

**FEDERAL BUDGET WRAP
MAY 2024**

Portfolio	Item
Health and Medical Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional \$1.4 billion over 13 years from 2024–25 through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to continue to invest in medical research in Australia, for a total commitment through the MRFF of \$6.4 billion over 13 years in research funding across the following themes: • An additional \$377.5 million (for a total contribution of \$2.0 billion over 10 years from 2024–25) to translate research outcomes into medical practice. • The Government will also undertake a strategic examination of Australia’s research and development system to strengthen its alignment with Australia’s priorities and improve innovation and research and development outcomes. • An additional \$411.6 million (for a total contribution of \$1.6 billion over 13 years from 2024–25) to continue existing research missions and introduce two new 10-year research Missions from 2027–28 for low-survival cancers and reducing health inequities. Funding includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – \$306.0 million to continue existing research missions and fund the two new missions to 2033–34 – \$105.6 million over three years from 2034–35 to continue support for the two new missions • An additional \$329.6 million (for a total contribution of \$1.4 billion over 10 years from 2024–25) for patient-centred research including emerging priorities in areas such as women’s health, and supporting innovative treatments, clinical trials, and more advanced healthcare • An additional \$269.6 million (for a total contribution of \$1.3 billion over 10 years from 2024–25) for medical researchers to make breakthrough discoveries, develop their skills, and progress their careers in Australia. • \$18.8 million over two years from 2024–25 to continue the development of the National One Stop Shop for Clinical Trials and Human Research (National One Stop Shop) and support current systems. The National One Stop Shop will streamline work to manage clinical trials and human research, including the management of cross-jurisdictional ethics approvals. Funding includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$17.2 million in 2024–25 to continue the development of the National One Stop Shop for Clinical Trials and Human Research - \$1.6 million over two years from 2024–25 to continue support for the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry until this data function can be included in the National One Stop Shop.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Health and Medical Research Strategy will help Australia build a sustainable research pipeline – from discovery and innovation to translation and commercialisation. It will cover the entire sector and include all levels of government, industry, philanthropy, academia, and consumers. • Research at the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre will help deliver a solid evidence base for policymakers in preventative health (\$1.1m). • \$10.3 million over four years from 2024–25 to Melanoma Institute Australia to undertake targeted research into skin cancer screening and develop a roadmap for a national, targeted skin cancer screening program, in close consultation with Cancer Australia and the broader skin cancer sector. • \$11.6 million over two years from 2024–25 to continue support for Men’s Sheds and existing national men’s health research and data collection initiatives, in line with the National Men’s Health Strategy 2020–2030. • \$22.1 million over two years from 2024–25 to continue support for preventive health and chronic disease research including patient and clinician services for Australians with chronic conditions, in support of the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030. • The Specialist Dementia Care Program will support people living with dementia to successfully transition from hospital to aged care services and fund clinical in-reach services. It will also enable Australian Dementia Network researchers to ready the health system for promising new dementia diagnostic and treatment options (\$32.1m).
Digital Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$47.5 million over four years from 2024–25 (and \$14.1 million per year ongoing) to expand Healthdirect Australia to provide national and state-based virtual health services to assist consumers access the most appropriate care. • \$57.4 million in 2024–25 to continue initiatives under the Health Delivery Modernisation Program and to update My Health Record. • An extension of the MBS item for telehealth for sexual and reproductive health will better support women, particularly in regional and remote areas to get the care they need. • A virtual contraception decision-making tool will support women and health practitioners providing contraceptive counselling (\$1.1m). • \$588.5 million over eight years from 2024–25 (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 the need for referral. • \$2.6 million in 2024–25 to support patient care improvement and general practitioner services, health professional education, condition awareness, and digital resources for childhood dementia, juvenile arthritis, stroke, rare diseases, and epilepsy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$188.8 million over four years from 2024–25 by amending the MBS fee for certain CT items to reflect recent technological advances in CT scanning that have reduced scan times for many examinations, enabling faster throughput. • \$8.0 million over three years from 2024–25 to support the development of datasets on miscarriages, sexual and reproductive health, as well as evaluation activities for early pregnancy assessment services. Enhancing data collection and evidence will help inform future women’s health policy. • The Department of Health and Aged Care will see 629 new staff expected in the 24/25 financial year, almost 100 of which will be in the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA).
Aged Care and Digital Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.4 billion to upgrade the technology systems and digital infrastructure across the sector. This includes funding to sustain current systems and to support the implementation of the new Aged Care Act. • As part of the \$1.2 billion Strengthening Medicare package in the 2024-25 Budget, states and territories will be funded (\$882.2 million) to upskill the residential aged care workforce, deliver hospital outreach services in the community, provide virtual care services, and deliver complex care for older people outside of the hospital. • \$111.0 million to enhance the capability of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, in response to the recommendations of the Independent Capability Review, as well as to implement the regulatory framework that will underpin the new Aged Care Act.
Industry, Science and Resources and Digital Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$39.9 million over five years from 2023–24 for the development of policies and capability to support the adoption and use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in a safe and responsible manner, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$21.6 million over four years from 2024–25 to establish a reshaped National AI Centre (NAIC) and an AI advisory body within the Department of Industry, Science and Resources - \$15.7 million over two years from 2024–25 to support industry analytical capability and coordination of AI policy development, regulation, and engagement activities across government, including to review and strengthen existing regulations in the areas of health care, consumer and copyright law - \$2.6 million over three years from 2024–25 to respond to and mitigate against national security risks related to AI. • The Digital Transformation Agency will also develop and implement policies to position the government as an exemplar in the use of AI, with costs to be met from within existing resources. • \$46.9 million over four years from 2024–25 to support the development of industries in Australia and maintain the affordability of nuclear medicines for Australians. Funding includes:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25.9 million over two years from 2024–25 to the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation to continue production of affordable nuclear medicines. • \$18.0 million in 2024–25 to continue to build the capability of the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation to undertake investments and deliver on its policy outcomes. • \$466.4 million for a financing package of equity and loans provided by Export Finance Australia on the National Interest Account to PsiQuantum Pty Ltd to support the construction and operation of quantum computing capabilities and associated investment in industry and research development in Brisbane, as part of a joint investment with the Queensland Government.
Tertiary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.6 billion over 5 years, and an additional \$2.7 billion from 2028–29 to 2034–35 to reform the tertiary education system and deliver Australia's future workforce. This includes \$1.1 billion for reforms to university funding and tertiary system governance.

AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL HEALTH AGENCY

Investments made in the 2023–24 Budget are leveraged and built on in the 2024–25 Budget to improve digital health platforms and better align consumer and clinician facing services. The Agency's 2024–25 priorities include:

- Continuing to support the Australian Government and health sector leaders in implementing the agreed direction and outcomes of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report, designed to modernise and digitally enable primary care, reduce the administrative burden on health professionals, and improve health outcomes for all Australians.
- Enabling consumers to take control of their health journeys with convenient, coordinated, and connected access to health information where and when they need it, including through the My Health app.
- Working with healthcare providers across the continuum of care to increase the sharing and use of core clinical content in My Health Record.
- Modernising the My Health Record system to support greater connectivity and drive near real-time information sharing across care settings.
- Supporting effective telehealth and virtual care with real time information exchange, such as electronic prescriptions.
- In collaboration with standards organisations and government partners such as CSIRO, developing and driving the adoption of clinical terminology, conformance, and standards across clinical domains, with an initial focus on pathology and diagnostic imaging, to drive the sharing of information between care settings and jurisdictions and support safe, secure, efficient and high quality care.
- Supporting rural, remote, and First Nations communities to connect to their health information and make it available to their healthcare providers.
- Respecting and caring for older Australians – ensuring aged care residents and their carers have access to their health information, including to support their transfer to hospital care settings.

