

Australia gives additional funding to reinforce aged care sector

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The Australian Government will provide an additional \$563.3 million to extend support for the aged care sector's response to COVID-19, announced in March and subsequently as part of the Aged Care response plan.

This takes the government's support to senior Australians in Aged Care to over \$1.5 billion since the pandemic began.

Building on the \$205 million COVID-19 Support Payment provided to all residential Aged Care providers in June 2020, the Australian Government will extend this payment to provide a further \$245 million injection into all facilities.

This funding will be required to be used by providers to fund and support enhanced infection control capability, including through an on-site clinical lead.

Funding may also be used to address other COVID-19 related costs such as increased staffing costs, communications with families and managing visitation arrangements.

Providers will be required to report how these funds were used for additional COVID-19 related costs through strict requirements in providers' end of financial year returns.

Providers will receive around \$975 per resident in major metropolitan areas and around \$1,435 per resident in all other areas.

This payment will be provided through Services Australia by early October.

In addition, the Australian Government will continue the 30 per cent increase in the viability supplement and the residential care homeless supplement for a further six months.

In recognition of the higher costs providers face in hotspot areas, particularly in supporting their staff, the Government will provide additional levels of support.

The Supporting Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 Grant has been open since 4 August, to help providers cover the costs of

implementing single site workforce arrangements in current hotspots of Greater Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire.

This funding will be extended from an initial period of eight weeks to 12 weeks with a total of \$92.4 million available.

Further funding under this grant will be activated as new hotspots are declared by the Commonwealth, based on local circumstances.

Finally, the Government will expand support for older Australians who temporarily relocate from residential Aged Care facilities to the community to live with their family due to concerns about COVID-19, with an additional \$71.4 million for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme.