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Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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THREE MAJOR REFORM PROJECTS RESPONDED TO IN THE 2010-11 BUDGET

Today's Budget is the culmination of the work of the Government's three key health reform reports, and provides \$7.3 billion in new funding to implement their key recommendations.

On coming to office, the Government commissioned three key reports to examine critical areas of the health system – the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC), the Preventative Health Taskforce (the Taskforce) and the Primary Care Strategy.

More than 30 appointed experts led this work to comprehensively analyse our health system and provide advice to the Government about delivering better health outcomes and better health services for all Australians.

These experts led their own consultations, and their recommendations were further road tested by the Government in more than 100 local forums around the country in 2009 and early 2010.

This Budget has secured the future of our health system by funding a majority of recommended reforms called for by those experts.

In implementing and supporting 94 – the vast majority – of the NHHRC's recommendations, the Government has made strategic reforms to fundamentally restructure the health system, including taking majority funding responsibility for hospitals, and funding hospitals for activity against strong national standards.

Key recommendations from the NHHRC on lifting the quality of care, improving access to hospital services through funding linked to performance targets, and filling the 'missing links' in the system such as sub-acute care and electronic health records, have been accepted and funded in this Budget.

A major reform funded by this Budget is the Government's takeover of GP and primary care services – supported by investments in more GPs, more support for nurses

working in general practice, better access to after hours GP care, and better connected care in the community.

The first ever National Primary Care Strategy has also been released with the Budget, and implements the Draft Strategy developed by the External Reference Group.

The strategy recommends growing our primary care workforce, implementing personally controlled electronic health records, regionalising primary care services, boosting infrastructure, and better supporting chronic disease patients. Each of these key areas are being acted upon in this Budget.

Independent primary care organisations – *Medicare Locals* – will be established throughout the country, to enhance and better integrate services provided by local GPs and primary care providers, and make sure that working families have access to the health care they need, when and where they need it.

Understanding the need to put more energy into keeping people well and out of hospital, the Government is acting on 28 out of 35 key action areas recommended by the Preventative Health Taskforce, but has not adopted each individual sub-recommendation.

The Government supports and has funded vital preventative health infrastructure, as recommended by the Taskforce, including the establishment of a National Preventative Health Agency, and the most ambitious study of Australia's health ever conducted.

On the Taskforce's recommendation, the Government has announced the strongest ever package of measures to cut smoking rates, our biggest single cause of preventable deaths. A world first will be pursued by mandating plain packaging for tobacco.

Investments targeting diabetes, encouraging more participation in sport, and an ongoing commitment to working with industry and the broader community in prevention and health promotion, will help to deliver on the Government's aim of keeping people healthy.

Responses to each report can be found at yourhealth.gov.au

The Government thanks Dr Christine Bennett, Dr Tony Hobbs and Professor Rob Moodie, and all their fellow Commissioners and appointees, for their hard work and the vision they have helped to create for better health for all Australians.

For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220