

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Written Question received 21 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000533**

**Question Subject:** Commission staff working on COVID-19 outbreaks

**Type of Question:** Written

**Senator:** Rachel Siewert

**Question:**

How many staff at the Commission are working on covid-19 outbreaks?  
Have you recruited any new staff to work on Covid-19? If so how many?

**Answer:**

The Commission has established a COVID-19 Response Taskforce (taskforce) with 15 staff as at 21 August 2020. The taskforce includes outbreak case coordination, intelligence and secretariat functions. Also, the majority of the Compliance Operations section (of 24 staff) are involved in managing enforcement actions and activities.

The Commission's Complaints Operations Branch established an additional Enquiries Line of eight staff to manage the increased volume of contacts and complaints, and a dedicated COVID-19 team of ten staff (including seven registered clinicians) with a nominated contact for each residential service, with a COVID-19 outbreak, where a Notice to Agree was issued.

The Commission and taskforce is advised on COVID-19 matters by our Chief Clinical Advisor. In total this represents 59 staff, including the Commissioner.

The Commission recruited 88 new employees and contractors from 1 April to 31 July 2020 to assist in the response to COVID-19 and operations of the Commission.

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**Written Question received 21 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000535**

**Pandemic plan for aged care facilities:**

**Written**

**Senator:** Rachel Siewert

**Question:**

Are you aware of how many facilities have actively rehearsed their pandemic plan? What are you doing to support providers to rehearse their plans?

**Answer:**

The second residential self-assessment survey conducted by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) in August 2020 asked specifically if the service had reviewed their Outbreak Management Plan. The survey was sent to 2,603 eligible services with 2,424 responses received. Most services (98%) indicated that they had reviewed their Outbreak Management Plan to ensure it was current and fit for purpose.

The Commission's communications, online resources and webinars with residential providers have urged and supported services to critically test their outbreak management arrangements. These arrangements are also considered in all monitoring and assessment visits currently being undertaken by the Commission.

A Companion Resource Guide to support services to assess and 'rehearse' their readiness for an outbreak is located on the Commission website here:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/media/88212>

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**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

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**Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Written Question received 21 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000536**

**Question Subject:** Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's regulatory powers

**Type of Question:** Written

**Senator:** Rachel Siewert

**Question:**

The Commission has said they are “exercising all our powers as the aged care regulator to minimise the risk to consumers and staff”. Would additional regulatory powers have enabled the Commission to have a strengthened role in preventing covid-19 outbreaks?

**Answer:**

The Commission has the regulatory powers necessary to hold providers to account in relation to their compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards, including providers' minimisation of risks to the safety, health and wellbeing of aged care consumers.