



Workforce (Pillar 4 of the Royal Commission response) – Growing a skilled and high quality workforce to care for senior Australians

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government is investing \$338.5 million over 3 years to grow, train and upskill the aged care workforce to drive improvements to the safety and quality of care experienced by senior Australians.

The aged care workforce is central to the quality of aged care in Australia. There will be a strong focus on registered nurses, as workforce leaders, with incentives put in place to attract and retain more nurses to aged care as their preferred place of employment, especially in regional and remote areas.

This investment includes:

- \$91.8 million, announced on 1 March 2021, to support the growth of the home care workforce by 18,000 new personal care workers with the necessary skills and training required to work in aged care, through:
 - establishing a focused Home Care Workforce Support Program, to attract 13,000 new personal care workers, with grant opportunities available for organisations or consortia to deliver a range of supports to attract, train and retain care workers, and
 - using programs, including Jobactive, Australian Apprenticeships, Job Trainer, Youth Jobs PaTH, and Launch into Work, to attract an additional 5,000 new personal care workers and provide additional support to connect and guide workers through training.
- \$135.6 million to provide additional financial support for registered nurses working for the same aged care provider over a 12 month period. Financial support up to \$3,700 for full-time and on average \$2,700 for part-time employees, will be paid as an annual bonus over 2 years. Nurses may also access additional financial support for:
 - working in rural and remote areas, or
 - holding post-graduate qualifications in palliative care, dementia, leadership, infection prevention and control, or
 - taking on additional training responsibilities.
- an additional \$27.2 million to expand the number of available places in the Aged Care Transition to Practice Program and Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Program. Allied health professionals will also be eligible for

- postgraduate scholarships. There will be a specific allocation of places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- an additional 33,800 additional training places for personal care workers to attain a Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) or a higher qualification
 - all new personal care workers in the aged care workforce will be encouraged to attain this qualification.
 - personal care workers already working within the aged care sector will also be encouraged to have their experience recognised, increase their skills and fill any knowledge gaps through undertaking the Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) and other training and professional development opportunities.
 - \$49.4 million in increased funding will be directed towards training to improve aged care workers' knowledge and practice in dementia and palliative care. Dementia training will target leaders in personal care, general practitioners (GPs) and GP registrars, and improve access to dementia training in regional and rural areas. Learning networks will support the sector in adopting better dementia care practices. Palliative care training will also be provided to the aged care workforce to enhance quality palliative and end of life care
 - an additional \$25.1 million to expand the Rural Locum Assistance Program, ensuring continuity of clinical care and strong clinical leadership, so aged care providers in rural and regional areas will have increased access to a surge workforce. An incentive scheme for permanent placements in regional and remote areas will also increase staff retention, and
 - \$6.3 million for improved workforce data reporting which will enhance linkages with other aged care data sets to inform future policy development and evaluation within government and for external agencies.

Why is this important?

The care workforce is central to the quality of aged care in Australia.

By 2050, the aged care workforce is expected to grow to more than one million people. Within two years the workforce will need to increase by around 3,600 Registered Nurses and 34,200 personal care workers. Attracting and retaining skilled and professional workers will be crucial to meet the needs of senior Australians and ensuring quality care, and to drive necessary reforms across the aged care sector.

Registered Nurses are leaders within aged care and specific targeted measures will be delivered to increase their remuneration for that role, while supporting additional training through scholarships and an expanded transition to practice program.

Future options and career pathways will be enhanced for those entering the aged care workforce. New entrants to the sector will be supported to improve their skills and knowledge through both formal qualifications as well as access to continuing professional development and training opportunities.

Those living with dementia or approaching the end of their lives will be the focus for enhanced worker training, ensuring people in need of speciality care and compassion receive high quality dementia and palliative care.

These measures implement *Recommendations 75, 78, 79, 80 and 114* of the Royal Commission's final report.

Who will benefit?

Senior Australians will benefit from broad improvements to quality, safe and culturally sensitive care that meets their individual care needs.

Nurses considering aged care as a career pathway, and those already working in the sector will benefit from new initiatives to attract and retain their services, knowledge and skill in aged care.

Personal care workers will be supported to grow their aged care skills and acquire qualifications which will enhance their skills and knowledge and career opportunities.

Access to enhanced aged care workforce data will benefit the Government and the sector in undertaking informed policy development and decision-making, and to evaluate the impact of reform measures on the workforce.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$246.7 million over 3 years from 2021–22.

This builds on the \$91.8 million already announced on 1 March 2021 to grow a skilled, aged care workforce to provide quality home care services.