



Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians
Minister for Youth and Sport

16 July 2020

Additional testing support for Victorian residential aged care services

Five new COVID-19 testing teams will be deployed to test staff and residents in residential aged care services located across metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire.

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck, said the new mobile testing teams will help health authorities identify where community transmission is occurring, before there are COVID-19 outbreaks.

“We know Australians living in aged care are among those most vulnerable to becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19,” Minister Colbeck said. Stopping this virus from spreading across Victoria’s aged care facilities is our top priority.

“It remains one of the greatest challenges the sector has faced and we need to be proactive in our fight against it.”

Minister Colbeck said the new testing teams will give health authorities the chance to identify people with COVID-19 who are living and working in aged care, even before they appear unwell.

The five new teams will be dedicated to testing in residential aged care facilities and are in addition to the in-reach pathology services deployed by the Australian Government to residential aged care services with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case.

Testing teams will begin today (16 July).

The COVID-19 testing will be carried out on a voluntary basis and providers will be contacted to participate before the arrival of a mobile testing team.

The Australian Government has contracted Aspen Medical to provide qualified staff, including medical practitioners and registered nurses, to attend aged care facilities and collect the specimens. Sonic Healthcare will then do the testing.

While this additional testing capacity will help health authorities in their fight to contain COVID-19, Minister Colbeck urged everyone living and working in aged care to remain vigilant.

“COVID-19 tests are only a point in time indication of whether someone has the virus, and everyone working and living in aged care must maintain good hygiene measures, be alert to symptoms of COVID-19, and be retested if they become unwell,” Minister Colbeck said.