

WHITE PAPER



Primary Health: Policy Shifts & Strategic Impacts | **May 2025**

White paper for Queensland
Healthcare Professionals

May 8th 2025

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(i) Executive Summary

The 2025 federal election resulted in a decisive Labor victory, granting the government a strengthened mandate to pursue significant healthcare reforms. The Albanese Labor Government has undertaken significant reforms to strengthen Australia's healthcare system, with significant emphasis on primary care and Medicare.

These initiatives aim to enhance accessibility, affordability, and quality of healthcare services nationwide. From a state-based standpoint, this translates to increased investments in primary care infrastructure and workforce development, presenting both opportunities and challenges for healthcare practitioners, in a changing landscape.

The opportunity exists to contribute to the development of a more integrated and accessible healthcare system. A summary of the key investments have been outlined below.

Historic Investment in Medicare

In the 2025–26 federal budget, the government announced an unprecedented \$8.5 billion investment in Medicare—the largest since its inception over 40 years ago. This funding is directed towards:

- Delivering an additional 18 million bulk-billed GP visits annually
- Providing hundreds of nursing scholarships
- Training thousands more doctors through the largest GP training program ever

Investment in Expansion of UCCs

- Labor's \$644 million investment will establish 50 new Urgent Care Clinics across Australia, including Queensland, by mid-2026.
- Service Delivery: These clinics present opportunities for allied health professionals to integrate services such as physiotherapy, mental health support, and chronic disease management.

(ii) Executive Summary

Advocacy for Role Recognition and Scope of Practice

- Policy Development: The expansion of roles in other sectors, like pharmacy, may set precedents for allied health.
- The federal and several state governments have launched or expanded pharmacist prescribing trials, allowing pharmacists to:
 - Prescribe medications for minor ailments (e.g., UTIs, skin conditions)
 - Provide extended services like vaccinations and health screenings
 - Participate in chronic disease management (e.g., asthma, diabetes)

These initiatives aim to improve primary care access and reduce pressure on GPs, and they signal growing government support for extended scopes of practice—a relevant trend for allied health professionals advocating for similar recognition.

Emphasis on Preventative Health and Chronic Disease Management

- Policy Focus: The federal government's emphasis on preventative health aligns with the core competencies of allied health professionals.

Strategic Opportunities

- Service Expansion: Develop services tailored to the needs of rural and remote communities, aligning with state and federal workforce strategies.
- Digital Health Initiatives: Leverage telehealth and digital platforms to expand service reach and efficiency.
- Policy Engagement: Actively participate in policy development processes to advocate for the recognition and expansion of allied health roles.



Workforce Strategies & Investment



Despite leadership changes at the state level, the Queensland Government seems to remain committed to the \$1.7 billion allocated for the Health Workforce Strategy, which aims to expand the healthcare workforce by 45,000 by 2032, including 1,000 allied health professionals.



Workforce Strategies & Investment



45K

The strategy aims to add 45,000 staff to the healthcare workforce by 2032.



46%

Nearly half of the growth will come from nursing and midwifery, projected to rise by 46.4%.



+1000

Increase in 1,000 allied health professionals by 2032.



Medicare Strategies & Investment



The Queensland Government plans a \$1.7 billion investment in its Health Workforce Strategy, aiming to increase the healthcare workforce by 45,000 by 2032, including 1,000 allied health professionals.



Medicare Strategies & Investment



Medicare Expansion: Plans to invest \$8.5 billion to increase bulk-billed GP visits by 18 million annually

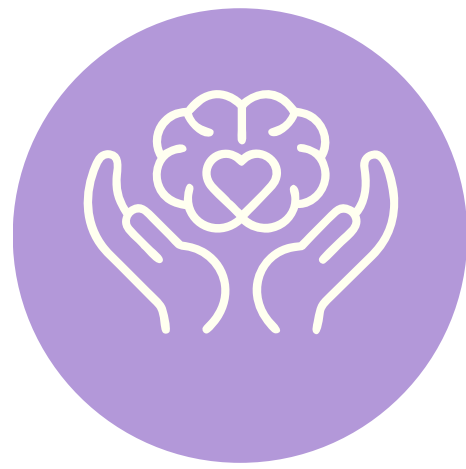


Goal to achieve 9/10 GP visits being bulk-billed by the end of the decade.



