

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA BUDGET 2010-11 SUMMARY BRIEF



Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA

www.phaa.net.au

12 May 2010

FEDERAL HEALTH BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Prevention

Preventive Health measures in the Budget include:

Tobacco

- \$28M for a new anti-smoking campaign targeting high risk and disadvantaged groups. Brings total spending on anti-tobacco campaigns to more than \$85M over the next 4 years;
- Excise on tobacco products has been increased by 25% from 30 April 2010; and
- All tobacco products will be sold in plain packaging by 1 July 2012.

Alcohol

An additional \$50M over 4 years for the National Binge Drinking Campaign, including:

- \$25M for sponsorship for community organisations as an alternative to alcohol industry sponsorship;
- \$20M for community level initiatives to tackle binge drinking; and
- \$5M for enhanced telephone counselling and referrals for alcohol problems and further social marketing activities.

The additional \$50M delivers on the promise to the Australian Greens and Senator Xenophon in securing the passage of the 'alcopops' legislation last year.

Diabetes

- \$449.2M as part of the primary care package for preventive measures to

reduce avoidable hospital admissions for diabetics.

Sport and Physical Activity

- \$262.7M over 4 years to encourage greater participation in sport and physical activity, with a focus on junior and community level measures.

Australian Health Survey

- \$54M for the establishment of the Australian Health Survey – the most comprehensive research on the health of Australians ever undertaken – covering information on health, nutrition, medications, exercise and pathology.

Response to Preventative Health Taskforce

2010-11 Budget measures targeting prevention build on existing responses to the Taskforce report, including:

- \$872.1M for the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health agreed by COAG in 2008;
- \$100.6M altogether in tackling high rates of smoking in Indigenous communities; and
- 'alcopops' legislation resulting in reduction in consumption of spirits by 3.45M standard drinks a week.

Indigenous Health

Additional funding includes:

- \$38.5M over 4 years for the rollout of Opal fuel to prevent petrol sniffing in a further 11 Aboriginal communities; and
- \$6.6m over 2 years to enhance the response to violence and child abuse in remote communities.

Further detail on the 2010-11 Health Budget can be found at:

http://www.health.gov.au/internet/budget/publishing.nsf/Content/2010-2011_Health_PBS

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Mental Health

- \$175.8m over 4 years for a package of initiatives aimed at improving mental health services with a focus on early intervention and prevention.

E-Health

- \$466.7m over 2 years on an e-health records system to assist Australians to manage their health more effectively through better coordinated healthcare.

Other Health Budget Measures of Interest

- \$416.8M over 4 years to establish *Medicare Locals* – a nationwide network of primary health care organisations to provide Australians with 24-hour access to GP services;
- \$390.3M over 4 years for practice nurses for GPs;
- \$639M over 4 years for GP training measures designed to enhance the rural and regional health workforce; and
- \$2.5 billion in savings to taxpayers over 5 years through the negotiation of health agreements delivering better value for money and enhanced access to essential medicines (including a new Pharmacy Agreement and MOU with Medicines Australia on PBS medicines covering generic medicines).

OVERALL PHAA RESPONSE:

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has welcomed the Government's response to the National Preventative Health Taskforce report and funding

outlined in the Federal Budget as a landmark in action to support prevention.

PHAA President Professor Mike Daube said, "For the first time, we have a comprehensive approach to reducing our massive toll of preventable ill health and death, with substantial commitments in the Budget to funding for prevention. The Government's response to the Prevention Taskforce Report demonstrates a strong commitment to action on tobacco, obesity and alcohol problems, with a special focus on binge drinking.

"Today's announcements confirm that the Australian Government will lead the world in tobacco control, through the 25% tax increase combined with public education, plain packaging and a range of other measures and a special focus on disadvantaged groups who continue to smoke at high levels. This will help to prevent literally hundreds of thousands of deaths.

"The allocation of \$50M for action on alcohol, including funds to offer alternatives for sports sponsored by alcohol is also an important development, allied to strong public education programs on both alcohol and obesity. We also welcome the allocation of \$54m to a National Health Survey as well as the substantial funding promised through COAG.

