



Aged Care – Reforms to support people living with dementia and their carers

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government will invest \$229.4 million to improve quality of life and care for people living with dementia, while improving the sector's focus on this core part of aged care.

These initiatives will support people living with dementia and their carers at every stage from diagnosis through to residential aged care. Together this will ensure people living with dementia are connected with the support they need post-diagnosis, are enabled to remain in their home for longer, and able to access high quality, dementia informed aged care services.

Key measures include:

- more support when a person is first diagnosed with dementia to help them access the services they need to maintain health, wellbeing and independence. Primary Health Networks will develop local dementia care pathways which support General Practitioners (GPs) to refer their patients to the support they need
- dementia training will be made available for an additional 1,000 GPs and GP registrars per year
- enhanced early support for people living with dementia in the community and their carers through a significant funding increase for evidence-based activities delivered under the National Dementia Support Program (NDSP). This is expected to provide around 30,000 people with more timely access to supports like counselling, education sessions, support groups, and peer mentoring that provides coaching, advice and support to carers
- an additional outreach capability for the National Dementia Helpline to stay in touch with people. This will allow senior Australians living with dementia and their carers to be connected to additional support as their situation evolves and help prevent them from reaching a crisis point
- improved connection between services so when a person living with dementia needs aged care services they will be supported and there will be a specific focus on dementia in aged care assessments and care planning
- an increase in the number of care minutes provided to people in residential aged care which will support the person-centred care practices that are essential for people living with dementia
- additional dementia training, including for 3,200 personal care workers to operate as leaders in dementia care in their organisations and improved access to dementia training in regional and rural areas

- up to 60 learning networks will support aged care workers in adopting better dementia care practices through the opportunity to share experiences and insights
- documented dementia training pathways to ensure health professionals and aged care workers will more easily be able to identify high quality dementia training that is relevant to them
- increased availability of respite places with respite providers supported to develop dementia specific respite plans through the engagement of a national provider to facilitate the introduction of this planning process and training will be available for up to 5,200 staff. These plans will help to reduce the stresses of the new environment which respite represents for people living with dementia and lessen the risk of further decline in their condition
- an expansion of care models which combine carer education and respite care to support 3,200 families caring for a person living with dementia
- improvements in aged care regulation which include:
 - improved regulation and transparency of information about provider performance
 - clearer regulations on the use of restraint (restrictive practices), including physical and chemical restraint only being used as a last resort after behaviour support strategies have been used
 - a review of the Aged Care Quality Standards, focusing on key areas of concern identified by the Royal Commission such as governance, dementia, and food and nutrition, and
 - supporting the adoption of dementia friendly building practices in residential aged care facilities.
- enhanced capability for positive approaches to behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia and to minimise the use of restraint, if someone living with dementia starts to experience behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, whether living at home or in the community, there will be:
 - increased funding for the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service and the Severe Behaviour Response Teams to support a further 13,000 referrals to these services per year on average, and
 - training for representatives of all aged care providers on managing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

These measures respond to *Recommendations 2, 8, 10, 15, 17–19, 22–25, 27–30, 32, 42, 43, 45–46, 75, 77–80, 86, 88–91 100, 104, 109, 112–114, 120–122 and 142* of the Royal Commission’s final report.

For further information, refer to the relevant fact sheets.

Why is this important?

Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia and the leading cause of death in women.

Coordinated dementia care management in the community has been shown to lower hospitalisations, increase quality adjusted life years and delay entry to residential care.

Dementia carers consistently report not knowing where to go or what is the next practical step following a dementia diagnosis.

Supporting people living with dementia to remain at home, including help with the management of treatment and care, medication management, and support and education for informal carers, improves the quality of life for both the person living with dementia and their informal or family carer. It will also delay the need for residential aged care.

Who will benefit?

It is estimated that in 2020 there are between 400,000 and 460,000 Australians with dementia.

It is estimated that currently there are almost 1.6 million people in Australia involved in the care of someone living with dementia, including aged care workers and informal carers such as families and loved ones.

The number of people living with dementia is expected to increase to between 550,000 and 590,000 by 2030.