



07 residential aged care seniors fact sheet

This fact sheet outlines ways in which the Howard Government supports people who live in aged care facilities.

Residential Care

While the great majority of older people are able to continue living independent lives in the community, residential care facilities are available for older people who have complex care needs which cannot be catered for within the home. The Australian Government has budgeted \$5.1 billion in 2004–2005 to ensure that older Australians have access to quality residential care when they can no longer remain in their homes.

There are two main types of residential care:

- > **Low Level Residential Care**, or 'hostel' care, focuses on personal care services such as help with bathing, dressing, eating, and other personal care. Low level residential care also provides accommodation support services (cleaning, laundry and meals) as well as treatments and procedures carried out according to the instructions of health professionals. Assistance in obtaining health practitioner services (medical, dental etc.) and access to specialised therapy services (speech therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy) is provided as required.
- > **High Level Residential Care**, or 'nursing home' care, which usually involves nursing care delivered by registered nursing staff. Care is combined with accommodation support services, personal care services and allied health services.

Many aged care homes offer both types of care. For further information on residential care facilities, contact the Aged Care Information Line on FREECALL™ 1800 500 853.

Exemption of Accommodation Bonds from the Assets Test

The Australian Government is delivering on an election commitment to exempt accommodation bonds from the Social Security and Veterans' Affairs assets tests. Under current rules, care recipients who pay an accommodation bond have the value of the refundable portion of the bond counted as an asset under the assets test. From 1 July 2005, accommodation bonds paid by residents entering aged care will be exempt from the Social Security and Veterans' Affairs assets test. This measure will apply to all bonds, regardless of when they were paid.

Residential Aged Care Quality

The Australian Government has in place a number of quality processes aimed at enhancing life for older Australians in residential aged care services. In order to receive funding from the Government, aged care homes must receive an accreditation from the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency. In addition to this accreditation, an ongoing monitoring process is in place to ensure that standards continue to be met. Both the Australian Government and the Agency undertake visits to aged care homes, including unannounced spot checks.

The Government's Certification Program is aimed at improving the physical quality of Australian Government funded residential aged care buildings. Homes must be certified to access accommodation payments. The Government also requires a Fire Safety Declaration to be completed annually for each home declaring that all state/territory and local government fire safety laws have been met.

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Aged Care Complaints

The Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme is a free service introduced by the Australian Government to handle complaints about Australian Government funded aged care services. To contact the Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme call TOLLFREE™ **1800 550 552**.

Complaints about the operation of the Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme can be lodged by contacting the Office of the Commissioner for Complaints on TOLLFREE™ **1800 500 294** or via its website www.cfc.health.gov.au

2004 – 05 Budget Measures – Investing in Australia’s Aged Care: More Places, Better Care

To continue its commitment to the provision of quality aged care, the Australian Government is providing \$2.2 billion through its Investing in Australia’s Aged Care: More Places, Better Care package. The package includes:

Investing in Better Care

- > An investment of \$877.8 million over four years in better care provision.
- > The provision of \$951.9 million to build more aged care homes and to expand and upgrade existing ones.

More Places Better Care

- > An additional 27 900 aged care places available over the next three years.

Better Skills and Better Care

- > Building a stronger workforce by providing \$101.4 million for aged care worker and nurse training places, including support for 1700 more students to commence nursing studies over the next four years.

Streamlined Administration for Better Care

- > Streamlining of the resident classification scale under a new funding model, reducing the current eight categories into three.
- > Additional funding for the development of a new payments system, the introduction of e-commerce, and strengthened review arrangements.

The Right Care in the Right Place

- > Additional funding of \$47.9 million over four years, including extra support for Aged Care Assessment Teams and better links between community and residential assessment.
- > New supplements for residents with dementia exhibiting challenging behaviours, and residents needing complex palliative nursing care.
- > Funding of \$2.1 million to establish a web-based aged care information service.
- > \$11.6 million over four years to improve access by culturally and linguistically diverse communities to culturally appropriate aged care services.
- > An additional \$10.3 million over four years to extend the conditional adjustment payment and increase the concessional resident supplement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Services. A viability supplement will also be paid for the first time to these services.
- > Additional resources for the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

In addition, providers will no longer be required to assess the assets of new residents. Centrelink will carry out this task, with veterans being assessed by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Providers are also no longer required to obtain approval from an Aged Care Assessment Team before existing residents can move from low to high level care within the same aged care home.

This package will bring the Australian Government’s total investment in the care of older Australians to \$30 billion over the next four years: \$6.7 billion in 2004-05 rising to \$8.2 billion in 2007-08; resulting in a total of \$67 billion that the Australian Government has committed to securing better aged care between 1996 and 2008.

For more information on this package, call FREECALL™ **1800 500 853**, or go to www.health.gov.au/investinginagedcare.