



Residential aged care quality and safety – assuring access to multidisciplinary care and maintaining effective quality audits

The Australian Government has implemented the first year of a five year aged care reform program, in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The once in a generation reforms are based on five pillars – home care, residential aged care services and sustainability, residential quality and safety, workforce and governance – to deliver respect, care and dignity for senior Australians.

In response, the Government committed \$942 million to residential aged care quality and safety reforms.

As part of the over \$18.8 billion Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety response, the Australian Government is committing an additional \$389.4 million over four years in the 2022–23 Budget towards residential aged care quality and safety. The Government's total investment in Aged Care will climb to \$129.9 billion over the next four years.

These additional measures will:

- deliver better coordinated care across the health system for aged care residents, and
- bolster the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) to ensure aged care services comply with Aged Care Quality Standards.

Access to multidisciplinary care

\$22.1 million will deliver trials of Multidisciplinary Outreach Services to:

- share costs with states and territories for providing more comprehensive health care, through multidisciplinary care teams, to people in residential aged care
- provide hospital-led access to specialists and other health practitioners, such as allied health professionals, pharmacists, geriatricians and palliative care specialists
- facilitate an evaluation of trials to inform pricing and delivery of these services nationally in the long term.

Improved medication management

\$345.7 million over four years to improve medication management and safety for aged care residents through on-site pharmacists and community pharmacy services. This responds to a recommendation by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

This measure complements ongoing improvements in residential aged care facilities (RACF) digital capabilities to support medication management services and ensure safe use of medications.

Third Party Quality Assessment Workforce

A further measure will extend funding for the Commission to maintain a Third Party Quality Assessment Workforce. Maintaining the Commission's experienced external auditors will ensure services comply with the Aged Care Quality Standards.

\$21.6 million will be invested in this auditor workforce to undertake 1,443 residential aged care quality audits in 2022–23, increasing quality and safety assessments.

This will provide the Commission with critical support through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond as well as ensuring that audits are sustainable, and quality of care is safeguarded.

Why is this important?

Aged care residents experience higher hospitalisation rates and emergency department presentations than people aged 65 and over in the community.

Many of the common reasons for aged care residents' and recipients' hospital presentations and admissions are preventable. Improving access to specialist care, and connection between services will produce improved health outcomes for senior Australians.

Strengthening the Commission will ensure a strong, capable aged care regulator that is responsive to emerging quality and safety risk.

The 2022–23 Budget funding will enhance critical support to the aged care reforms, consolidating investment announced in the 2021–22 Budget and 2021–22 MYEFO processes. These measures respond in part or fully to *Recommendations 38, 58 and 64* of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Who will benefit?

Senior Australians will experience a significant shift in the quality and safety of their care, resulting in improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Australian community will have confidence in the quality and safety of aged care, where and when they need it.

Providing improved linkages between hospitals, a range of medical and allied health specialists, and the aged care facility will improve the health outcomes for residents and reduce their need to be admitted to hospital.

The medicines of aged care residents will be better managed, ensuring they are receiving the right medication, with the increasing access to pharmacists.

Australia's aged care reforms are expansive and will impact virtually every aspect of the sector. The Government is working closely with the sector, including providers and workers, peak and advocacy groups, senior Australians, and their families and carers, to engage, inform and implement the system changes.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government will invest \$389.4 million over four years, from 2022–23 to 2025–26.