



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

24 January 2020

Thank you to our aged care workers

Hundreds of aged care workers in bushfire-affected communities have been recognised for their tireless efforts to keep our oldest and most vulnerable Australians safe.

During a visit to the hardest-hit regions in southern New South Wales, Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Richard Colbeck, has thanked staff for going above and beyond.

More than 750 people were evacuated from aged care centres as fires threatened townships.

But it was the efforts from committed workers that Minister Colbeck said showcased the determined spirit of locals.

“Some staff members stood outside with hoses, others came in to work even as fire threatened their own homes,” Minister Colbeck said.

“These people chose to remain at work and ensure the care of residents.

“It is a remarkable and humbling effort.”

The same staff continue to provide essential care as communities start the long process of recovery, Minister Colbeck said.

In all, 405 care recipients from 10 residential aged care services were safely evacuated in New South Wales.

“In addition, 73 people were evacuated from three multi-purpose services and 15 people had to leave a retirement village,” Minister Colbeck said.

“In Victoria, aged care workers evacuated about 260 people, including 174 from four multi-purpose services and 81 from a residential aged care service.”

Six services in the South Coast towns of Dalmeny, Tura Beach, Warringing Heights, and Pambula have been able to re-open their doors, enabling 162 residential care recipients and 15 retirement village residents to return home.

The Minister said the Government was actively engaging with aged care providers and assessment teams to ensure senior Australians continued to receive the care they need.

“I am very aware of the challenges facing some providers and the government will continue to work with them to ensure residents receive appropriate care not only during a crisis but in the days, weeks and months following,” Minister Colbeck said.

In speaking to staff and management at several centres, Minister Colbeck said there would also be lessons to learn in relation to ensure crisis management plans are improved.

Aged care residents and their families in areas affected by fires can call My Aged Care Contact Centre on 1800 200 422 (Freecall) for updated information and advice.