



AUSTRALIAN
PHYSIOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION



APA ADVOCACY NEWS

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Developing news

Aged care COVID-19 measures a good move but more needs to be done

The APA welcomes the new temporary funding measures announced in response to the Royal Commission's Inquiry into the Impacts of COVID-19 on Aged Care.

The doubling of the number of allied health sessions available under Chronic Disease Management Plans (CDMs), from five to 10 consultations, will better address the complexities of treating older people in residential aged care facilities.

The APA has long called for the number of physiotherapy sessions available to older people under CDMs to be increased. Five sessions to meet all the allied health needs of a chronically ill or physically deconditioned person has never been enough to provide comprehensive care.

The introduction of group allied health sessions in homes where there have been COVID-19 outbreaks or periods of extended lockdown will also have an enormous impact on the well-being and independence of residents.

The APA is calling for these new measures to be made ongoing and available to all older Australians.

The APA will continue to advocate strongly for improved access to ongoing and episodic restorative and reablement care in the aged care sector.

The association is waiting on the outcomes of Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's final Report next year – and expects to see the Government embrace substantial funding reform.

APA's with you every step of the way along your career pathway

Don't miss this month's InMotion magazine and its 11-page Career Pathways coverage.

The Career Pathways are a way of recognising, credentialing and training all physiotherapists, as well as providing all physiotherapists with ongoing education that begins as a graduate and continue on to specialist or post-specialist level.

The special InMotion article explains how the Career Pathways works including research, the Australian College of Physiotherapists, fellowship, specialisation and more. College.

No matter your area of work or career stage – from novice to expert – the pathway for advancement has never been clearer.

Release of Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report

The 2020 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) has been released. The OID provides a comprehensive report measures the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This year's report has shown mixed outcomes with improvements in early childhood development and economic participation. However, outcomes related to obesity and nutrition, access to primary health care, mental health and self-harm are concerning.

In addition to providing a snapshot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing the report also demonstrates the barriers to positive change want is required to overcome this. Key to seeing positive outcomes is shared decision making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and governments.

APA member milestones acknowledged in new reward and recognition program

Earlier this year we celebrated significant milestone of our members who have reached 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 plus years of membership.

This annual program celebrates significant achievements that the profession has made to date and acknowledge all of our APA members who work tirelessly to contribute to the health of Australians.

Members who reached decade milestone have also received a small token gift to show our appreciation of their continued membership.

Further details: [APA website](#)

International Day of People Living with Disabilities

Everyday physiotherapists across the country are making positive changes to the lives of 4.4 million Australians with Disability.

Today is International Day of People with Disability. Join us in acknowledging the hard-working efforts of our physiotherapists and celebrating the achievements and contributions these 4.4 million Aussies make to our communities.

The OID is produced in consultation with all Australian governments, the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations and measures against a range of indicators such as governance, leadership and culture, health and economic participation.

Further details: [Website](#)

Latest advocacy and emerging issues

Aged care

The APA has publicly responded to a Federal Government's response to the Royal Commission Inquiry into the Impacts of COVID-19 in Aged Care.

The government announce it had accepted and acted on all recommendations with a \$132.2 package of measures. These include:

- \$12.1 million for additional individual allied health sessions under Medicare chronic disease management plans. There will be 10 allied health consultations available under the plans, up for 5.
- \$15.7 million for allied health group services for residents living in facilities affected by COVID-19 outbreaks. These funds will be distributed via PHNs in regions affected by COVID outbreaks in aged care facilities. The APA will advocate for physiotherapy group sessions directly with PHNs.

While these measures are positive step, the APA will continue to advocate for them to be made permanent and for significant funding reform in the sector.

Further details: [Federal Government media release](#), [APA media release](#)

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has released a new resource on Outbreak management planning in aged care. This resource provides practical guidance to assist residential aged care providers to support their workers, care recipients, families and visitors to prevent, prepare for and manage outbreaks of COVID-19.

The Commission will host a webinar on the new outbreak management planning resource on Thursday 10 December 2020.

Further details: [Website](#)

Compensables

New South Wales

The APA has further met with SIRA this week to provide verbal feedback from the recent member consultation regards the possible fee schedule changes.

