



The Hon Luke Donnellan

Minister for Child Protection

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Tuesday 24 November 2020

NATION FIRST ENSURING AGED CARE STAFF-TO-RESIDENT RATIOS

The Andrews Labor Government wants to make sure every family has confidence that older Victorians – our parents and grandparents – are comfortable and cared for.

This pandemic has thrown the safety and wellbeing of our loved ones in some private aged care facilities into sharp relief.

That's why, in an Australian first, Victoria will step in and provide \$40 million to help cover the cost of introducing minimum staff-to-resident ratios in private aged care – if the Commonwealth Government as the primary regulator and funder of aged care also comes to the table.

Victoria became the first state in Australia to have nurse-to-resident ratios in its public sector residential aged care. These reforms provide an important safeguard for both residents and staff, and ensure older Victorians are receiving the best care possible.

Throughout the pandemic, there were just 15 positive cases in Victoria's public aged care, including three residents and no deaths, showing the value of our ratios.

The findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety showed the private sector aged care system had seen "insufficient" preparations for the pandemic. We believe that staff-to-resident ratios would have made a significant difference had they been in place this year.

That's why we're calling on the Commonwealth to implement ratios in private and not-for-profit residential facilities – bringing them into line with Victoria's public aged care sector – and supporting the providers and hardworking staff doing their best in an already stretched system.

If the Commonwealth agrees, the introduction of staff-to-resident ratios would vastly improve the quality of care in private residential aged facilities.

The Labor Government's contribution would cover the clinical student training placement costs for thousands of extra registered nurses, enrolled nurses and personal care workers.

To reduce the financial burden for Victorians wanting to enter the workforce, the *Diploma of Nursing* and *Cert III in Individual Support* and *Cert IV in Ageing Support* will also continue to be included on the Free TAFE courses list.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* also provides \$175 million to ensure our older Victorians have a safe and comfortable home, where they know they'll be cared for.

Government will invest up to \$134.6 million to deliver a brand-new residential aged care facility in Cheltenham in Melbourne's south-east, which will be operated by Monash Health at the Kingston Centre

The state-of-the-art and dementia-friendly building will have 150 beds and cater for older Victorians with high care or mental health needs.

Another \$900,000 will deliver the first phase of designing and planning a new 90-bed residential aged care facility in Coburg in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

In regional Victoria, communities will share in \$10 million in grants for upgrades to facilities and services as part of the *Rural Residential Aged Care Facilities Renewal Program*. This builds on the important work of the \$470 million Regional Health Infrastructure Fund (RHIF), which has seen substantial upgrades to many regional and rural aged care and health services across the state.

More than \$27.6 million has also been allocated for public sector residential aged care, to help ensure older Victorians in state-run facilities are properly supported and cared for.

The Government's work to keep Victorians of all generations connected during the pandemic and beyond will continue, and a further \$1.9 million will support several important initiatives to prevent and respond to elder abuse.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan

"Everyone older Victorian deserves care and compassion – no matter who owns the facility that supports them."

"Ratios are vital in our public aged care system, and we want the Commonwealth to join us in making sure they exist in every single facility in Victoria."

"We're continuing to modernise and upgrade public residential aged care services right across our state – because we know it means keeping staff and residents safe."