
Health Well-Being Report

Madam President, distinguished guests, fellow state councillors, members, ladies, and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Health and Well-Being Report for ICPA-NSW at the 2024 State Conference.

ICPA has raised with the Minister of Health and Minister for Regional Health the following issues:

- Limited access to Allied Health Services and the inclusion of these in the IPTAAS Scheme,
- Screening Health Checks for Children,
- Post-natal services,
- Counselling and support services in schools, and
- The increasing wait times for families to access specialist services in rural and remote NSW.

A common factor in all these issues was the importance of continuity in the provision of these services and varying differences with services provided across the different health districts. We regularly hear stories about members having to start from scratch and develop new relationships when either services are suspended, or staff move on.

Whilst acknowledging the difficulty in accessing these services in correspondence received the Minister stated that *“this presents opportunities for rural local health districts to consider increasing the availability of public allied services based on the needs of their communities”* He also advised *“that the proposal for NSW Health to provide subsidies to receive private or not-for-profit allied health services would generally not be supported”*. These are concerns that our members have raised over numerous years and ICPA are committed to ensure that these continue to be raised with the relevant Government departments.

The NSW Budget for 2023-24 outlined increased funding for regional and rural areas in NSW. The Minns Labour Government has interestingly stated that “People living in rural, regional and remote parts of NSW will have better access to high-quality healthcare as part of 2023-24 NSW Budget”.

A brief overview includes;

- \$438.6 million to be invested in recruiting an extra 500 rural and regional paramedics.
- Increasing the incentive payment for healthcare workers moving to regional and remote areas from \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- \$419.1 million to increase staffing levels and address the shortage of nurses.
- \$121.9 million over 5 years towards study subsidies for healthcare workers to ensure continuation of attracting graduates.
- \$3.8 billion for new and upgraded facilities in regional NSW including Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Moree, and Glen Innes.
- \$18.6 million to fund 29 new and 8 existing McGrath Foundation Breast Screen Nurses.

There is also a focus on creating a gender equal society for a stronger economy including \$13.8 million to improve Women's participation and empowerment in the workforce and \$30 million for Level the Playing Field Facilities Fund for new and upgraded facilities to empower women to participate in sport. Whilst these Budget announcements are welcome as we are all aware the actual implementation of these is another issue.

The NSW Department of Education is continuing their School Based Traineeship program which allows high school students to remain at school whilst completing their traineeship. Traineeships include Allied Health Assistance, Health Service Assistant, Community Services – Individual Support (Ageing) and Health Services- Dental Assisting. I have been fortunate in my workplace to witness first hand the importance of these programs and as a result two local students have been able to commence employment with our local hospital whilst a new student has just commenced their 2-year traineeship. This demonstrates the importance of being able to train locals to keep them local.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow State Councillors and my family for their support throughout the year.

Thank you.

Myfi Kellahan
Health and Wellbeing Convenor