



## **The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**

Minister for Health

## **The Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP**

Minister for Women

Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **\$52.2 million to improve women's health**

The Liberal National Government will today launch the National Women's Health Strategy 2020-2030 with more than \$50 million in funding to improve women's health in areas such as ovarian cancer and endometriosis.

We will release the National Women's Health Strategy, which sets out a national approach to improving health outcomes for all women and girls in Australia, particularly those at greatest risk of poor health.

Australian women on the whole enjoy long, healthy lives, with a current average life expectancy of 85 for those born in recent years. This relatively long life expectancy disguises a large element of avoidable ill-health and inequitable outcomes between different groups.

The women's health strategy for 2020-2030 includes recommendations for action by governments, health professionals and women themselves. It recognises that there is no "average" woman and is inclusive of sexuality and gender identities.

We are also announcing today that our Government will provide further funding of \$52.2 million to improve women's health in a number of areas including:

- \$20 million for research to help Australian women in their fight against ovarian cancer with a focus on early detection. Ovarian cancer has a poor prognosis, with only 43 of every 100 women diagnosed still alive five years after their diagnosis. A complete understanding of the risk factors for ovarian cancer are not yet known and further research is required to develop comprehensive prevention and detection strategies. The funding, from 2019–20 to 2022–23, will support ovarian cancer research under the new Medical Research Future Fund. Researchers will be able to apply for funding through a contestable peer-reviewed funding round with the best research proposals funded to ensure impact. Early detection and finding a cure for ovarian cancer will be a priority for this funding.
- Over \$10 million for endometriosis

- \$9 million for contestable targeted call from the Medical Research Future Fund for endometriosis research to improve the treatment and understanding on an often misunderstood and crippling condition
- \$1.06 million to develop a digital health platform for endometriosis research and support. The platform will enable a ‘one-stop shop’ for endometriosis information and resources. It will also be used as a treatment tool that will refine effective treatments for endometriosis based on patient feedback and be a vehicle for promoting and supporting collaborative research
- EndoActive will receive \$160,000 to disseminate its award winning Shared Perspectives endometriosis videos, free of charge, to medical professionals and women affected by endometriosis. Shared Perspectives is a resource of 25 evidence-based videos that help health professionals and patients to better understand the condition and provide guidance regarding effective methods of management and treatment
- \$5 million to Jean Hailes for Women’s Health for the continuation of its National Women’s Health Initiative, including clinical services, provision of information on women’s health to employers, and the national digital gateway for women’s health and wellbeing for doctors and patients
- \$9 million investment to The Glen to build and run a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program specifically for women and run by the people behind one of Australia’s most successful Aboriginal service providers is set to become a reality
- \$1.3 million for an intensive support service to support families following stillbirth. The program, delivered through SANDS, will deliver an intensive support service that begins in the hospital and continues once the family have returned home
- More than \$4 million for reproductive and family planning organisations
- \$1.5 million over three years for local women’s health promotion grants

Today’s announcements add to the Government’s strong record on women’s health.

We launched the first National Action Plan for Endometriosis, backed by an initial \$4.7 million and now an additional \$9 million for research.

We are providing \$7 million to help reduce stillbirth in Australia, and \$26 million to combat pre- and post-natal depression.

Last month we announced \$78 million to give hundreds more women and children escaping domestic and family violence a safe place to sleep.

We continue to invest strongly in better treatment and prevention of women’s cancers, including the updated cervical cancer screening program and the expanded Gardasil vaccine program.

In the Budget our Government announced \$70.2 million to establish six residential eating disorders centres and provide national coordination for eating disorders treatment.

They will advance the way eating disorders are diagnosed and treated, providing 24/7 intensive care and support, as well as training, education and advocacy.

There are around 1 million Australians living with an eating disorder. Eating disorders can be debilitating for both men and women of any age. Many suffer in silence with only 25 per cent of people with eating disorders are thought to be diagnosed.

This build on the historic \$110 million investment to introduce new MBS items for eating disorders, announced in December 2018.

This will allow people with anorexia nervosa and other severe psychological eating disorders to be able to access a Medicare rebate of up to 40 psychological and 20 dietetic services per year, depending on their needs.

In this year's Budget we also invested \$32 million so breast cancer patients, who are largely women, have life-saving MRI and PET scans covered under Medicare, saving patients up to \$1,500 per scan.

We have added numerous new treatments for women's cancers to the PBS—such as Kisqali, for breast cancer, a \$700 million investment saving more than 3000 patients \$70,000 a year.

Ibrance, which will be listed on the PBS on May 1, for the treatment of hormone receptor positive locally advanced inoperable or metastatic breast cancer, expected to save 3000 patients \$55,000 a year. Olaparib for ovarian cancer saving patients \$90,000 a year, and Lynparza for ovarian cancer, also saving women and their families \$90,000 a year.

We have also led development of Australia's National Breastfeeding Strategy. This was approved by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council last month and has now been endorsed by the COAG Health Council.

This strategy will go a long way to helping Australian women to reach the WHO targets—exclusive breastfeeding up to six months, and continued breastfeeding for up to two years.

Since the first of this month, we're providing Continuous Glucose Monitoring devices to pregnant women, and we have committed \$40 million to ensure every pregnant woman can get free whooping cough vaccine to protect her and her baby.

The National Strategic Approach to Maternity Services provides an important opportunity to develop a genuinely holistic policy framework that recognises and values all models of care, including midwifery continuity of carer.

We have asked that the NSAMS commits to improving access for women to continuity of care with the care provider of their choice – including midwifery continuity of care.

The strategy will complement the Government's record investment in preventing and responding to violence against women and children.

The \$328 million package announced by the Prime Minister on March 5 includes funding for groups especially at risk, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as frontline services and initiatives to change the culture of disrespect towards women. The Government's funding brings the Coalition Government's investment for women and children's safety to more than \$840 million since 2013.

We want to thank the women from all walks of life, doctors, policy makers and others who took part in the consultations to draft the strategy