



**THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP**

**Minister for Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

22 December 2008

**QUALITY GUIDELINES FOR INDIGENOUS AGED CARE**

The Australian Government is now at its next stage in developing the first set of quality standards for flexible Indigenous aged care services – as part of the Rudd Labor Government’s commitment to improving Indigenous aged care.

In 1994, the flexible services were set up to enable Indigenous people “to age in country with the support of government funded aged care services in their own community”.

This week, the Department of Health and Ageing will be seeking tenders from experienced individuals or organisations to develop the **Quality Framework for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program**.

Tenders close on February 17, 2009 and work is expected to begin in March 2009. (Advertisements will appear in various newspapers with details.)

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said “We will consult and take the advice of Indigenous communities and the Indigenous aged care sector so that older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have services that allow them to remain in their communities.”

There are around 30 residential aged care services with significant Indigenous populations and 29 Aboriginal flexible aged care services.

“The Rudd Labor Government is acting to improve and lift the standards of Indigenous aged care. This is about taking practical and commonsense measures to improve the care and welfare of older Indigenous Australians,” Mrs Elliot said.

“We will work with Indigenous communities to improve their facilities and care. I have seen very remote Indigenous aged care services first hand – and they need to be improved.

“There has not previously been a thorough review or examination of the regulatory framework on flexible Indigenous aged care,” Mrs Elliot said.

On 22 September 2008, Mrs Elliot announced the Australian Government would fund a \$46 million Indigenous aged care plan to improve the long-term quality of aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The plan includes:

- Developing a quality framework to set standards for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program;
- Establishing a capital grants program for Indigenous aged care;
- Developing a Peer and Professional Support program for Indigenous aged care; and
- Providing an emergency assistance program to give short-term support to eligible care services in a crisis.

Since September, Mrs Elliot has announced a number of practical measures. They include:

- **In-principle approval to create eight flexible care beds in Mutitjulu's first permanent overnight aged care service;**
- **A \$1 million grant to Frontier Services to build overnight staff accommodation at Mutitjulu to retain staff;**
- **An \$800,000 grant to MacDonnell Shire Council to provide overnight staff accommodation at Tjilpi Pampaku Ngara (Docker River) Flexible Aged Care service to retain staff at this remote aged care service;**
- **In-principle approval to create a 10 place flexible residential aged care service in East Arnhem Land - following representations at Community Cabinet on July 23; and**
- **A \$200,000 grant to assist the Aboriginal Community Elders Service in East Brunswick (Melbourne), which provides 25 residential aged care places and 69 community care places, to help them to assess their capacity to come under the operation of the Aged Care Act 1997 and the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.**

***Tender inquiries***

Any difficulties accessing this site should be addressed to the Project Officer Roslyn Goddard on: Phone: 02 6289 1485; Fax: 02 6289 9743 or Email: [iactprocurement@health.gov.au](mailto:iactprocurement@health.gov.au). The Department's internet site is at [www.health.gov.au/tenders](http://www.health.gov.au/tenders)

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