



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

29 March 2020

Support to keep people active and healthy as COVID-19 restrictions continue

Senior Australians and young people will benefit from a \$1.1 billion funding package aimed at ensuring they stay healthy and connected during the campaign to stop the spread of COVID-19.

The additional boost announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison will target mental health services, domestic violence support, Medicare assistance for people at home and emergency service relief.

Minister for Aged Care Richard Colbeck said the package provided targeted support for those who needed it most.

It includes \$10 million for a Community Visitors Scheme to help ensure Senior Australians are not socially isolated as a result of visitor restrictions.

The funding will support extra staff to train volunteer visitors, who will connect with older people in aged care both online and by phone, and assist seniors to keep in touch with the community and loved ones.

“Connecting with each other has never been more important,” Minister Colbeck said. “This support will ensure the most vulnerable Australians remain connected with family, friends and the vital support services they need.”

Younger Australians will also be able to stay on track in their education and training and prepare them for the workforce with \$6.75 million provided to deliver the headspace digital work and study service and “ehespace”.

Minister Colbeck said mentors and headspace vocational specialists working in an integrated team will offer technical and life skills, providing a comprehensive digital support service for all young Australians during the COVID-19 pandemic and after.

More broadly, a \$669 million injection will be used to expand Medicare-subsidised telehealth services for all Australians.

This will give people of all ages access to support in their own home using phone or video conferencing features like FaceTime to connect with GP services and a wide range of services including support to patients in aged care facilities, children with autism, after-hours consultations and nurse practitioners.

Minister Colbeck said the delivery of health services at home remained a key weapon in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

“Limiting unnecessary exposure of patients and health professionals to the virus through phone and video conferencing will be a necessary mechanism in ensuring we focus on saving lives and saving livelihoods,” he said.

Minister Colbeck said guidelines for Aged Care facilities remained in place.

A fact sheet for Senior Australians is available [here](#).

Advice for retirement villages is available [here](#).

Guidelines for in home care workers is available [here](#).

Guidelines for workers in residential aged care is available [here](#).

Information for families and residents regarding visitation is available [here](#).