



Senator the Hon Santo Santoro
Minister for Ageing
MEDIA RELEASE

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Implementation of \$1.5 billion aged care package underway

The Howard Government is working closely with both providers and recipients of aged care as it moves into the implementation phase of its \$1.5 billion *Securing the Future of Aged Care for Australians* package.

The Minister for Ageing, Senator Santo Santoro, said he was very pleased with the positive overall reaction from aged care providers, residents, staff and even the Federal Opposition since the package was released two weeks ago.

Senator Santoro today said aged care providers would begin receiving the first instalments of the \$96 million additional accommodation subsidy from July 1 this year.

The remaining reforms and additional funding contained in the package would take effect from March 20 next year. These changes include:

- An extra \$755 million in accommodation payments and fees available to the aged care sector over four years;
- Additional funding of \$393.5 million over four years to support the introduction of the new Aged Care Funding Instrument, with this money to be targeted at those with the highest care needs;
- The creation of 7200 new community aged care places, at a cost of \$411.7 million;
- And simpler and fairer income tests for care fees, which will help self-funded retirees.

Senator Santoro said the Government had consulted widely during the development of the package, and would now work closely with both the providers and the recipients of aged care in the lead-up to its implementation in March next year.

“I very much value the assistance and cooperation I have received from the aged care sector in putting together this landmark funding package,” Senator Santoro said.

“My door is always open, and the Government will consult with the sector as we move through the implementation phase, to ensure that all aged care providers are able to maximise the benefits they receive from the package.”

The reforms continue the Howard Government’s record of improving the availability and the quality of aged care in Australia over the last 10 years.

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