"Of course there are other measures we would like to see accepted – such as alcohol tax reform, and legislated controls on alcohol and junk food promotion, but this is a very encouraging start, and we note that the Government has not closed the door on

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some of the tough measures proposed in the Taskforce Report.”

PHAA CEO Michael Moore said, “We are pleased to see the emphasis on prevention continue, through action ranging from the new Australian National Preventive Health Agency, a new National Health Survey, delivery of the COAG funding, support for community programs, support for primary care (including through the new Medicare Locals) and a significantly increased commitment to participation in sport.

“The Budget’s primary healthcare package also contains a number of further measures that are designed to reduce the levels of preventable illness and disease in the Australian community. It will also be important to ensure that these are complemented by further measures to reduce the health inequities in our society, investment in areas such as mental health and oral health, and action beyond the health portfolio.”

Professor Daube said, “Even in difficult economic times, this gives us a strong basis on which to build. We will continue to press for further action, including an increase in the percentage of health expenditure for prevention from the current 2%, but today’s announcements clearly mark the start of a new era in prevention.”

FEDERAL HEALTH BUDGET CONCERNS

Alcohol Taxation

Recommendations by the National Preventative Health Taskforce and the Henry Review of taxation for the implementation of volumetric alcohol

taxation have not been implemented in the 2010-11 Budget.

Illicit Drug Use

- \$4M over 4 years cut from the media campaign combating illicit drug use.

Health Workforce

- \$39.1M over 4 years cut from a program supporting nurses to return to the workforce

Practice Incentives Program

- \$23.5M over 4 years cut from the Practice Incentives Program incentive payments for cervical cancer screening.

Aged Care

- \$9M over 4 years cut from measures meeting demand for high level aged care.

Grant Programs

- \$88.9M has been cut in a ‘reprioritisation’ of Department of Health and Ageing grant programs – impact unclear.

BUDGET 2010: WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Australian Medical Association

The AMA has welcomed the Federal Budget investment of more than \$7 billion to bolster the health system and provide Australians with better access to quality health services. AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said the AMA has been calling for major Government investment in health and the Budget has delivered substantial new funding and reforms within a tight fiscal environment.

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"The Budget confirms the promised funding for the COAG health agreement and spells out new spending in key areas of the Government's health reform agenda, including primary care and e-Health," he said.

Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation

The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER), Australia's leading alcohol harm minimisation body, today acknowledged the Federal Government's commitment of \$50 million over 4 years towards an extension of the National Binge Drinking Strategy yesterday. However, AER Director Professor Ian Webster says it's a long way from the comprehensive alcohol reforms needed to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on the Australian community.

"The Federal Government's \$50 million commitment will not go far in addressing the \$15 billion cost of alcohol-related harm to the community...As part of this holistic strategy, AER supports Ken Henry's recommendations to introduce volumetric taxation, as well as strategies relating to licensing and regulation, marketing and promotion, child and maternal health and initiatives to support young people," said Professor Webster.

Catholic Social Services Australia

Spokesman Frank Quinlan says the budget will not help some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

"We are not seeing a serious investment in addressing some of the serious inequities that exist in Australian society. For low-income Australians - the unemployed, for

instance, who are struggling to live on \$220-odd a week - this budget delivers nothing extra to help them make ends meet."

Australian Council of Social Service

Clare Martin from the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) welcomed the \$2.2 billion promised for increased GP services, super clinic upgrades, more nurses and electronic health records, but she said she was disappointed there was no mention of dental care for the 2.3 million people who could not afford to go to the dentist.

Australian Nursing Federation

Ged Kearney, Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) said today that Budget 2010 had delivered a huge win for aged care nurses, care staff and the residents they care for.

"The \$132 million aged care workforce package announced by the Treasurer in Budget 2010 ensures nurses will remain front and centre in the delivery of aged care in Australia," she said.

Australian General Practice Network

Patients can expect better access to General Practitioners (GPs), improved after hours services and a connected health care system as a result of the cash injection into primary health care announced in the Federal Budget, says Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) Chair Dr Emil Djacic.

"The Budget delivers for patients, it delivers for health care providers and it will deliver a better, more efficient and more effective health system," Dr Djacic said.

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