability or developmental concerns



People with intellectual disability

Spending	Measures
\$171.3 million	Psychosocial support services, including a regional loading, for people with a severe psychosocial disability who are currently not supported by the National Disability Insurance Scheme
\$6.7 million	Improve the uptake and implementation of annual health assessments for people with intellectual disability, to better prevent and manage chronic and complex conditions
\$1.4 million	Enable scoping and co-design of a model for a National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.
\$4.7 million	Intellectual disability health curriculum development to support the delivery of specific and specialised content as part of tertiary education curricula.
\$17.9 million	A national early childhood program for children with disability or developmental concerns



What is missing?



- Any significant increase in income support through Jobseeker and related payments.
- The Primary Health Care 10 year Plan to transform primary healthcare

More information

Health stakeholder pack:

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/05/budget-2021-22-stakeholder-pack.pdf>.

Major health announcements are in Minister's media release at pages 3-15 [here](#)

Response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is at the [same link](#), pages 16-22

Mental health and suicide prevention announcements are also [at the link](#), pages 17-30.

The official budget website: <https://budget.gov.au/index.htm>

Budget Paper No 2:

https://budget.gov.au/2021-22/content/bp2/download/bp2_2021-22.pdf

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