



The Hon Greg Hunt, MP
Minister for Health

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

The Hon Jenny Mikakos
Victorian Minister for Health

The Hon Luke Donnellan
Victorian Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Joint Media Release

19 July 2020

Support for aged care residents and aged care workers across Victoria

The Australian and Victorian Governments, in collaboration with representatives from the aged care sector, are today announcing additional measures to ensure aged care providers are equipped to minimise the spread of COVID-19 and can continue providing quality care.

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Senator Richard Colbeck, and the Victorian Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan, recognise the aged care workforce has been doing an outstanding job in very difficult circumstances.

However, with widespread community based infection in Victoria, more needs to be done to help aged care providers minimise the risk of transmission within and across facilities. This includes specific support to reduce the need for aged care workers to provide care across multiple aged care facilities.

Both tiers of Government, in partnership with Victorian Aged Care Industry leaders, will introduce measures to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 into Aged Care services.

The measures include:

Workforce funding support

Funding will be made available by the Federal Government to residential and home care providers to:

- Ensure aged care employers can cover any additional entitlements to enable employees to work at a single site;
- Engage and train additional staff where existing employees are unable to work due to self-isolation requirements and/or where a more intensive workforce mix is required;
- Support aged care workers who are unable to work due to symptoms, self-isolation or travel restrictions, regardless of whether they would usually receive paid leave.
- Provide alternative accommodation so workers who live or work in hotspots can continue to work.

The Victorian Government is providing financial support to Victorian workers who are self-isolating or in quarantine.

A one-off \$1,500 payment will financially support Victorian aged care workers who have been instructed by the department to self-isolate or quarantine at home because they are either diagnosed with COVID-19 or are a close contact of a confirmed case, but can't rely on sick leave while missing work.

Industry program to reduce workforce sharing across sites

Victorian Aged Care Industry representatives have agreed principles and an urgent process to ensure aged care workers work in a single aged care facility where possible. The industry will commence a cooperative process to identify existing workforce sharing and negotiate safer arrangements across the sector to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission in aged care. A key component of the principles will be to ensure that no aged care worker is disadvantaged by the arrangements.

More Infection control training

The Victorian Government will also commence additional intensive training in infection control for aged care workers, building on the training program released by the Morrison Government earlier in the year. From 22 July 2020, Monash University, through its nursing students, will provide face to face training to the aged care sector.

Enhanced surveillance and contact tracing

The Morrison and Victorian Governments will focus additional resources on testing in aged care facilities. We will continue to prioritise contact tracing for aged care workers and residents.

Increased contact tracing

In addition to direct support for aged care workers, the Australian and Victorian Governments are prioritising contact tracing in aged care facilities. The Australian Government has set up a National Incident Centre which will provide information to help states and territories respond to the situation, including data for contact tracing and public health follow up.

Testing

The Morrison Government has deployed five new COVID-19 testing teams to test staff and residents in residential aged care services located across metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire. The five new teams are dedicated to testing in residential aged care facilities and are in addition to the in-reach pathology services deployed to residential aged care services with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case.

Additional capacity to care for aged care residents from outbreak sites

The Australian and Victorian Governments are working with private hospitals so they can support the response to outbreaks in aged care facilities.

Private hospitals with capacity, adequate staff resourcing, and appropriate infection control procedures will be available to open wards to ensure appropriate care for residents of aged care facilities requiring medical attention, or who cannot safely isolate in their facilities.

These measures announced today demonstrate the Governments' unwavering commitment to the health and wellbeing of the aged care sector. The combination of contact tracing in aged care facilities, workforce training, ensuring workers are based in one facility for their placement, and the provision of accommodation or financial support for infected workers are critical to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

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Media contacts:

Minister Hunt | James Perrin | 0447 534 427

Minister Colbeck | Aaron Langmaid | 0456 889 018

Victorian Government | Rania Spooner | 0436 019 993