

Overview of Federal Budget 2010/11

The government dubbed this a “Building a Health and Hospitals Network for Australia’s future” budget.

It provides for \$7.3 billion dollars in new funding over the next five years to implement their key recommendations from the three major health reform reports of last year.

So in a nutshell:

From the **Preventative Health Taskforce** report there was funding for:

- Boosting the numbers of Australians participating in sport
- Cutting smoking rates
- Tackling binge drinking
- Managing diabetes

From the **National Primary Health Care Strategy** report there was funding for:

- More comprehensive and convenient GP and primary care

and Belinda will talk more about that, especially in relation to the funding to support general practice nurses.

From the **National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission** Report there was funding for:

- More GP super clinics – upgrading of existing facilities and building new ones
- Mental health – and Kim will tell you more about the mental health nursing money
- Closing the Gap initiatives to strengthen Indigenous communities, for example, early childhood care
- Rural health – more doctors, a rural locum scheme for nurses to allow time for taking leave, clinical training scholarships for allied health students
- E-health – for implementing the personally controlled electronic health records (opt-in system)
- The fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding with Medicines Australia for a better deal on PBS medicines.
- Quicker access to high quality hospital care – for example, funding to reduce emergency department waiting times, new sub-acute hospital beds, Govt to become major funder of public hospitals, establishment of Local Hospital Networks
- Funding for the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Aged care funding to better support nurses working in aged care: I need to say here that funding was redirected from the Bringing the Nurses Back to the Workforce program which hadn’t been terribly successful, into the aged care budget measures:

- funding provided to assist existing aged care workers to upgrade qualifications (Cert 111, EN, RN), more scholarships for EN and RN,
- increase numbers of Nurse practitioners in aged care,
- funding to explore regulation of personal care workers and assistants in nursing in aged care;
- funding to conduct a research study on staffing levels, skills mix and resident care needs in residential aged care facilities.

Given the ANFs national *Because We Care* campaign these aged care measures were most welcome. And we'll keep lobbying now for other things we'd asked for such as wage parity for aged care nurses and care workers.

A beginning for the health reforms with this budget but of course we still need to keep the pressure on politicians to make sure that the directions now started are continued.