



The Hon Greg Hunt
Minister for Health and Aged Care

Fiona Ellis
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Dear Ms Ellis

I refer to your correspondence regarding ongoing support for Australians with congenital or acquired heart disease.

The Morrison Government is proud to have established the HeartKids project through a \$26 million investment to tackle congenital heart disease. The Morrison Government is providing \$20 million through the Medical Research Future Fund to support our best and brightest researchers to translate their vital work into real health benefits – better diagnosis, treatment and prevention of congenital heart disease. The Morrison Government is also providing up to \$6 million to help implement the recommendations of the National Strategic Action Plan for Childhood Heart Disease by supporting HeartKids with \$1 million per year over six years.

This funding will help deliver the action identified through the National Strategic Action Plan for Childhood Heart Disease that was launched in 2019.

Youth Mental Health

The Morrison Government is committed to supporting young people and the issues they face with practical measures that reflect their priorities. Supporting them to develop the knowledge, skills and capabilities to be successful in education, work and life.

In August 2021, the Government launched [Australia's Youth Policy Framework](#), following consultations with young Australians. The policy framework sets out a blueprint for how the Government is supporting young people to navigate life's challenges and be engaged and active citizens who contribute productively to society.

The mental health and wellbeing of young Australians is a key priority for the Morrison Government. The almost \$3 billion National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, outlined in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Budgets, represents the single largest Commonwealth investment in mental health and suicide prevention in Australia's history. It takes the total mental health and suicide prevention funding to an estimated record \$6.8 billion in 2022-23 in the health portfolio alone – a more than 100 per cent increase since 2012-13 when Labor was last in Government - and helps set Australia up for the future by introducing landmark reforms and will transform mental health care.

As part of this, in October 2021 the Morrison Government launched the world's first National Child Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, backed by more than \$317 million. A world first, the Child Strategy focuses on the mental health and wellbeing of children from birth through to 12 years of age, as well as the families and communities that nurture them. The Government will continue to deliver on key priorities of the strategy including the creation of a national network of new Head to Health Kids mental health and wellbeing centres, online parenting education and support programmes and expansion of Medicare support for family members and/or carers.

The Morrison Government is also undertaking the largest ever expansion of the headspace network, increasing the number of centres to 164 nationally by 2025-26, up from just 56 in 2013. Over the next four years from 2021-22, the Government is investing \$873.2 million in the national headspace network. This includes \$152 million to address demand and reduce wait times and an additional \$20.3 million over four years from 2021-22 for eheadspace. To ensure continuity of care for vulnerable young Australians experiencing, or at risk of, psychosis, a further \$206.5 million will be provided for the Early Psychosis Youth Services (EPYS) program, which is delivered by headspace.

This includes expanding the program to the ACT and Tasmania, meaning the network will be able to help young people in every state and territory.

Additionally, the Morrison Government is also investing \$22.6 million to support mental health and wellbeing in education and home environments, and support further research into youth mental health and suicide prevention. This investment includes \$9.7 million for nationally consistent mechanisms to better manage mental health and wellbeing concerns in schools, \$1.8 million for the Raising Children Network, \$3.9 million for evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention research activities and services delivered by the Thompson Institute, and \$3.3 million for the Raise Foundation to deliver its best-practice, early intervention and prevention student mentoring program to vulnerable students for a further two years.

Rural Health

The Morrison Government is continuing its ongoing commitment to ensure that all Australians can access quality health care services and treatments, no matter where they live, including in regional, rural and remote communities. We are building on the 10-Year Stronger Rural Health Strategy within the Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan, to focus on improving health outcomes by ensuring there is quality health workforce distributed across the country according to community need. 5 The 10-Year Stronger Rural Health Strategy was unveiled in 2018–19 and the Government originally invested \$550 million in the Strategy. This investment is built on through \$296.5 million in the 2022–23 Budget.

The Morrison Government understands that the key to delivering better health outcomes for Australians is our health workforce, including in regional and remote communities. As such, we are investing \$152.4 million in more training and education opportunities in these regions. We are also investing a significant \$56.8 million for aeromedical services, which ensure people in rural and remote Australia can access health services, regardless of where they live. Aeromedical services provide critical health and medical services to millions of Australians, the iconic Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) services approximately 6.5 million square kilometres or 85% of the nation's landmass, and many of the smaller outlying islands.

The RFDS is an integral and iconic part of Australia's rural and remote health landscape, and a new 10-year strategic agreement will further support the RFDS with \$33.3 million in additional funding for their ongoing work delivering services in rural and remote locations.

This will take the Government's funding contribution to the RFDS to more than \$991.7 million over the next 10 years. The Government is also investing \$18 million to guarantee rescue services and emergency aeromedical services through CareFlight. This funding will expand aeromedical support to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Top End region of the Northern Territory.

In addition, \$4.1 million is being provided for Little Wings to deliver aeromedical transport services for seriously ill children across rural New South Wales, with a further expansion of services planned into the ACT and Queensland. We are also supporting outreach health and medical services to regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland through a \$17.2 million investment in Heart of Australia. This will support five mobile clinics to continue to travel to 32 communities, delivering diagnostic, treatment and follow-up care services, including cardiology, endocrinology, sleep medicine, psychiatry, geriatric medicine, immunology, general medicine, neurology, gastroenterology and gynaecology. In 2022, Heart of Australia will also commence providing CT and x-ray services.

A re-elected Morrison Government looks forward to continuing working with HeartKids to deliver better health outcomes for the over 65,000 Australians living with congenital heart disease.

Yours Sincerely



Greg Hunt