The APA is presently finalising a formal written submission to SIRA. The key messages that will be relayed will include:

- establishment of a pro-rata Consult C code for a defined cohort of workers
- establishment of safeguards to ensure physiotherapists are appropriately remunerated for the essential 'value added' roles undertaken outside of the consult such as verbal and written liaison, report writing, completion of fax requests, etc
- maintenance of the home visit item codes for a defined cohort of workers

The APA had additionally highlighted the Increasing inequality between the rate that physios are being reimbursed for work cover patients when compared to private/commercial based clients, which will likely be a mounting deterrent for experienced, competent and busy providers to remain involved in the scheme.

SIRA are asking for feedback from physiotherapists who provide services to people injured at work and who are an important part of the care framework delivering optimal health, recovery and quality of life outcomes to compensation scheme participants.

The Monash University evaluation of the role physiotherapists have played in the NSW scheme introduction of certification is also open. The APA strongly encourages that uptake of the survey to help Monash with the evaluation of this important role for physiotherapists in the NSW scheme. The survey is pertinent to all physiotherapists, whether you have issued a certificate or not.

Further details: [APA website](#)

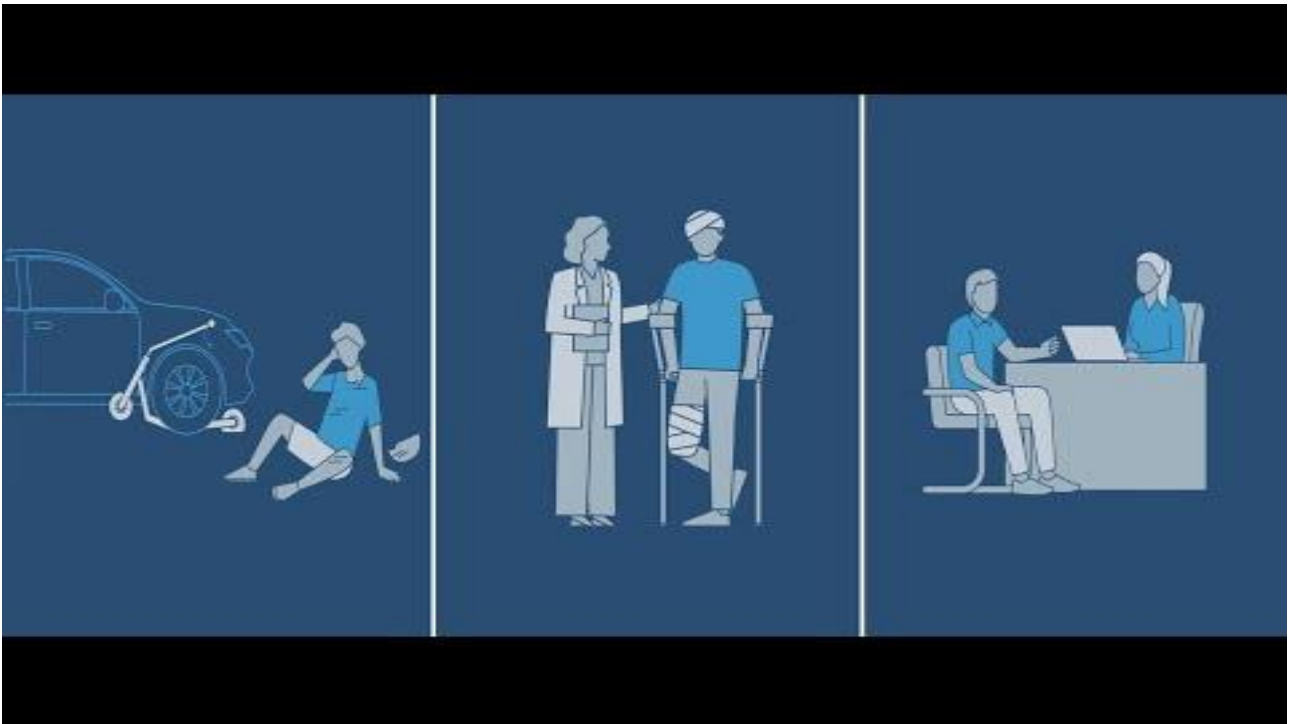
Victoria

TAC have put together an animated infographic video around the clinical framework

The *Clinical Framework for the Delivery of Health Services* (Clinical Framework) is a set of five principles to help health professionals achieve the best possible outcomes for patients injured in a transport accident.