SECTOR RESPONSES

AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) was disappointed with the inadequate allocation of funds towards critical technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), stating that despite the global trend of escalating investments in AI and other transformative technologies, the Budget fails to meet the urgency and scale required for Australia to remain competitive on the world stage. AIIA called for a long-term AI strategy. AIIA welcomed a strategic examination of Australia's R&D system and the provision of \$68 million over four years to support First Nations digital inclusion, which includes building remote community Wi-Fi and improving digital literacy.

RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

Research Australia states that the Government's commitment to a strategic examination of Australia's R&D system must shine a spotlight on health and medical research. RA noted there is nothing in the Future Made In Australia Innovation Fund for medical products, despite the lessons of COVID about the importance of manufacturing sovereignty. RA stated an extra \$323 million could be invested in Australian medical research if the Federal Government realised the full potential of the MRFF.

ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES (AAMRI)

AAMRI was pleased to see an ongoing commitment by the Government for medical research funding but noted that the budget did not include the release of further funds from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), which AAMRI asked to be strategically allocated for an MRFF scheme to fund the full costs of research. AAMRI stated the confirmation of the planned National Health and Medical Research Strategy and the national One-Stop-Shop for clinical trials, were the highlights from an otherwise stationary Budget for the sector.

TECH COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

The Tech Council of Australia (TCA) welcomed measures to invest in safe and responsible AI, while continuing to encourage the Government to develop a comprehensive plan to drive AI development and adoption across the economy. TCA noted that this year's Budget builds on existing flagship initiatives like the National Reconstruction Fund and Industry Growth Program, through which they hope to see funding roll out to the tech sector as soon as possible this year.

COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AUSTRALIA (CRA)

CRA welcomed the strategic examination of Australia's R&D system to strengthen alignment with Australia's priorities, improve innovation and research and development outcomes, and set the nation on a trajectory to 3 percent of GDP spent on R&D. CRA highlighted Cochlear as an Australian success story that returned economic benefit to Australians, which investment by government was central.

GO8

GO8 welcomed the focus on providing cost of living relief for students, however, highlighted the structural deficiencies of research funding for Australian universities, pointing to the significant reliance on international student fees to subsidise government investment in research that still leaves Australia's national investment in R&D as a percentage of GDP well short of the target of 3 percent of GDP. The GO8 identified the strategic examination of R&D as critical to a national approach to research that addresses the current fractured and uncoordinated government support across multiple government portfolios and a need for a more integrated approach to research between universities and industry.

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE (AAS)

The Australian Academy of Science welcomed the strategic examination of R&D as a necessary step to align national effort across the whole of government, industry, universities, and philanthropy to create an environment where investment is effective, strategic, and scaled. While welcoming the investments in developing science and technology spillovers in quantum, battery technology, renewable energy, green steel, and hydrogen, AAS called for re-investments in discovery science – the basic feedstock of a Future Made in Australia and the government's net zero ambitions – and substantial investments in Australia's sovereign AI capability so that our nation can remain competitive.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AUSTRALIA

Science and Technology Australia (STA) welcomed the announcement of the strategic examination of the R&D system, as a way to chart a course towards investing 3 percent of GDP in R&D. STA stated the review of the R&D system has the potential to better connect the innovation ecosystem to support business, build a thriving economy, and accelerate the development of products and solutions. This can reverse the decline in national investment in R&D.

AGED AND COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION (ACCPA)

ACCPA welcomed the Government's commitment in the Budget to fully fund wage rises and the \$531.4 million investment in 24,100 home care but highlights the need for 80,000 home care packages to clear the national queue. ACCPA states the delay in the commencement of the new Aged Care Act to July 2025 makes it more critical that the legislation is introduced to Parliament as soon as possible to allow for an effective implementation. ACCPA was disappointed there was no mention of the Aged Care Taskforce in the Budget and calls on the Government response to this.