



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

14 June 2020

**Serious Incident Response Scheme**

A Serious Incident Response Scheme will be introduced by the Morrison Government to protect vulnerable and senior Australians from abuse and neglect.

The initial \$23 million investment will be rolled out from July 1, 2021.

The announcement coincides with World Elder Abuse Awareness day on Monday.

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck, says the scheme will be an important measure to guarantee transparency and keep our loved ones safe.

It follows the release of findings of a prevalence study which provides a framework for the appropriate implementation of the scheme.

“The Federal Government continues to take huge steps towards the ongoing protection and welfare of vulnerable and senior Australians,” Minister Colbeck said.

“Any abuse of a care recipient is unacceptable and that is why we committed to implementing a Serious Incident Response Scheme for residential aged care in the 2019-20 Budget.”

The SIRS will drive quality and safety improvements at the individual service and broader system level.

As part of the scheme, residential aged care providers will be required to manage all incidents, with a focus on the safety and wellbeing of consumers and reducing preventable incidents from reoccurring.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will receive incident reports and will have enhanced powers to administer the SIRS, including taking regulatory action where needed.

Reporting under a SIRS will include a broader range of incidents, including neglect, psychological or emotional abuse and inappropriate physical or chemical restraint.

Significantly, it will also lift the current exemption on the reporting of resident on resident incidents, where the perpetrator has an assessed cognitive impairment.

This reform was recommended in the Australian Law Reform Commission's Report Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response and the Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes (Carnell-Paterson Review).

The funding allows for the provision of a prevalence and feasibility study to inform future Government decisions on the potential introduction of a SIRS in home and community aged care.

Additionally, the package includes funding to continue investigating the design, implementation and regulation of a worker register for aged care.

Minister Colbeck says the implementation of the scheme was another important measure toward reinforcing the sector.

“We understand there is still much work to do,” Minister Colbeck said. “Improving aged care for senior Australians continues to be one of the Morrison Government's key priorities.”

Public consultation on the [Aged Care Worker Regulation Scheme](#) is now open. Submissions closing on 29 June 2020.