



Federal Budget 2019-20: Overview for AIVL Members and Stakeholders

1. Health Budget Snapshot

New National BBV and STI Strategies

\$45.4m over 4 years for the implementation of the new national strategies for blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections

Alcohol & other drugs

- New Whole-Of-Government Drug Strategy initiative - \$189.1 million over 5 years (commencing in 2018-19) - including:
 - o Rehabilitation services \$10.5m
 - o Increasing access to services in regional, rural and remote areas \$9.6m
 - o Providing local family drug support \$4.3m
 - o Reducing prescription opioid use through better access to pain management services \$4.3m
 - o PBS subsidised take home Naloxone \$7.2m
 - o National ice Action Strategy \$153.3m
- \$20m for a national anti-smoking campaign

Indigenous health

- \$4.1 billion over 4 years commencing in 2019-20 (various initiatives)

Mental health

- \$736.6m for mental health and suicide prevention in two key areas across 25 specific initiatives over the next seven years
- A Suicide Prevention Coordinator will be established within the Prime Minister's Department to promote a national whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention
- \$15m over 4 years will be provided for a new national suicide information initiative
- A trial of eight coordinated mental health centres will receive \$114.5m over five years from 2020-21

Family Violence

Funding of \$9.6m over 4 years to implement the Fourth Action Plan to prevent violence against women and their children including training for primary care workforce

2. Budget Responses from Other Non-Government and Health Sector Organisations

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)

The federal Government has tonight granted the greatest increase in funding to prevent, diagnose and treat sexually transmitted infections and blood-borne viruses in at least two decades, with a \$45 million boost over four years.

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations has strongly and warmly endorsed the decision, which will turbocharge progress against HIV.

AFAO CEO, Darryl O'Donnell said, "This investment puts resources where they are needed. It will upgrade the skills of the HIV workforce, foster nationally consistent policy and seriously bolster community education.

"Especially encouraging is the fact we now have bipartisan recognition of the importance of this work. Federal Labor has committed a similar amount."

<https://www.afao.org.au/media-release/45-million-federal-funding-boost-will-turbocharge-progress-against-hiv/>

Australian Medical Association (AMA)

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said tonight that the Government's Budget announcements have set up genuine health policy competition for the upcoming election.

"The Health Minister, Greg Hunt, has listened closely to the AMA and delivered a strong Health Budget, with a particular emphasis on primary care, led by general practice," Dr Bartone said.

"Australia's hardworking GPs will be happy to see a commitment of almost \$1 billion to general practice. This includes matching Labor's promise to bring forward by a year the lifting of the freeze on rebates for a range of Medicare GP items.

"Overall, the Government has delivered a much-needed significant investment to general practice – the driving force of quality primary health care in Australia."

<https://ama.com.au/media/federal-budget-sets-genuine-election-competition-health-policy>

Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)

ACOSS CEO, Dr Cassandra Goldie said, "None of the tax cuts benefit people on the lowest incomes, as one third of households, including low-paid workers, pensioners and people looking for paid

work, do not have enough income to pay tax.”

The budget does contain some welcome measures including \$500 million for the Royal Commission into Abuse of People with Disability, an extra \$80 million for young carers, \$280 million for 10,000 home care packages for older people, \$460 million for mental health, and the previously-announced \$330 million in funding for domestic violence services.

It’s sad but telling that the Government has found just \$5 million over 4 years to respond to the escalating crisis of suicide among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

https://www.acoss.org.au/media_release/government-turns-its-back-on-people-who-have-the-least-and-guarantees-more-cuts-to-essential-services/

The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples

Funding for the Lowitja Institute is welcome. While research is important, significantly more funding for services is required to address the disparities in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous communities. In addition, \$5m over four years will be inadequate to remedy the incidence of youth suicide which afflicts our communities.

