



Australian Government

Additional information on the 10 February 2019 \$662 million aged care package

A \$320 million general subsidy boost in 2018-19 to benefit senior Australians receiving residential aged care services from increased support for aged care providers

The aged care general subsidy will be increased in 2018-19 to deliver \$320m to the residential care sector between 20 March 2019 and 30 June 2019. This measure will provide a general proportionate increase in the rate of residential care basic subsidies of approximately 9.5%. All providers will get the same proportionate increase in residential care subsidies. Basic subsidies are ACFI, grand-parented residents on the former Resident Classification Scale (RCS) payments, and respite subsidy.

\$282.4 million for 10,000 home care packages across all levels

The 10,000 packages will be released through the national home care prioritisation system from 12 February 2019. Packages will be released across all levels as follows:

- Level 1 – 3,000
- Level 2 – 2,500
- Level 3 – 2,500
- Level 4 – 2,000

A \$4.2 million mandatory national aged care quality indicator program

The National Aged Care Quality Indicator Program (QI Program) is a program for Commonwealth subsidised residential aged care services. Providers will be required to submit quarterly data on three QIs: pressure sores; use of physical restraint; and weight loss, using standard definitions. Information will be submitted via the My Aged Care Provider Portal or to the Department through a simple template using the definitions existing in the current voluntary scheme.

The Government has allocated funding:

- a) For change management, consultation and transition activities to support residential aged care providers to meet the new requirements of collecting quality indicator data.
- b) To engage with the sector and to pilot expanded quality indicators.

The National Aged care Quality Indicator Program has been operating in a voluntary capacity since 2016 and was developed and implemented in consultation with the sector and peak bodies.

From 1 July 2019 the Australian Government will mandate the collection of the three Quality Indicators (QIs) for all Commonwealth-funded residential aged care providers. The first quarter of data collection will commence from 1 July to 30 September 2019. Quality Indicator data collected will be published on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's website by the end of 2019.

The National Aged Care Quality Indicator Program operates fee-free to the sector. The new aged care standards applying from 1 July 2019 will already require service providers to effectively manage high impact or high prevalence risks. While services are likely to be recording similar data, aged care providers may need to update their processes to enable

the collection of data in line with the mandated QI definitions. Further resources will be developed to assist providers in complying with the new mandatory requirements.

Mandating the National Aged Care Quality Indicator Program will:

- give consumers transparent, comparable information about quality in aged care to aid decision making (over time, as data is reported and published);
- enable providers to have robust, valid data to measure and monitor their performance and support continuous quality improvement; and
- allow for the establishment of national benchmarks in the specified domains.

Providers are able to access and download personalised reports via their My Aged Care portal and by the end of 2019 will be able to access comparable national data publicly available on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's website. The first national data available by the end of 2019 will provide data from the 1 July to 30 September 2019 quarter and, over time, data will be provided for subsequent quarters which will enable the development of benchmarks. At least 12 months of data will be required prior to considering and setting benchmarks.

The department will engage a third party to undertake activities to:

- extract, validate, and clean the quarterly data, in preparation for analysis and reporting by the end of 2019; and
- analyse the data collected in order to develop and publish value-added reporting products, from 2020.

\$7.7 million to enhance the safety, quality and integrity of home care

This measure provides for the phased development of enhanced quality, safety and integrity of home care services as the Home Care Packages Program expands. It will increase targeted audit activity with more reviews of quality and safety for new and current home care providers.

The initial \$7.7 million for phase one includes funding for an additional 17.8 frontline staff in 2018-19 and 22 staff in 2019-20 to support the rapid growth in the home care program. This includes workforce across complaints, compliance, approved provider assessment, and auditing of home care services.

\$35.7 million to increase home care supplements for dementia and cognition and veterans

The rates of payment for the dementia and cognition supplement and the separate veterans' supplement will permanently increase by 15% from 20 March 2019. This means they will now be paid at 11.5% (rather than 10%) of the value of the home care package.

The payment rates will be updated automatically for eligible consumers. DHS will start making payments at the new rates from 20 March 2019.

The same eligibility arrangements will apply. The dementia and cognition supplement is paid for home care consumers with moderate to severe levels of cognitive impairment associated with dementia or other conditions. The veteran's supplement provides additional support for veterans with a mental health condition associated with their service. Eligibility is determined by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

A \$4.6 million trial of a new residential care funding tool to replace the Aged Care Funding Instrument

Following the Resource Utilisation and Classification Study (RUCS) a possible new funding tool for residential aged care has been developed. This measure will trial the new tool, allowing it and the supporting workforce and IT processes to be comprehensively tested to ensure it is suitable for national implementation. The trial will commence in the second half of 2019.

The Department has scheduled a Stakeholder forum in mid-March and proposals for further consultation with the sector will be discussed at that forum. No final decisions have been made about shifting to a new funding tool.

A new \$7.4 million business advisory service for both residential and home care providers to help them improve their operations

The measure will provide subsidised independent accounting and business advisory services to residential and home care providers to help them find efficiencies and improvements in their operations. Aged care providers will be able to apply for these services. Eligibility criteria will be established with an expectation that providers operating facilities in rural and remote areas and smaller providers will be prioritised.

An independent firm/s will be engaged by the Department to provide the services. The Department will put out a tender for these services shortly.