

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Written Question received 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000516

Retention bonus

Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

Please provide the following information in relation to the retention bonus:

- How many employers applied for the retention bonus? Please provide the number as a total and by state and territory.
- How many aged care workers will receive the first quarterly payment of the retention bonus?
- How much did a direct aged care worker receive as the first quarterly payment working in a residential aged care facility?
- How much did an aged care worker providing care at home receive as the first quarterly payment delivering services under the Home Care Packages Program?
- Please confirm the total amount of funding that has been allocated to the retention bonus?
- How much of that funding for the retention bonus has been allocated towards the first quarterly payment of the retention bonus?

Answer:

- The Department has received 1,600 applications for the Aged Care Workforce Retention Payment.
- Applications are at approved provider level. State and territory data is not recorded for the purpose of this grant round.
- Applications have been received to provide a payment to over 235,000 eligible workers for the first payment round.
- Payment amounts are calculated on the average weekly hours worked over the four weeks prior to census date.
- Calculations are then based on the average weekly hours worked within that period over the following tiered structure.

Eligible Workers	Between 3 and 7.5 hours per week	More than 7.5 and up to 15 hours per week	More than 15 and up to 22.5 hours per week	More than 22.5 and up to 30 hours per week	More than 30 hours per week
Residential Aged Care	\$160	\$320	\$480	\$640	\$800
Home Care	\$120	\$240	\$360	\$480	\$600

- \$250 million has been committed for the program so far.
- Half of this amount has been paid into nominated bank accounts for the first payment.
- The second payment will be made in the first week of October.
- The Government has announced a third payment based on employment as at 30 November 2020, taking total investment in the bonus to \$440 million.

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Written Question received 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000527

Additional funding provided by the Commonwealth to aged care services

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

What was the actual amount of additional funding per resident per day that the Commonwealth has provided to aged care services to protect their residents and staff?

Answer:

There has been a range of supports through additional funding paid to residential care providers as part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the amount of daily subsidy or supplement paid to an approved provider on behalf of a resident can vary greatly, and the COVID-19 payment was paid as a one-off payment, these supports cannot be characterised as an additional funding amount per resident day.

Supports funded to help protect residents and staff during the pandemic include:

- \$78.3 million to support all residential care providers with additional costs and workforce supply pressures resulting from COVID-19. This equals a 1.2 per cent increase to subsidies paid through the Aged Care Funding Instrument from 1 March 2020 to 31 August 2020;
- \$26.9 million for a temporary 30 per cent increase to Residential and Home Care Viability Supplements and the Homeless Supplement, from 1 March 2020 to 31 August 2020; and
- \$205 million for a one-off COVID-19 payment to residential care providers paid in June 2020. Approved providers received around \$900 per resident in major metropolitan areas, and around \$1,350 per resident in all other areas of Australia. Facilities outside major metropolitan areas received a 50 per cent loading to cover the additional costs of providing care in these areas.

- \$245 million for a one-off payment and the continuation of the 30 per cent increase the viability and homeless supplements to support providers with the additional costs associated with responding to COVID-19 and costs associated with workforce pressure.
 - The one-off payment will be made by October 2020.
 - As with the first COVID-19 support payment, providers outside major metropolitan areas will receive a 50 per cent loading.
 - Providers will receive around \$975 per resident in major metropolitan areas and around \$1,435 per resident in all other areas.

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Written Question received 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000528

Waiting periods and services for Home Care packages

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Please provide the average waiting periods for Home care packages in each state?
Please provide what services if any people are receiving while they are waiting for home care packages?

Answer:

The Department does not report on average waiting periods for home care packages by state, as the Home Care National Prioritisation System (NPS) is a nationally-consistent system for prioritising access to home care, which means that a person's geographical location, including the state that they live in, does not affect their waiting times.

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Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

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Written Question on 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000530

Home care package waiting periods in Victoria

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Please provide regional data on home care package waiting periods in Victoria?

Answer:

The Department does not generally report on home care package waiting times in specific regions, as the Home Care National Prioritisation System (NPS) is a nationally-consistent system for prioritising access to home care, which means that a person's geographical location, including the state or region that they live in, does not affect their waiting times.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

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Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Written question received 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000531

Victorians supported by CHSP

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Please provide the number of Victorians who are supported by CHSP while waiting for Home Care packages by municipality and Federal Electorate?

Answer:

As at 31 March 2020, 18,005 people living in Victoria had been approved for access to services through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme whilst awaiting assignment of a home care package (at level). Data on this indicator is by Aged Care Planning Region only.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

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Written Questions from 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000572

The Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment

Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

- A one-off \$1,500 payment will financially support Victorian aged care workers who have been instructed by the department to self-isolate or quarantine at home because they are either diagnosed with COVID-19 or are a close contact of a confirmed case, but can't rely on sick leave while missing work.
 - Is the Federal Government providing any funding or contributions to the one-off payment of \$1,500 or is this measure fully funded and managed by the Victorian Government?
 - If the Federal Government is providing any funding or contributions please provide the share it is making to this measure.
- In relation to this \$1,500 payment that will financially support Victorian aged care workers please name the Department that has the responsibility of instructing Victorian aged care workers to self-isolate or quarantine at home because they are either diagnosed with COVID-19 or are a close contact of a confirmed case, but can't rely on sick leave while missing work?

Answer:

- The Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment (the payment) of \$1,500 for Victorian workers is funded by the Australian Government and administered by Services Australia. This includes aged care workers.
- The payment replaces the Victorian Government's \$1,500 COVID-19 Worker Support Payment.
- The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for instructing Victorian aged care workers to self-isolate or quarantine at home because they are either diagnosed with COVID-19, are a close contact of a confirmed case, or

care for a child under 16 years who has COVID-19 or has been in close contact with a confirmed case.

- If instructed by DHHS to self-isolate or quarantine at home, workers may apply for the payment from the Australian Government.

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Written Questions from 21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000573

Single Site Workforce Arrangements

Written

Senator: Kristina Keneally

Question:

1. What is/will be the Federal Government's role in the Industry program to reduce workforce sharing across sites?
2. For this initiative has the Federal Government provided any funding for this work? If yes, how much funding has been provided and to whom? That is the VACI or Victorian Government.
3. Please provide details including how the Federal Government will ensure other states and territories will benefit from this work? If there is no role for the Federal Government, why not?

Answer:

- The Department of Health (Department), along with the Peak Bodies and Unions, supported the work of Industry leaders in the development of the "*Guiding Principles for Residential Aged Care – keeping Victorian Residents and Workers Safe*" (Principles).
- A key objective of the Principles in place in Victoria is to have Victorian aged care workers based with one residential aged care facility only.
- The Department is providing funding to support Victorian approved providers and their workers in designated hotspots of Greater Melbourne and Mitchell Shire to implement the Principles through the Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 (SACWIC) grant opportunity.
- \$92.4 million of new funding has been allocated by the Australian Government for the SACWIC grant. This funding will be provided directly to approved providers who are assessed as meeting eligibility criteria.
- To support the industry program, the Department has also:
 - funded the Aged Care Services Australia to deliver the Guiding Principles Support Hub to the value of \$760,000.00 (GST exclusive)

- contracted Converge International to deliver counselling services to Victorian aged care workers whose work hours are reduced or otherwise affected by the single site arrangements.
- The Aged Care Advisory Group, which reports to the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), is considering a range of measures that support national aged care sector preparedness, including workforce protocols and the approach to single site arrangements.
- The Department is also working with provider peak bodies and union representatives on implementation of the Principles in Victoria, including collating lessons to ensure other states and territories benefit from this work.