



## Residential Aged Care Quality and Safety (Pillar 3 of the Royal Commission response) – Improving quality and safety across the aged care sector including the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS)

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission the Australian Government is investing \$81.5 million to strengthen consumer protection within aged care and further build capacity in the areas of dementia care. This will improve the quality and safety of care for the 1.3 million Australians who currently access aged care services each year.

Measures to strengthen consumer protections and further build capability in dementia care include:

- an initial \$14 million will be allocated to expand the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) from residential care into home and community care from 1 July 2022. This will provide greater protections to more than 1 million consumers receiving home and community aged care services
- \$67.5 million over 4 years to lift dementia care capability. This includes extending and increasing funding for the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service and the Severe Behaviour Response Teams to support a further 13,000 referrals to these services on average per year, and
- dementia specialists will also provide training to representatives from all aged care providers on managing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia and how to prevent the use of restraint (restrictive practices) through appropriate behaviour supports.

### Why is this important?

There is currently no requirement for home and community aged care providers to report incidents of abuse or neglect to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC). SIRS, implemented on 1 April 2021, only applies to residential care. Expanding the SIRS, with appropriate support from the ACQSC to home and community

aged care providers, is an important step in responding to incidents in home and community aged care, protecting care recipients and enhancing transparency.

Building dementia care capability includes the provision of the knowledge and expert assistance that carers need for better management of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. Restraint must only be used as a last resort after behavioural support strategies have been used. In residential aged care, restraint not used in accordance with the restraint legislation is considered a reportable incident under the SIRS.

This measure implements *Recommendations 17, 80, 100, and 114* of the Royal Commission's final report.

### **Who will benefit?**

These measures will benefit the 1.3 million Australians who receive aged care annually by improving the quality of services and their quality of life. This will bring significant benefits to the estimated 400,000 to 460,000 Australians living with dementia.

It will also increase the skills base of aged care workers, in both residential and home care environments, in caring for senior Australians experiencing severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, with specialist advice and training in these areas.

Aged care workers will have other options to manage behavioural issues without resorting to restraint, which can be confronting, confusing and upsetting for senior Australians, their families and the aged care workers themselves.

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

This measure has been costed at \$81.5 million over 4 years, from 2021–22.