



Workforce – growing and upskilling the workforce to improve care for senior Australians

The Australian Government has implemented the first year of an \$18.8 billion, five year aged care reform program. Senior Australians need a skilled, diverse and compassionate care and support workforce. Growing the aged care workforce is fundamental to the Australian Government's aged care reforms.

As part of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety response, the Australian Government committed \$652.1 million to workforce aged care reforms. The 2022–23 Budget further invests \$99 million in this area, and a further \$303.3 million in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the total aged care commitment growing to over \$129.9 billion over the next four years. The Government is continuing to support the workforce and delivery of quality care across the aged care, disability and veterans' care sectors.

Workforce bonus payments

The aged care workforce will receive up to \$800 each, based on the most hours worked within a defined four week period.

The Government has committed this payment in recognition of workers' commitment to care for senior Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic, including home care and residential direct care, food or cleaning services. This adds to previous bonus payments during COVID-19, taking the Government's total investment to \$657.5 million.

Care and support regulatory alignment

The Government is investing \$10.8 million in the Cross-Agency Taskforce on Regulatory Alignment to progress alignment of regulation across the care and support sector – aged care, disability supports, and veterans' care. Alignment will improve the quality and safety of care and support services, reduce duplication of obligations, and enable providers and workers to operate more seamlessly across the sector.

A roadmap for regulatory alignment will be developed through detailed analysis and further consultation, with early activities to include:

- improved information sharing between regulators
- opportunities for streamlined reporting processes, and
- developing options for alignment of standards and auditing or assessment.

Clinical placements

The Government is committed to growing the aged care workforce and ensuring there are pathways for clinical placements within aged care will help to ensure more skilled and dedicated workers are in the pipeline.

Additional investment of \$14.9 million will address barriers to clinical placements in the care and support sector, attracting 5,250 more nurses.

RHMT training expanded

The Government is investing \$14.3 million to expand the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) Program to an additional five locations in the Northern Territory, Victoria, New South Wales and remote Queensland, to:

- enhance the quality of aged care services in rural and remote areas
- create opportunities for 150 nursing and allied health students, and Indigenous students to experience clinical placements in the care and support sector each year, and
- highlight the benefits of working outside metropolitan locations.

Growing the workforce through JobTrainer

An additional 15,000 low fee and free training places will be made available in aged care courses from January 2023, with a \$48.5 million investment over two years as part of the JobTrainer Aged Care Boost.

These training places are in addition to the 33,800 aged care training places announced in the 2021–22 Budget.

This will provide a strong pipeline of entry-level aged care workers and enable existing aged care workers to upskill.

CME Support Program roll out

The Government will also commit \$6.9 million to a staged rollout of the national Co-operative and Mutual Enterprises (CME) Support Program. CMEs are organisations that are owned and run by members, such as consumers, service providers, employees or people in the local community.

The CME Support Program will support aged care, and the broader care and support sector to:

- develop sustainable and coordinated approaches in growing a skilled workforce using a model which is likely to attract new workers to the care sector
- support the start-up of six to seven CMEs that will delivery care services in areas of need, and
- deliver up to six additional projects to help grow existing CMEs.

Why is this important?

The Government's aged care workforce reforms align with the *Care and Support Workforce Strategy*, the *Aged Care Workforce Action Plan 2022–25* and *A Matter of Care: Australia's Aged Care Workforce Strategy*.

The care and support workforce demonstrated their commitment and dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has also highlighted the challenges faced by the workforce, as they care for vulnerable Australians.

Workforce – growing and upskilling the workforce to improve care for senior Australians

A significant proportion of the care and support sector, 57% of aged care providers, 87% of veterans' care providers, and 10% of registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers, also operate in at least one other part of the sector. Regulatory alignment will enable service providers to grow their operations and allocate more resources to quality services.

The Government's aged care workforce initiatives aim to meet the demand of an ageing Australian population, including:

- growing the clinical care workforce of nurses and allied health professions
- upskilling the workforce with training and qualifications that will enhance the quality of care delivered, and
- strengthening the workforce nationally, including in rural and remote locations.

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 75 and 83* of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Who will benefit?

The Australian care and support workforce will have more opportunity to develop the skills and experience required to meet the changing needs of their recipients.

Regulatory alignment will provide Senior Australians, people with disability and veterans, their families and carers, with improved quality and greater service choice, and accommodate for people with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Care and support providers will benefit from a strengthened pipeline of nurses and allied health professionals choosing to work in the sector.

Senior Australians will also have access to a skilled and sustainable workforce, including in rural and remote locations. The Australian community will have confidence in the quality and safety of aged care, where and when they need it.

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, peaks and advocacy groups, senior Australians, their families and carers, to engage, inform and implement the system changes.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government will invest \$402.2 million over three years, from 2022–23 to 2024–25.