We are disappointed by the Australian Government’s continued rollout of cashless debit card trials. The \$128.8m spent on the trials over the next four years would be better used to fund vital health, education and support services which enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s self-determination instead of taking it away.

<https://nationalcongress.com.au/budget-2019-20-australias-first-peoples-need-more-than-promises/>

Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)

The 2019 federal Budget does too little to prevent Australia’s major illnesses, according to Public Health Association of Australia CEO Terry Slevin.

“Australia is one of the lowest investors in illness prevention of any OECD nation at less than 2% of our national health spending,” Mr Slevin said.

“Spending on good health care, effective drugs and research is important and essential. But a continual downward spiral in real prevention is a trend we must seriously address.”

<https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/3355>

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA)

“We are delighted the government will build its efforts to reduce prescription opioid use. We welcome the expansion of the Rural Health Outreach Fund to give better access to pain management specialist services and train providers to improve prescribing habits.

“The announcement of \$7.2 million to establish an Australia-first-take-home naloxone program is a significant investment in reducing deaths caused by opioids. It is vital for pharmacy to be a key component of this strategy.”

<https://www.miragenews.com/budget-s-health-funding-welcome-but-more-is-needed-for-community-pharmacy/>

Mission Australia

Mission Australia CEO James Toomey questioned the Commonwealth Government’s blatant neglect of the needs of thousands of people experiencing homelessness and rental stress in Australia.

“This must be tackled as a priority while the Budget is in surplus. The essential social infrastructure of housing has been ignored, despite a boost in infrastructure spending.

“This is a national responsibility and a good Budget must prioritise ensuring that everyone has a safe, secure place to call home.”

<https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/news-blog/news-media/media-release-mission-australia-s-response-to-federal-budget-2019-20>

The Health Portfolio Budget Statements are now up on the Department’s website at:

http://www.health.gov.au/internet/budget/publishing.nsf/Content/2019-2020_Health_PBS

The Budget at a Glance document is particularly useful for a quick overview of portfolio highlights:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/budget/publishing.nsf/Content/budget2019-glance.htm>

3. AIVL's Media Release



MEDIA RELEASE

NEW BBV/STI & AOD MEASURES FEATURE IN HEALTH BUDGET

The Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL) has welcomed additional investments in blood borne virus (BBV), sexually transmissible infection (STI) and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) initiatives flagged in tonight's Federal Budget. Funding for implementation of the new National BBV and STI Strategies and investment in a new Whole-of-Government Drug Strategy package have been announced as part of the Health Budget.

"The Australian Government has announced an additional \$45.4 million over four years, commencing in 2019-20, to step up public health prevention and promotion activities around BBVs and STIs to deliver on the goals of the new National BBV and STI Strategies. The beneficiaries of this investment will be groups identified in the National BBV and STI Strategies, many of whom are particularly vulnerable members of the community," said Melanie Walker, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AIVL.

"There is also \$189.1 million in additional funding over five years, commencing in 2018-19, for a new Whole-of-Government Drug Strategy package to build on existing services and support, including in rural, regional and remote areas. This initiative includes funding recently announced for a national take-home naloxone program," said Ms Walker.

According to the Health Budget papers, the new Drug Strategy initiative includes the following components that are additional to current funding in these areas:

- Rehabilitation services (\$10.5 million);
- Increasing access to services in rural, regional and remote areas (\$9.6 million);
- Providing local family drug support (\$4.3 million);
- Reducing prescription opioid use through better access to pain management services (\$4.3 million);
- PBS subsidised take home naloxone (\$7.2 million); and
- National Ice Action Strategy (\$153.3 million).

"In summary, the Health Budget looks good on first glance. AIVL looks forward to seeing more detail on planned spending and initiatives and engaging with the Australian Government and the Department of Health to ensure that implementation of the newly announced measures meets the needs of affected communities," said Ms Walker.

AIVL is the national organisation representing people who use/have used illicit drugs and is the peak body for the state and territory peer-based drug user organisations.

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