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## Media Release

### A pre-election health budget that is fiscally conservative

Australian College of Nursing (ACN) welcomes tonight's 2016-17 Federal Health Budget announcements that included some promising new initiatives in an otherwise conservative budget package.

While these announcements are encouraging, they fall well short of meeting the need for continued health systems reform including new approaches to funding, innovative models of care and greater utilisation of the health workforce to improve service reach and impact. ACN reiterates it is essential to invest in nurse leaders to drive transformational change in the health and aged care system.

ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward is cautiously optimistic about the proposed budget which gives strategic direction for integrated health reform. Some of the measures outlined are promising to deliver healthier populations and a healthier nation.

ACN is pleased to see the continuation of the Rural Health General Practice Grants Program. This is a positive move towards improving access to skilled health professionals in rural and regional areas of Australia. It is also encouraging to see the continued funding of the Home and Community Care Services in Western Australia with a Commonwealth contribution of \$392.9 million. This will allow ongoing service delivery for clients receiving HACC services in Western Australia.

Furthermore, the *Healthier Medicare- Trial of Health Care Homes* for patients with chronic and complex conditions will provide continuity of care, coordinated services and a team based approach according to the needs and wishes of the patient. ACN believes this model of care puts the patient at the centre of care, delivered in a team based environment. Whilst the government says the preferred clinician is the GP, ACN advocates that nurses and nurse practitioners are well positioned to take on this role and be a coordinator of care.

ACN is pleased to see the implementation of a National Cancer Screening Register coupled with the subsidisation of MRI to detect certain types of breast cancer.

ACN CEO Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward says the budget is a promising initiative in the implementation of integrated health reform, however, is eager to see more detail.

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