



26 September 2022

The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer of Australia
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: prebudgetsubs@treasury.gov.au

Dear Treasurer,

ANMF October Pre-Budget submission 2022-23

I am pleased to provide the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation's (ANMF) pre-budget submission to the next Federal Budget 2022-23 to be handed down on the 25th of October 2022. The ANMF acknowledges the Labor Government's commitment to Australia's healthcare workforce of which well over 50 percent are nurses, midwives, and care workers.

About the ANMF

The ANMF is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 320,000 nurses, midwives and care workers across the country.

Our members work in the public and private health, aged care, and disability sectors across a wide variety of urban, rural, and remote locations. We work with them to improve their ability to deliver safe and best practice care in each and every one of these settings, fulfil their professional goals and achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Our strong and growing membership and integrated role as both a trade union and professional organisation provides us with a complete understanding of all aspects of the nursing and midwifery professions and see us uniquely placed to defend and advance our professions.

Through our work with members, we aim to strengthen the contribution of nursing and midwifery to improving Australia's health and aged care systems, and the health of our national and global communities.

The ANMF on this occasion has chosen to provide our pre-budget submission in the form of a letter rather than a more extensive document as the usual formal

ANMF Federal Office

Level 1, 365 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia

E anmffederal@anmf.org.au

W www.anmf.org.au

ANMF Journals

Australian Nursing and
Midwifery Journal (ANMJ)

E anmjadmin@anmf.org.au

W www.anmj.org.au

Australian Journal of

Advanced Nursing (AJAN)

E ajan@anmf.org.au

W www.ajan.com.au

ABN 41 816 898 298



system for soliciting and publishing pre-budget submissions does not appear to have been established for the second Federal Budget 2022-23.

We take this opportunity to highlight the valuable contributions nurses, midwives, and carers currently make to Australia's health and aged care sectors and in this letter outline how, through good, well-funded Government policy, this contribution must be dramatically increased. Adopting and implementing our recommended policy reforms would result in improved cost efficiency for Governments and providers, increased patient satisfaction, better health and wellbeing outcomes, and nurses, midwives, and carers being generally happier with the work they do, resulting in better workforce recruitment and retention.

The ANMF believes that the 2022-23 Federal Budget is a major opportunity to break down barriers that prevent nurses, midwives, and carers from working to their full potential to protect and improve the health of all Australians, now and in the future. Whilst we outline our five priorities below, the ANMF will be undertaking further work to develop those priority areas in detail ahead of the May budget 2023.

The ANMF has five priorities which we seek to advance with regard to the Federal Budget 2022-23:

- 1. A high-quality, well-funded, and sustainable health and maternity care system with the capacity and resources to meet increased demand and complex needs across all sectors from preventive and primary health to hospital and end of life care.**
- 2. A strong, valued aged care workforce that is supported to work safely and effectively to deliver high-quality, dignified care to all residents and clients.**
- 3. A strong, valued post-pandemic healthcare and maternity workforce that is supported to work safely and effectively to deliver the best possible experience and outcomes to every patient and client.**
- 4. Gender equity in all Australian workplaces and enhanced recognition of and solutions to the increased burden on the nursing, midwifery, and carer workforce.**
- 5. Future-ready policies, legislation, and practices that genuinely and proactively address the climate crisis and its impacts on Australia, the region, and the world.**

While the COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-century global health emergency, many of the pressures it has revealed across every sector including aged care, public and private hospitals, mental health, primary health, maternity care and disability are longstanding issues that prevent safe, appropriate, effective, and affordable care for all Australians.

In our wealthy, well-resourced, country, every Australian should be able to expect and receive the very best care, delivered in a timely fashion, according to their wishes, in a place of their choosing. To achieve this, genuine, significant, and sustained reform is urgently required.

