# Australian Federal Budget 2024: Prioritising Health Care and Aged Care Improvements



The Australian federal budget for 2024 introduces several significant measures aimed at health care and aged care improvements. Announced on May 14, 2024, the budget allocates $2.2 billion principally for creating 24,000 new home care places, allowing older citizens the resources to continue living at home rather than transitioning to aged care facilities.

The package includes establishing 29 new Medicare urgent care clinics designed to help reduce emergency room waiting times by attending to non-life-threatening conditions. These are in addition to the previously planned 58 clinics, cumulatively valued at $227 million. Also outlined is a price freeze for prescription medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), maintaining charges at $7.70 for pensioners and $31.60 for the general public to aid in cost-of-living pressures.

The budget proposes enhancements in mental health services with an $888 million investment over eight years for a new online mental health platform launching in 2026, which will offer up to 10 free therapy sessions for low-intensity mental health issues. This is supplemented by an additional $30 million towards enhancing existing mental health networks.

Additional health-related funding includes $56 million for various women's health initiatives, including training for GPs on menopause and contraceptive care, along with $49 million across four years to increase rebates for managing endometriosis and other complex gynecological conditions.

Moreover, the budget prescribes legislation amendments to enable qualified nurses and midwives to prescribe PBS medicines and offer services covered by Medicare, aiming to provide more accessible healthcare options.

This financial outline underscores the government's focus on bolstering aged care services, expanding mental health support, and enhancing the overall health infrastructure to alleviate hospital pressures and improve healthcare accessibility across the nation.