



**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**
VICTORIAN BRANCH

Newsflash

COVID-19 information for aged care members

Friday 4 March 2022

COVID-19 AGED CARE UPDATE

Aged care pandemic bonuses explained

The aged care royal commission found understaffing and an undervalued workforce paid poor wages in private aged care were significant factors 'compromising the care of residents despite the best intentions'.

ANMF continues to advocate for a per shift COVID surge allowance for private aged care workers and a respectful pay increase that values their important work.

Instead, the Morrison Government has paid or announced a series of one-off bonuses costing \$393 million. The latest \$800 bonus was announced on 1 February 2022.

Federal ANMF joined with other unions and employer groups to condemn the bonus as 'grossly inadequate'. Read the media release 'Staff shortage emergency requires more than a two-payment bonus' via bit.ly/372xxG7

Aged care nurses and personal care workers need secure permanent full- and part-time work and pay rises that show we value the work of caring for elderly, vulnerable Australians.

The Morrison Government has ignored the royal commission's pay rise recommendation and insulted a burnt-out workforce in crisis with paltry bonuses.

Private aged care needs urgent structural wage reform so it can recruit and retain a workforce that feels valued and has the time to provide safe, dignified care for residents

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

What are the aged care bonuses?

\$800 aged care workforce bonus

On 1 February 2022, Health and Aged Care Minister Greg Hunt announced a bonus up to \$800, in two instalments, for aged care workers. Read the media release via bit.ly/3HSX6WZ

Mr Hunt said the payments would be made to 'clinical care workers' and 'expanded to all those providing direct care, food or cleaning services' in government subsidised residential care.

The first instalment up to \$400 will be paid to aged care workers employed on 28 February 2022 and the second up to \$400 will be paid to those employed on 28 April 2022.

The rates are (if you qualify for both instalments):

- If you work 3-15 hours per week - \$400
- If you work 16-30 hours per week - \$640
- If you work more than 31 hours per week - \$800

If you only qualify for one instalment your payment will be half of the amounts listed above.

Aged care providers must apply for the payments on behalf of their staff. Employers can apply from 1 March 2022 on behalf of eligible workers and will then pay the bonus to those workers. Employers are "encouraged" to pay the bonus at the time they lodge the application.

ANMF understands private and public aged care staff are eligible for these payments.

The Federal Department of Health will conduct random and targeted audits of the bonus payment program to ensure workers receive their payments. Read the Federal Department of Health's frequently asked questions, including what to do if you have a problem with your payment, via bit.ly/3KbAy56

Registered nurse payment

The Morrison Government announced a one-off COVID aged care **registered nurse payment bonus** in the May 2021 budget. The payment is only for registered nurses, not enrolled nurses. (ANMF continues to campaign for a fair pay rise for all nurses and carers instead of bonuses.)

Full-time registered nurses will receive a \$3700 bonus. Part-time and casual nurses will receive a \$2700 bonus.

Registered nurses who work for the same private or public state-run aged care providers for 12 months, between 1 November 2021 and 31 October 2022, are eligible for the payment.

A second payment is available for eligible nurses who work for the same provider for 12 months between 1 November 2022 and 31 October 2023.

Two additional annual payments of up to \$2,300 are available for registered nurses who work in a rural or remote area, have a postgraduate qualification and take on leadership and training responsibilities in their workplace.

Aged care providers must apply for the payments on behalf of their staff. The payments are considered taxable income. More information via bit.ly/3pA60Ck

Aged care workforce retention bonus payment

The Morrison Government made three **aged care workforce retention payments** – in July, September and November 2020 of up to \$800 – to registered and enrolled nurses and personal care workers. The payments were considered taxable income. More information via bit.ly/3nMpzVa

Need ANMF advice or support?

Members can complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance (scroll to the bottom of the page).

Got a colleague not receiving ANMF emails?

If you have an ANMF colleague who is not receiving these newsflash emails, please pass this on and let them know they can re-subscribe via anmfvic.asn.au/resubscribe

Encourage your colleagues to join ANMF

Please invite your aged care nursing and personal care worker colleagues to join their union so they have access to support, advice and information about their employment. Let them know they can join via anmfvic.asn.au/join

Important COVID-19 links for nurses and personal care workers

ANMF continues to collate the important links all in one place, so you don't have to go looking. Please bookmark and check anmfvic.asn.au/COVID-19 regularly.

This newsflash has also been sent to agency nurses who may be working in private aged care.

ANMF Job Reps and Health and Safety Reps are encouraged to display this newsflash in the workplace.