At a Federal level, Labor plans to establish 50 new Urgent Care Clinics across Australia, including QLD





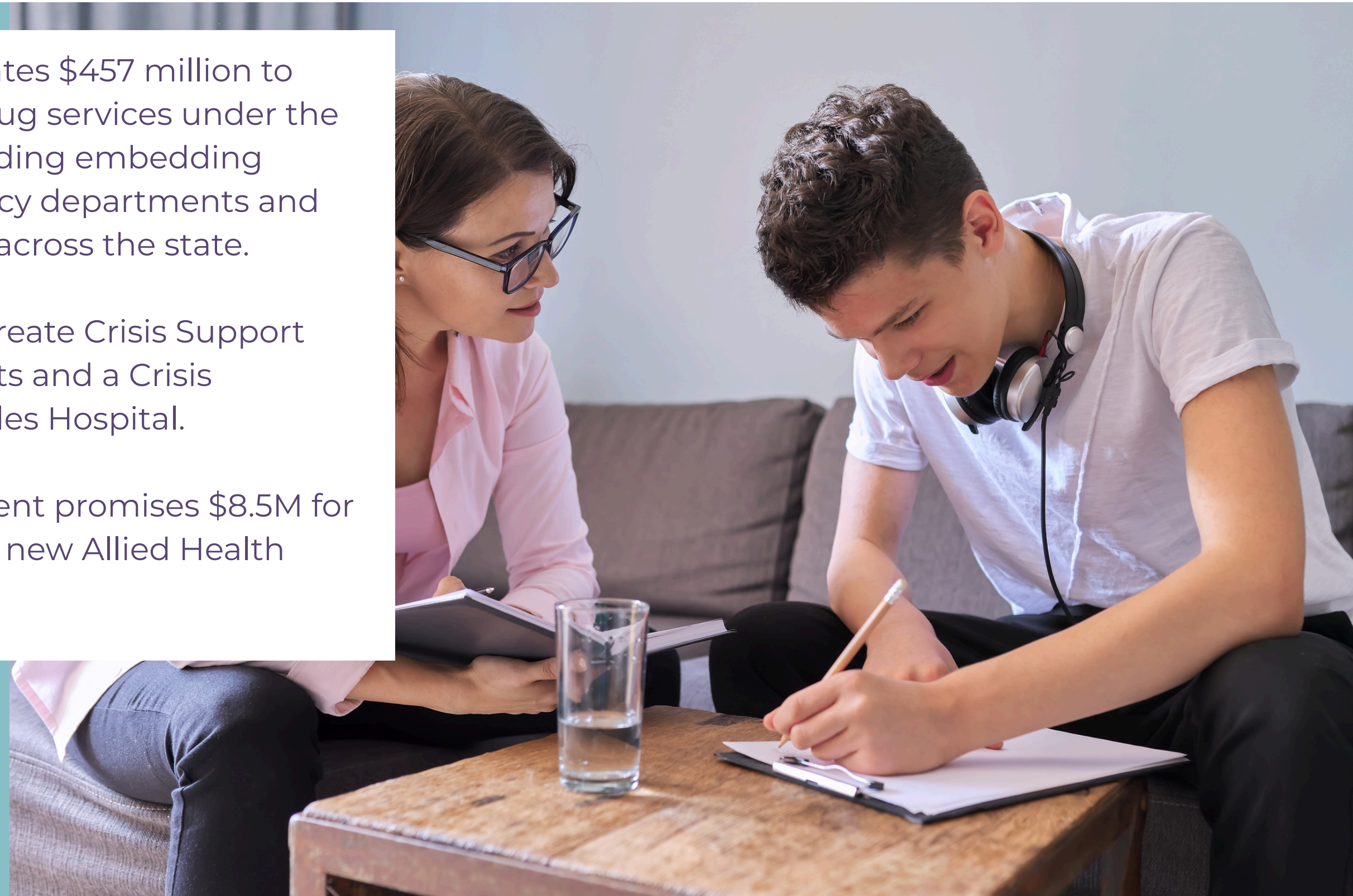
Mental Health Strategies & Investment



Queensland's 2024–25 budget allocates \$457 million to boost mental health, alcohol, and drug services under the Better Care Together initiative, including embedding mental health clinicians in emergency departments and enhancing allied health and quality across the state.

Key investments include \$61.6M to create Crisis Support Spaces near emergency departments and a Crisis Stabilisation Unit at The Prince Charles Hospital.

Additionally, the Albanese Government promises \$8.5M for workforce development, including a new Allied Health Graduate Program.



Mental Health Strategies & Investment



Mental health and community care: *Better Together* funding commitments.



\$61.6 million is dedicated to establishing new Crisis Support Spaces, embedding mental health clinicians in EDs



\$14.5M directed towards improving mental health, alcohol, and other drugs services for First Nations peoples

Conclusion

The 2025 federal election has set the stage for significant reforms in Australia's healthcare system, with continued prioritisation on strengthening Medicare.

The 2025 post-election climate offers one of the most coordinated health investment periods in recent history, and sets the stage for significant reforms in Australia's healthcare system— especially for practitioners, allied health groups, and organisations engaged in prevention, early intervention, and mental health.

How will your organisation evolve to meet rising demand, harness new funding streams, and deliver more connected, equitable care?

In the case of allied healthcare providers, this presents a unique opportunity to align services with government priorities, advocate for professional recognition, and contribute to the development of a more integrated and accessible healthcare system.

Now is the time to act.



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