

Announcement of extension of SACWIC Grant

Updated 03/12/21

On 3rd December Ministers Hunt and Colbeck made an announcement relating to ongoing Commonwealth Government funding for Australia's Covid 19 response. The statement can be found at the link below.

[\\$540 million to continue and expand Australia's COVID-19 response | Health Portfolio Ministers](#)

The following extract has particular reference to aged care and this includes the extension of the SACWIC grant until 30 June 2022 as highlighted.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring our senior Australians are protected against COVID-19 which has had a disproportionately significant impact across the aged care sector, particularly in 2020.

Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, Richard Colbeck, said the Government is continuing to assist aged care service providers to manage the direct impacts of the pandemic.

“Our investment will continue funding the Aged Care Support Program Extension grant opportunity, which reimburses providers for eligible costs incurred as a direct result of managing COVID-19,” Minister Colbeck said.

“Ready to deploy surge workforce arrangements also remain in place to ensure the continuity of care for aged care residents even in the event of an outbreak within their residential facility.

“The spending on aged care preparedness will also continue intensive case management support available to aged care services experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak amongst residents and/or staff. This will ensure we remain ready to assist providers experiencing outbreaks.”

The Australian Government recognises the outstanding efforts of our aged care workforce in protecting the health and wellbeing senior Australians throughout the pandemic, and will provide additional funding to continue the Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 (SACWIC) grant opportunity. This grant opportunity is being extended to 30 June 2022 to ensure support remains available as required.

At times where there is significant community transmission of COVID-19, the SACWIC grant enables aged care workers to adhere to single site restrictions without being financially disadvantaged. Single site restrictions are voluntarily enacted to mitigate the risk of workers unintentionally spreading COVID-19 between facilities.

As Australia transitions to living with COVID-19 the need for rapid response in our aged care sector, including access to diagnostic testing, will continue.

Minister Colbeck said the residents of Australia's aged care facilities are a very highly vaccinated population and the same is true of the aged care workforce, but testing remains a critical tool to manage potential outbreaks.

“The Government will provide funding to extend the ‘in-reach’ COVID-19 pathology services for residential aged care facilities, as we work towards a future approach where rapid antigen testing becomes the standard for COVID-19 surveillance in aged care,” he said.

“We are also making funding available to continue the work of the Victorian Aged Care Response Centre (VACRC) to support preparedness activities and rapidly respond to COVID-19 outbreaks in that state.

“The VACRC has been critical in prioritising the quality of care and protection of residents, and ensuring a rapid and effective response for providers, and communicating with families.”

The existing Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) Support Loan Program will be extended to continue to support the residential aged care sector, preventing the unnecessary insolvency of providers as a result of the pandemic.

Some residential aged care facilities have experienced declining occupancy rates during the pandemic, as senior Australians look to remain in their own homes or with family.

The RAD Support Loan Program has helped facilities manage the financial impact of declining resident numbers, which has minimised the flow-on cost to taxpayers.