



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Minister launches best practice publications for care workers

More than 1000 copies of a new publication focusing on care workers for older people in the community and how to improve their skills base is ready for distribution.

The Benevolent Society and the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre have developed: *Caring for older Australians: Care workers and care practices that support and enable good care* which contains evidence-based ideas, designed to be easily incorporated into the day-to-day work of community care workers.

The publication was launched today by Minister for Ageing Mrs Justine Elliot at the 41st Australian Association of Gerontology conference in Fremantle.

Around 650,000 older people living at home receive care services at some point each year.

Paid home care workers have become a crucial part of the aged care sector. Employment in home care services expanded faster than in any other community services industry between 1996 and 2001.

The Productivity Commission estimates that in 2001 there were 39,000 paid care workers providing care services to older people living at home (not including those providing nursing services to people at home).

Care workers provide assistance to older Australians in a number of ways by assisting people to shower, dressing, eating and with their mobility and communication needs.

“This publication uses Australian and international research to assist aged care providers recognise the value and contribution of care workers and provides advice on how they may be able to better include them in organisational processes,” Mrs Elliot said.

The suggested strategies include:

- Valuing care workers by recognising their experience by taking their skills into account when matching them with clients;
- Providing flexibility for care workers to spend appropriate time listening to the needs of their clients and organise care with this in mind;
- Continuity of care that allows workers to care for one person over time through improved rostering; and
- To include and consider care workers in the organisational policies and processes such as travel time, staff meetings, communication channels and ongoing training.

The briefing paper is the first in a series designed to improve staff skills, training and the levels of care available to older Australians in the community. Planned other topics for the briefing paper series include:

- Older people's social networks;
- Preventing and responding to elder abuse, and
- An enabling approach to community aged care.

Details please visit www.bensoc.org.au

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