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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Greater virus protection for aged care workers

Protection from COVID-19 for aged care staff and residents in Victoria will be increased, with reusable face shields and additional face masks being supplied from the National Medical Stockpile to help prevent the spread of the virus.

The Australian Government will:

- Supply 500,000 reusable face shields to all residential aged care services across Victoria for use by staff.
- Release a further five million face masks from the National Medical Stockpile for Victorian aged care providers.

This will immediately assist around 770 residential aged care facilities.

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and face shields is vital in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

All aged care workers across Victoria are now required to wear face masks and, as an additional precautionary measure, will be advised to wear face shields.

The new release of face masks from the national stockpile is in addition to the four million surgical masks made available to aged care services on July 13.

Our Government is committed to supporting aged care workers and residents in Victoria during this difficult period.

Both workers and residents are at risk of contracting the virus, with elderly and frail residents highly vulnerable to the disease.

Face shields are designed to cover the sides of the face and below the chin. Face shields may be reusable or disposable, and are worn together with surgical masks.

The latest advice for aged care workers is in addition to infection control and staff screening measures already in place across the sector.

The Australian Government has to date dispatched more than 52 million masks in response to COVID-19, including 11 million to Victoria.

Since late March, more than 300 million masks, more than eight million gowns, more than 41 million gloves, and more than 10 million goggles and face shields have been received into the stockpile.

Substantial amounts of PPE, including additional masks and face shields, will continue to arrive over the coming weeks and months.

ENDS