Further details: [TAC website](#)

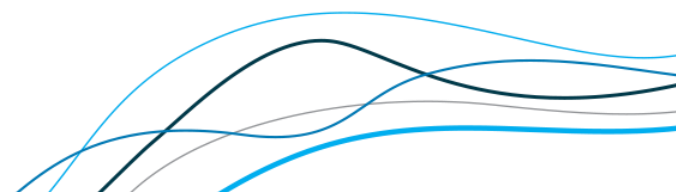
[TAC Clinical Framework video](#)



COVID-19

The APA and AHPA have strongly advocated on behalf of the physiotherapy profession and allied health to ensure continuity of safe practice via telehealth and face-to-face care since the onset of COVID-19.

We are in regular contact with State Chief Allied Health Officers, the Minister for Health and relevant departments.



While it is pleasing we are moving to a “new normal” across the country, we are working hard to keep members updated as changes occur.

South Australia

From 1 December 2020, physiotherapy practices in South Australia:

- Will be required to have a [COVID-Safe Plan](#).
- The COVID-Safe Plan for healthcare settings must include a contact tracing system, such as the [COVID-Safe Check in](#).
- All people, including patients, patient’s family members, healthcare staff, administrative staff, contractors and cleaning staff, are required to wear single use surgical masks when on healthcare sites. Cloth sites are not sufficient for healthcare settings.
- Exemption to mask wearing includes certain breathing difficulties, mental health conditions, communication with those hard of hearing and those under the age of 12.
- Density requirements should be 1 person per 4 square meters. Density requirements do not include people employed at the practice.

Further details: [Website](#)

New South Wales

It is now a requirement for practices to record the details of patients and staff coming into the practice which should be done electronically, such as QR code or spreadsheet.

The NSW government has information on how to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan and QR codes.

Further details: [Website](#)

Department of Veterans’ Affairs

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) has revised its Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) National Schedule of Equipment.

Changes include:

- indexation of prior approval financial limits, effective 1 November 2020
- references to the new Assistive Listening Devices form
- changes to a full prior approval required for some prosthetic items and TV connected video magnifier.

Further details: [DVA website](#)

Treatment Cycle Review

In October 2019 the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) introduced treatment cycle arrangements for referrals from general practitioners to allied health providers. The arrangements are currently being independently evaluated by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) at the request of DVA.

QUT is seeking input from as many individual providers as possible. If you would like to take part, you can complete an online survey at www.qut-dva-treatmentcycles-evaluation.com.

It will take about 10 minutes to complete. After completing the survey, participants will be invited to nominate to participate in a follow-up interview to discuss their opinions and experiences.

Digital health

The APA were represented at the AHPA secure messaging forum with the following were the intended aims of the workshop:

- understand the potential role of secure messaging in clinical workflows and
- to identify barriers and opportunities related to using secure messaging

The workshop focused on:

- enabling mapping of typical communication/information pathways occurring in practice now
- which pathways may or may not be appropriate to use secure messaging
- whether you have considered using or do use secure messaging, and if so
 - o which system/s?
 - o what has stopped you using them?
 - o what opportunities has using them created for you?

Private Health Insurance

Bupa has announced its support of the Commonwealth's decision to support telehealth ongoing for Allied Health.

Further details: [Media release](#)

The final PHI reference group occurred on the 25 November 2020 to reflect on the current state of play within the private health insurance industry and some opportunities for advocacy in the next year.

NDIS and disability

Updates to the NDIS Price guide were announced on the 17 November 2020.

Further details: [website](#)

NDIS Independent Assessors

The NDIA has announced a postponement of the introduction of the NDIS Independent Assessments. They will now be introduced in mid-2021, with an extensive public consultation process to occur in the meantime.

Further details: [NDIA website](#)

Submissions

- The APA will provide a submission to DSS on the NDS and NDIS Outcomes Framework.

Telehealth

The APA has welcomed the recent announcement on the permanent extension of telehealth funding.

Further details: [APA website](#)

Resources

Webinar: Pain Revolution: Supporting Local Pain Educators in Rural Australia
Hosted by SARRAH.

Date: Wednesday 9 December 2020.

Further details: [Registration](#)

Guidance: Personalised medical devices guidance has been published by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Further details: [Website](#)