



Residential aged care quality and safety (Pillar 3 of the Royal Commission response) – Protecting consumers by strengthening regulatory powers and capability

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government will invest an additional \$262.5 million in the independent regulator, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC).

This will ensure it is equipped to safeguard the quality, safety and integrity of aged care services, and effectively address failures in care. Specifically, this investment in sustainable resourcing will allow the ACQSC to:

- strengthen powers and the ability to protect senior Australians through action to address failures in care including civil penalties, enforceable undertakings, injunctions and compliance notices
- respond to more than 22,000 complaints, undertake at least 2,100 residential aged care site audits and at least 750 home care quality reviews, pursue at least 1,400 cases of non-compliance, and undertake 380 prudential and financial investigations. Complaint numbers have risen by more than 60% from 2017–18 to 2019–20, and residential aged care site audits required have risen 120% per cent from 2018–19 to 2019–20. There is also an anticipated 20% increase in applications to become an approved aged care provider from 2019–20 to 2020–21
- develop tools to enable earlier detection of high-risk home care services, including an enhanced risk profiling tool, and
- support the review of the ACQSC to be undertaken in 2023. The review will inform the functions, capability, structure, workforce arrangements and design of a new independent authority to regulate aged care services.

Aged care consumers will be further protected through strengthened clinical care standards to be developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care from 1 July 2021.

Why is this important?

The end-to-end regulator of aged care services must have sufficient resourcing, capability and appropriate powers to fulfil its role effectively. Without a properly resourced independent regulator, the generational reforms to improve quality and safety for aged care in Australia would be jeopardised.

This measure implements in full or in part *Recommendations 10, 18 and 104* of the Royal Commission's final report.

Who will benefit?

Around 1.3 million consumers will benefit from improved, safer care and higher quality outcomes through the ACQSC's strengthened capability. Consumers will also benefit from more rigorous and comprehensive clinical care standards.

Providers will benefit from risk-based proportionate regulation and greater harmonisation of standards across sectors, including aligning clinical care standards across aged care and healthcare sectors where appropriate.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$262.5 million over 4 years, from 2021–22.