

Australia injects \$1.1B towards COVID-19 health response and suppression strategy

March 16, 2021 | News

The country ensures key measures to back Australia's efforts in being second-lowest case rate and third lowest mortality rate amongst countries in the OECD



Australian Government has announced an investment of more than \$1.1 billion to extend the successful national COVID-19 health response and suppression strategy until 31 December 2021.

This \$1.1 billion is in addition to more than \$22 billion spent in these areas to date, including more than \$6 billion to support the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

The Government's focus on containing the virus through testing, tracing and border and travel measures, building and investing in the capacity of our health system, and collaborating with states and territories, the health sector and others, has helped stop the spread of COVID-19.

This new commitment will ensure that key measures remain in place throughout 2021 to protect the community while vaccinations roll out over the coming months.

This investment will extend:

- Government partnership with the states and territories to manage COVID-19, by sharing 50 percent of the cost of testing and treating people with COVID-19 through our public hospitals, and of public health measures to prevent the spread. To date the Commonwealth has provided an additional \$5 billion to support the states and territories, including \$1 billion in additional public hospital funding
- Continue telehealth services and care until 30 June 2021. So far more than 51 million telehealth services have been delivered to 13 million patients and almost \$2.6 billion in benefits paid. More than 82,000 providers have used telehealth services nationwide. The Government will continue to review the ongoing role of COVID telehealth to support the pandemic in the short term, while we plan the permanent post-pandemic telehealth arrangements with peak doctor groups.

- Support for rapid pathology testing and tracing building on the more than 14.5 million COVID-19 tests conducted to date
- GP-led Respiratory Clinics, which have delivered more than 1 million consultations and 934,600 COVID-19 tests
- Culturally safe testing, treatment and evacuation preparedness in the most remote and isolated parts of the country which has so far provided more than 15,500 point of care tests
- Electronic prescription services with 3.8 million electronic prescriptions and repeats to patients issued and almost 1.7 million dispensed to date
- Delivery of Home Medicine Services across the country with more than 2.1 million services delivered already
- The Continued Dispensing Emergency Measure where around 289,000 people have had at least one supply of medicine so far
- The Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service to meet ongoing demand for services as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and provide continued support while COVID-19 restrictions remain and the COVID-19 vaccine program is implemented
- Aged care workforce surge support capability and financial support for aged care facilities affected by a COVID-19 outbreak to ensure the ongoing safety of senior Australians.

These measures have supported our response to COVID-19 outbreaks when they occurred. Extending them will ensure Australians remain COVID safe.