



## Aged Care – COVID-19 pandemic response

The Australian Government is committed to supporting the aged care sector's response to COVID-19. An additional \$746.3 million further extends support announced in March, May and August as part of the Aged Care COVID-19 response plan. This takes the total support for older Australians in aged care to more than \$1.6 billion since the start of the pandemic.

In addition to the \$205.3 million COVID-19 Support Payment provided to residential aged care providers in May 2020, the Government is extending this payment as part of a \$245 million package. Under this funding, trained infection control officers will be mandated, responding to the recommendation of the Aged Care Royal Commission COVID-19: a special report.

This also includes, for a further six months, an extension to the Government's 30 per cent increase in the viability supplement which assists providers in rural and remote areas, and the residential care homeless supplement for aged care homes specialising in caring for people who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Additional support for the aged care workforce includes:

- \$81 million for additional surge workforce and increased training for aged care workers on top of \$101.2 million announced in March 2020.
- \$8.4 million for supplementary payments to help cover quarantine costs and interstate staff.
- A total of \$440 million for the Aged Care Workforce Retention Bonus Payment – across three payments – to encourage residential and home care workers to continue providing direct care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- \$92.4 million for Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 to work at a single site.
- \$71.4 million for additional short-term support for older Australians.
- \$1.5 million to ensure appropriate and regular communication from Health Direct to the families and loved ones of Aged Care Residents affected by COVID-19.
- \$10.8 million for nursing skills and competence.
- \$9 million for the Aged Care Quality Safety Commission.

More than \$9.1 million has supported the establishment of the Victorian Aged Care Response Centre alongside the Victorian Government. This allows Victorian aged care providers to boost their workforce while undergoing training, and provides a prototype for similar emergency centres to be rolled out as necessary where outbreaks occur across the country.

More than \$12.5 million has been committed to supporting residents and their families with increased availability of grief and trauma support services for aged care residents and their families, as well as the \$10 million Community Visitors Scheme which supports volunteer visits to provide friendship and companionship to older people.

Pathology providers have been contracted to deploy specialised mobile testing and asymptomatic teams to aged care facilities in outbreak areas and undertake testing of staff and residents before they begin to show symptoms.

### **Why is this important?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on older people in aged care, both globally and here at home.

Residents of aged care facilities are particularly vulnerable and at risk.

This funding is critical to support senior Australians, workers and providers in the aged care sector. It responds to the Aged Care Royal Commission and supports the Government's Aged Care COVID-19 response plan and Coronavirus National Health Plan, to ensure older Australians have the support they need throughout this pandemic and that we remain prepared across the country.

### **Who will benefit?**

Older Australians in residential and in-home care and their families, and aged care workers and providers will benefit from this extended support.

### **How much will this cost?**

This will cost more than \$1.6 billion from 2019–20 to 2020–21.