



# Women's health and wellbeing

The Government is guaranteeing the essential services that Australians rely on, now and into the future. In particular, the Government is committed to providing health care that supports women at every stage of life.

The Government's strong budget management and plan for a stronger economy are ensuring continued record investment in health care for Australians. Australia's more than 12 million women continue to benefit from the Government's record investment in health care, which is expected to increase from \$78.8 billion in 2018-19 to \$85 billion in 2021-22. This Budget fully funds a new five-year public hospital agreement and the Government has guaranteed funding for the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) through the Medicare Guarantee Fund, as announced in last year's Budget.

In this Budget, the Government is investing \$1.6 billion to deliver 14,000 additional high level home care packages to support the choice of older Australians who wish to stay at home but need assistance to do so.

## Healthy beginnings

Australians want to give their children the best start in life.

The Government is acting to support pregnant women by ensuring that they will be able to access the whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine for free from 1 July 2018.

The \$39.5 million investment will mean the vaccine is added to the National Immunisation Program, guaranteeing its access, safety and availability.

The Government will provide \$20.9 million over five years from 2017-18 to improve the health of new families, particularly for pregnant women, as well as initiatives that are directly focused on supporting children.

This includes \$5 million to develop a national digital baby book over two years from 2018-19 to ensure all newborn Australians have access to a lifelong electronic health record.

The Government is committing \$3 million over three years from 2018-19 to deliver better information on healthy eating and physical activity for women during pregnancy.

To improve the long-term health of women who develop gestational diabetes mellitus during pregnancy, the Government is providing \$0.6 million over three years from 2018-19. This funding provides educational materials to increase awareness of the risks of type 2 diabetes among women who experience gestational diabetes.



## Expanding support for women with breast cancer and endometriosis

The Government is providing support to women affected by breast cancer and addressing concerns about the use of urogynaecological mesh.

### Access to new breast cancer medication

The Government continues to provide access to new and affordable medicines through the PBS. This includes listing Ribociclib (Kisqali®) on the PBS from 1 July 2018 for the treatment of advanced breast cancer at a cost of \$703.6 million.

### Addressing safety concerns with urogynaecological mesh and improving access to breast imaging

The Government is continuing to guarantee Medicare. As part of this commitment, the Government is amending the Medicare items to restrict the use of urogynaecological mesh in the surgical repair of pelvic organ prolapse, in addition to listing new interim services for the surgical excision of urogynaecological mesh to address safety concerns.

A new item to enable access to 3D breast tomosynthesis will be added to the MBS as an interim measure while an application for long-term funding is considered by the Medical Services Advisory Committee.

### Tackling endometriosis

The Government is increasing funding for the around one in 10 women who will suffer from endometriosis during their lives.

The Government will provide \$1 million over three years from 2018-19 to increase awareness of endometriosis among women and general practitioners. For Australian women affected by endometriosis, this means more efficient diagnosis, treatment and improved long-term health outcomes.

This builds on the Government's announcement of the first National Action Plan for Endometriosis which provides \$2.5 million in medical health funding to support research into the prevention and treatment of endometriosis.

### PROVIDING ACCESS TO A NEW TREATMENT FOR BREAST CANCER

In early 2018, Margaret was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. Margaret will now have access to Ribociclib (Kisqali®) through the PBS.

Without subsidy, this treatment would cost patients over \$71,820 per year. Upon listing on the PBS, patients like Margaret will only pay \$39.50 per script, while concessional patients will pay \$6.40 per script.

The listing is expected to benefit around 3,150 patients.

## Healthy ageing

Australians are now expected to live 10 years longer than they were 50 years ago. Life expectancy for Australian women is now 84.5 years.

### Supporting choice of care

Around two thirds of recipients of aged care services are women because, on average, they live longer. The Government is investing \$1.6 billion to support 14,000 additional high level home care packages to support the choice of older Australians who wish to stay at home. High level home care is for people with more complex needs. By 2021-22, over 74,000 high level home care packages will be available — an increase of 86 per cent from 2017-18.

In addition to this support for home care, the Government is supporting older women to exercise choice and to live a healthy long life by:

- supporting older Australians to receive the aged care services they need in regional, rural and remote areas;
- funding pilot services to assist older Australians to remain connected to their communities and promote social inclusion;
- providing funding for mental health services for people in residential aged care facilities who can face barriers to accessing these services;
- investing in the physical health of older Australians by supporting the development of interventions to support physical activity; and
- providing funding to organisations to develop innovative technological solutions to assist those Australians living with dementia to better manage their care.