



Home Care (Pillar 1 of the Royal Commission response) – Support for informal carers

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government will invest \$798.3 million to increase support provided for informal and family carers of senior Australians, particularly for those caring for people living with dementia.

Strengthening the support available will improve carer wellbeing, maintain the care relationship, and avoid crises that may jeopardise the relationship between the carer and the person in their care.

New supports include:

- \$441.4 million for residential respite by aligning funding arrangements with the new residential aged care funding model to give providers increased incentives to offer residential respite services, which will benefit about 67,000 recipients per year
- \$134.9 million for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) respite services for both flexible respite and centre-based respite, which will enable about 8,400 additional clients to access respite services each year from January 2022
- \$53 million, in addition to the existing \$49 million investment, for enhanced early support for dementia carers, through:
 - increasing early intervention assistance after diagnosis for the approximately 15,000 people diagnosed with dementia every year and their carers. This includes additional outreach capability for the National Dementia Helpline (NDH) so carers can stay in touch with services, and increased funding for other National Dementia Support Program activities, such as counselling and carer education
 - clarifying and simplifying dementia care pathways between the NDH and GPs, memory clinics, My Aged Care, Carer Gateway, and aged care assessment teams - for carers and people living with dementia
- \$60.1 million to increase outcome quality for people using respite through:
 - Engaging a national provider to prepare respite care plans for people living with dementia, developed with the individual and their informal carer at home.
 - training for residential care providers and staff to put respite care and activity plans into action for people living with dementia, and

- increasing access to carer education in the early period after diagnosis for people caring for a person living with dementia using dementia respite.
- \$103.4 million for early referrals to Carer Gateway services by aged care assessors for assistance such as counselling, coaching, peer support, and skills training. This will support approximately 134,000 informal carers, and
- referring the impact of amending the National Employment Standards to provide for additional entitlement to unpaid carer's leave to the Productivity Commission to examine.

Why is this important?

Informal carers are those providing help to older family members, friends and people in their social network who require help with everyday tasks. They make a significant contribution to caring for older Australians and as the proportion of older people receiving care in their homes increases, support for their informal carers is increasingly important.

Respite services are an important part of the aged care system, providing necessary care and support to senior Australians in a targeted way when it is needed, and supporting the wellbeing of informal and family carers.

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.

This measure supports *Recommendations 15, 32, 42 and 43* of the Royal Commission's final report.

Who will benefit?

The Royal Commission estimates that there are 428,500 informal carers who are the primary carer of someone 65 years or older.

Additional CHSP respite services will support around 8,400 new clients per year.

Increased funding for residential aged care providers to offer residential respite services will benefit approximately 67,000 recipients.

Early access to the Carer's Gateway will enable approximately 134,000 informal carers to access support including counselling, coaching, peer support and skills training.

People newly diagnosed with dementia, about 15,000 per year, and their informal carers, will benefit from additional funding for the NDH and other early support initiatives.

Respite care planning, staff training and carer education will improve the respite experience for people living with dementia, and will lead to better health and wellbeing outcomes, reduce carer stress, and assist with more successful returns home after a respite stay.

Australians who are informal carers will benefit from the Productivity Commission review into unpaid carers leave and possible reforms to the National Employment Standards.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government will invest \$798.3 million over 4 years, from 2021–22.