

MEDIA RELEASE

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Budget is further recognition of vital role of nurses and nursing Federal Budget 2024-25

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) welcomes the cumulative impact of funding and measures in tonight's Federal Budget as recognition by the Government of the vital and significant role of nurses and nursing in providing quality health care for all Australians.

Interim ACN CEO, Emeritus Professor Leanne Boyd, said that direct and indirect measures in the health Budget, and more broadly across portfolios, will help keep nurses in nursing, attract more people to nursing and others to return to nursing, and lead to more accessible and affordable quality health care for the Australian population.

"This Budget contains measures that respect nursing and recognise the unique and valued role that nurses play across the health system in so many settings," Professor Boyd said.

"We see this Budget as a significant building block as the Government's health reform agenda – led by the *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce-Scope of Practice Review* – builds momentum, with multiple reviews to be finalised in the second half of this year.

"Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Midwives stand ready to work to their full scope of practice to complement a stressed and strained medical workforce.

"An unleashed nursing workforce will provide quality care where it is most needed, particularly in rural, remote, and regional communities where other health professionals are leaving, retiring, or are in short supply.

"The Government's decisions to introduce Commonwealth Prac Payments for compulsory training work placements for nurses and provide HECS/HELP relief to ease student debt will help bolster the nursing workforce.

"The Primary Care Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program will support and encourage nurses and midwives to get higher qualifications to enable them to prescribe, order pathology, and provide patient referrals, Professor Boyd said.

"The funding of an additional 29 Urgent Care Clinics provides nurses with more opportunities to lead care and pursue different career pathway options.

“The nurse-led walk-in clinics in the ACT – delivered under the Urgent Care Clinic banner – are proof that this model of care keeps pressure off emergency departments and general practices, values nursing skills and experience, and provides patients and communities with quality and affordable health care.

“Significant funding has been provided to assist women with endometriosis and other complex gynaecological conditions.

“This complements the recent scholarship program partnership between ACN and Endometriosis Australia to train Endometriosis Specialty Nurses for remote communities.

“There are important measures to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vaccination rates and provide cheaper PBS medications for eligible First Nations patients.

“The aged care system, workforce, residents, and older Australians will benefit from additional home care packages, significant IT upgrades, measures to support enrolled nurses in aged care, and funding for better career pathways for all nurses in aged care.

“We also welcome new funding for mental health nurses, new MBS items for midwives and nurse practitioners, and measures to improve indemnity insurance cover for midwives.

“As a highly feminised workforce, nursing and nurses will benefit – professionally and personally – from the Government’s funding for housing; tackling family, domestic and sexual violence; tax cuts; higher wages in aged care and childcare; and the payment of superannuation on the publicly funded Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme.”

ACN will examine the Budget papers more closely and make additional comment in coming days.

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