



## Victorian Aged Care Services put on high COVID-19 alert

### Statement from Ms Janet Anderson PSM, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

1 June 2021

All residential aged care services are reminded to be on high alert following COVID-19 cases linked to aged care services in the State.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is actively partnering with the Victorian Aged Care Response Centre (VACRC), which brings together Australian and Victorian Government agencies, to manage the response to COVID-19 in Victorian residential aged care services.

The Commission is currently attending twice-daily outbreak management case meetings convened by VACRC to monitor the evolving situation in Victoria, to ensure that all aged care services are doing everything expected of them to reduce the risk of an outbreak, and to support those residential aged care services with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The Commission is collaborating with VACRC to support telephone-based contacts with all aged residential care services in the greater Melbourne area. These contacts are intended to confirm the actions that services are taking for outbreak preparedness including facilitating access to COVID-19 vaccination.

Where the VACRC phone contact program identifies risk in relation to outbreak management preparedness, a referral is made to the Commission which is responding by undertaking an infection control monitoring spot check visit.

The Commission has closely monitored risk and supported aged care services throughout the pandemic. As at 30 April 2021, the Commission has (since 1 March 2020):

- conducted 3,071 unannounced site visits nationally, with 801 in Victoria. This included 2,776 infection control spot checks, 768 of which were in Victoria
- undertaken 15,368 non-site regulatory checks (phone contacts and surveys), including 4,156 in Victoria
- issued 22 compliance notices for providers experiencing an outbreak including 21 in Victoria
- managed 11,073 complaints about aged care services including 2,635 COVID-19 related complaints.

The latest outbreak in Victoria underscores for everyone involved in the aged care sector the importance of meticulous planning and well-rehearsed preparations to minimise the risk of an outbreak and optimise the response if an outbreak occurs.

All providers are reminded of their legal responsibilities under the Aged Care Quality Standards to ensure that staff have the necessary training, including in infection control practices and procedures, and in the appropriate use of PPE including gloves, masks, face shields and gowns.

The Commission continues to publish and draw to providers' attention, a range of resources to support aged care services and consumers during the pandemic. These are all readily available on the Commission's website at: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/covid-19-coronavirus-information>

The national rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program agreed by National Cabinet is being managed by Departments of Health in all nine jurisdictions. Arrangements for the vaccination of those living and working in residential aged care services are being overseen by the Australian Government Department of Health.

If anyone has a concern about an aged care service, they should contact the Commission via its website at: [www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au) or by calling 1800 951 822.

Contact: [media@agedcarequality.gov.au](mailto:media@agedcarequality.gov.au)