



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

9 June 2009

Report on Karingal Nursing Home

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot, today released the report into the Karingal Nursing Home's handling of the mouse plague at an aged care facility in regional Queensland.

The investigation by the independent Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency (the Agency) recommended improved procedures and processes for the protection of residents.

Minister Elliot ordered the major investigation to determine how the procedures and processes could be improved and the timeliness of the actions taken by the home before and during the plague.

The investigation examined:

- The home's management of the mouse plague, including actions taken to defend the home from attack;
- The timeliness of actions taken;
- How the nursing home responded to the incidents where residents had been bitten;
- Actions taken to protect residents generally; and
- Actions of the home and the approved provider.

The Agency has continued to closely monitor the home and conducted a further inspection on 1 and 2 June to assess the actions taken to prevent a recurrence of the mouse infestation.

Agency assessors found the home is continuing extensive baiting and additional cleaning.

Mrs Elliot said: "This comprehensive report includes a number of findings and recommendations".

The report found:

- Residents and staff were bitten;
- Appropriate action was taken after residents were bitten;
- The mouse problem was long term and increased in intensity between November 2008 and April 2009;
- Environmental controls were not effective;
- Door seals were not effective;

- An ineffective baiting strategy;
- Poor management response;
- Poor identification of hazards, reporting and analysis; and
- No formal plans for management of mice.

The recommendations included:

- Implementing pest exclusion measures to address the issue of mice entering the home;
- Improving baiting strategies;
- The home should remove all building debris from the land around the home;
- The home should provide appropriate information to its staff about the risks;
- Implementing clear management guidelines for designated pests;
- Improving reporting and monitoring procedures to address deficiencies in incident reporting, risk management and monitoring processes:
- The District Health Service should review processes used to monitor the work carried out by contractors;
- The development of national guidelines by the Department of Health and Ageing for a risk assessment tool and pest plan;
- Review the wording of the relevant expected outcomes to the Accreditation Standards;
- Aged care homes should conduct a risk assessment of their home for pests such as mice and if required implement a pest management plan.

Mrs Elliot said that the findings of the report have been considered and that the provider has been found not to have complied with its responsibilities under the Aged Care Act 1997 in relation to the Charter of Resident's Rights. A Notice of Non-Compliance has been issued by the Department of Health and Ageing.

Mrs Elliot said: "I understand that the recommended building modifications are well underway, that baiting and pest management strategies have been strengthened and staff training is taking place.

"All measures necessary to protect people living in this home and provide them with a safe environment should be implemented and maintained," Mrs Elliot said.

"I have asked the Department's Queensland State Manager to monitor the progress of the corrective actions outlined in the report and asked that any concerns over progress be reported to me immediately," Mrs Elliot said.

Mrs Elliot said that the recommendations of the report in relation to the review of the expected outcomes under the Accreditation Standards and conduct of risk assessments will be considered as part of the review of accreditation standards that is already underway.

A copy of the report to has been sent to the Queensland Minister for Health today for his attention.

The report can be viewed at

<http://www.accreditation.org.au/about-us/report-to-the-minister-for-ageing/>

Sadly one of the residents at the home has passed away. The family has requested their privacy be respected at this difficult time.

For more information, contact Mrs Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280