



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program FACT SHEET FOR RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE HOMES and COMMUNITY PACKAGE AGED CARE SERVICES

Background

Funding is available to support registered and enrolled nurses to return to employment in aged care. Funding is also available to assist employers with the re-training and re-skilling of nurses who return to work.

This funding, announced on 15 January 2008 by the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP committed \$39.4 million over 5 years to provide places for 7,750 extra nurses and midwives in public and private hospitals and 1,000 nurses in residential aged care homes.

On 2 December 2008, Minister Elliot agreed three changes to the program. They were:

- An extension of the program to nurses returning to work in community based aged care and delivering Commonwealth funded packaged care including Community Aged Care Packages, Extended Aged Care at Home and Extended Aged Care At Home (Dementia) services.
- The \$1,000, one-off retraining payment for employers will now be paid in full whether nurses are returning full-time or part-time.
- Support for Enrolled Nurses returning under the program to up-skill to the Diploma of Nursing.

Employer Eligibility

Residential Aged Care

A service providing residential aged care for which it is in receipt of subsidy under Chapter 3 of the *Aged Care Act 1997* is an eligible service for the purpose of this initiative.

From the 15 January 2008, the program will provide cash bonuses of up to \$6,000 to eligible nurses who return to work in an aged care home that is participating in the program. For nurses returning to work between 15 January and 1 December 2008, the program will provide a cash bonus of up to \$1,000 to participating residential aged care homes that employ an eligible nurse. This bonus is paid pro rata where a nurse returns to work part time.

For nurses returning to residential aged care from 2 December 2008, the \$1000 bonus will be paid to the employer in full whether the nurse works full time or part time.

Community Aged Care

To be eligible to receive cash bonuses under this program, a prospective employer must be an approved service under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (the *Act*) for the delivery of community package aged care programs including:

- Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) program;
- Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) program; and
- Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD) program.

From 2 December 2008, the program will provide cash bonuses of up to \$6,000 to eligible nurses who return to work in a community aged care service that is participating in the program. The program will also provide cash bonuses of \$1,000 to participating community aged care services that employ an eligible nurse.

Nurse Eligibility

You are eligible for the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program if you:

- have previously been employed as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) in the Australian nursing workforce;
- have not been employed as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) to provide clinical nursing services in Australia within the past 12 months;
- are registered or enrolled with the relevant state or territory regulatory authority or have qualifications that make you eligible for such registration or enrolment;
- return to work as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) as an employee of a aged care service that has allocated places under this program;
- returned to work on or after the 15 January 2008 for residential care or on or after 2 December 2008 for community aged care;
- confirm that the aged care service where you are returning to work has an allocated place available under this program; and
- meet any additional requirements of the relevant state or territory.

You are **not** eligible for this program if you:

- returned to work in a residential aged care home as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia before 15 January 2008 or returned to work in a community aged care service as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia before 2 December 2008;
- are unable to gain registration or enrolment with the relevant state or territory regulatory authority;
- have been employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse to provide clinical nursing services in Australia within the past 12 months at the time you intend to return to work;
- are a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse, or have qualifications that make you eligible for registration or enrolment, but have never been employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia;
- are under investigation or sanctioned under the relevant state or territory regulatory body;
- are employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse by an independent agency to provide services to residential aged care home or community aged care service; and
- are or have been in receipt of a Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce bonus payments through previous employment. This applies for the duration of the funding.

How does an eligible aged care service employ a registered or enrolled nurse for a Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce place?

- The aged care service is responsible for determining the recruitment and selection of nursing staff for the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program.
- The aged care service is responsible for gaining information from the registered or enrolled nurse returning to work to determine if the individual nurse is eligible to be considered for a place under the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program.
- A nurse must fill in the relevant forms and a statutory declaration for an aged care service to register and claim the training bonus payment for an individual nurse.
- Applications should be based on a nurse being employed full-time or the pro rata equivalent. An aged care service may give priority to a nurse returning to work in a full-time capacity.

What do aged care homes/community package aged care services have to provide for the bonus payment?

- An aged care home/community package aged care service will be required to provide support for a nurse re-entering the workforce through retraining, mentoring or other support structures. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected on support structures provided to nurses to evaluate the program.
- Additional training support is available from the 2 December 2008 for Enrolled Nurses to upgrade their skills to the Diploma of Nursing qualification. Enquiries about this should be directed to the RCNA.

How does a nurse receive a bonus payment under this program?

- Each eligible nurse who returns to work in an aged care home or a community package aged care service receives \$6,000 (or pro rata equivalent amount) in two instalments; one payment of \$3,000 (or pro rata equivalent) after six months continuous employment and another \$3,000 (or pro rata equivalent) after 18 months continuous employment in the sector.
- An aged care service should ensure that there are systems in place through regular employment processes to identify nurses that are eligible for such payments and to provide necessary information to support that payment.
- Nurses employed under this program may work for multiple aged care employers during the 18 month period, but the employer payment will be paid to the first eligible employer with which the nurse is employed.

Further information

For further information about the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program please contact the Royal College of Nursing Australia on:

Freecall: 1800 553 252
Email: BNBW@rcna.org.au
Website: www.rcna.org.au

Authorised for Electronic Transmission

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