The ANMF seeks a commitment from the Australian Government to enact real reform. Reform that has the true interests and well-being of the Australian people as its first priority. This can be achieved by acknowledging the ANMF's priorities as central to our country's health and well-being and through implementing the following actions:



1. A high-quality, well-funded, and sustainable health and maternity care system

- a. Require state territory governments to reinvest the 5 percent of ‘freed-up’ funds resulting from the Federal Government’s contribution of 50 percent funding for health to improve health and maternity sector performance and capacity.
- b. Remove the artificial 6.5 percent cap on funding growth that is shared between states and territories so funding can meet community health needs based on real realities on the ground.
- c. Update health and maternity care funding models to remove structural and financial barriers to community member’s access to nurse and midwife-led services, particularly in areas of poorer access including:
 - i. ensuring that all babies cared for by midwives are appropriately counted and funded.¹
 - ii. ensuring that nurses (including nurse practitioners) and midwives are supported and funded to work to their full scope of practice in all settings.
- d. Fund and support maximum utilisation of the nursing and midwifery workforces to enhance health promotion and public health, increase preventative health care measures, and facilitate better access to primary health care.
- e. Increase Federal Government funding of the primary and preventative care sectors to 5 percent of total health funding.

2. A strong and valued aged care workforce

- a. Improve working conditions and job security (e.g., in relation to casual, low-hour contract, sub-contract/gig workers) for staff across residential and in-home/community aged care and fund increased wages.
- b. Fund evidence-based infectious disease preparedness measures across residential and in-home/community aged care ensuring approaches are appropriate and recognise that the aged care sector must be considered to process the same degree of risk as other health and maternity care contexts.
- c. Ensure that aged care funding is tied to care delivery, safety, and quality and that funding arrangements increase in line with the changing context and population within the sector.

3. A strong, valued post-pandemic healthcare workforce

- a. Mandate publicly reported, evidence-based minimum safe staffing levels and skill-mix across the health, maternity, and aged care systems to ensure the best health consumer outcomes and the delivery of safe, high-quality care in all settings.
- b. Fund the development and implementation of comprehensive, evidence-based nursing, midwifery, and care-worker workforce planning including:
 - i. High-quality, nationally consistent transition to practice programs for all nurses and midwives in every setting.

¹ Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union (QNMU). It’s time to Count the Babies! Online: QNMU. 2022. Available: <https://www.qnmu.org.au/CountTheBabies>



- ii. Improved data collection and data linkage by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and universities to track nursing and midwifery students from undergraduate courses through to full registration.
- c. Work in collaboration with health and aged care stakeholders, health and workforce researchers, and nursing and midwifery peak bodies to improve recruitment and retention of the nursing, midwifery, and care-worker workforce including expansion of Victoria's successful model of pre-graduation employment for Registered Undergraduate Students of Nursing and Midwifery (RUSON/M).²
- d. Fund nationally consistent peer support/mentor programs similar to those currently operating in Tasmania and South Australia to keep experienced nurse, midwife, and carer staff in practice for longer and that encourages staff who have left work or the sector to return to practice.
- e. Ensure housing policy is fit for purpose to ensure adequate, safe, and financially feasible accommodation for the growing workforce required to meet Australia's current and future challenges.
- f. Ensure that any migration of nursing, midwifery, and care workers is undertaken as an 'industry wide approach' and includes a decent minimum wage of \$91,000, appropriate housing and access to healthcare and childcare.

2. Gender equity in all Australian workplaces

- a. Ensure equal rights for working women.
- b. Eradicate the gender pay and superannuation gap.
- c. Provide free, accessible childcare.
- d. Expand paid parental leave.
- e. Embed respectful relationships in workplaces across Australia and end all forms of workplace violence.

3. Action to address the health impacts of the climate crisis on Australia and the region

- a. Develop and implement a standalone, National Plan on Climate, Health and Well-being based on the Framework developed by the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA).
- b. Fund programs and initiatives that support those most adversely impacted by climate change including people living in drought and natural disaster affected regions in Australia and neighbouring regions in the South Pacific.

The ANMF looks forward to working with the Government to help realise the full potential for nurses, midwives, and carers to have safe, rewarding employment and to continue supporting all Australians to stay healthy and to receive the right care in the right place at the right time. The health, aged care, disability, and maternity sectors are in a period of significant strain and change and we hope to work in partnership with the Government to help meet these current and future

² Victorian Department of Health. Undergraduate student employment. Online: Victorian Government. 2022. Available: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing-and-midwifery/undergraduate-student-employment>



challenges to ensure a healthy and safe future for all. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further, any of the matters raised in this letter with you.

Yours faithfully,

Annie Butler
Federal Secretary

cc. Hon Mark Butler MP
Hon Anika Wells MP
Hon Ged Kearney MP