

# Transition of Guiding Principles for Residential Aged Care in Victoria

As at 13 November 2020

In July 2020, the Guiding Principles of Residential Aged Care – Keeping Victorian Residents and Workers Safe, was developed through a sector led process. They acknowledge that safety of workers and residents in residential aged care during the Covid-19 pandemic are of the highest priority. These principles have sought to mitigate risks related to the working of staff across multiple sites. The adoption of the principles has been voluntary; however, most providers have implemented the recommended changes.

The Guiding Principles Support Hub and grant funding for service providers relating to their transition to single site operations in the Melbourne Metropolitan and Mitchell Shire regions were implemented for from mid-July, with 2 extensions until 30 November 2020.

Today Department of Health have made the following announcement:

## The Guiding Principles in Victoria are Ending

*The [‘Guiding Principles for residential aged care – keeping Victorian residents and workers safe’](#) (the Principles) have been in place since 27 July 2020 to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading among aged care residents and workers. Based on current case numbers in the community and within aged care residents and staff in Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, the risk of infection is now considered low. The Australian Government would like to thank the residential aged care sector for its hard work to achieve this. As a result, the Principles will end on 30 November 2020 in Melbourne and Mitchell Shire. This means that providers of non-government aged care facilities should commence transition out activities so that normal working arrangements can recommence from 1 December 2020. Public Sector facilities in Victoria are continuing single site arrangements until February 2021, as funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.*

*The activity period for the Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 (SACWIC) grant, as funded by the Australian Government, will end on 30 November 2020 in line with the Principles. Eligible providers can submit applications for the SACWIC grant up until 30 June 2021.*

*While the risk is low, providers are encouraged to continue to limit workforce mobility where possible. We encourage you to take steps to understand your workforce by developing a register for recording each workers mobility and their skills and training. The Department is currently updating the [CDNA national guidelines for the prevention, control and public health management of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care facilities in Australia](#) to include advice relating to preparing for single site workforce arrangements should these be implemented in the future.*

*The Support Hub, by ACSA and LASA, is available for Victorian aged care providers using the Principles to support transition out activities. You can visit [The Guiding Principles Support Hub](#) or seek assistance by phoning 1800 491 793 (free call).*

*Workers and managers can also obtain counselling support until 30 December 2020 by phoning 1800 687 327 (free call) or visiting [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au) to book an appointment. Please state that you are from the “VIC Residential Aged Care Workforce” when booking.*

Service providers who have implemented the single site arrangements will need to consider their transition arrangements from the current position to their new business as usual state. This process should also be considered in light of Victorian DHHS health directives.

Service providers can and will continue to plan and make workforce planning decisions according to their service model and resident needs. This may mean that some will choose to retain a model of full single site operations for staff, without the support of the additional funding grant. Others may resume their previous operating arrangements, with a higher level of awareness of the importance of limiting staff movement, which is helpful in the longer term.

Regardless, it is important that service providers commence planning with employees and any other relevant service provider partners, so that service continuity for residents over the change period at the end of November is maintained and so that workers have ample opportunity to be consulted and make choices about their future work plans.

The Guiding Principles Support Hub continues to be available to support service providers and workers with information, resources and tools through this process. Workers are also encouraged to contact their relevant union and will be able to receive support on this matter even if they are not a current member.

For further information go to: [www.supporthub.agedservicesworkforce.com.au](http://www.supporthub.agedservicesworkforce.com.au) or call **1800 491 793** Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm