



## THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

### Minister for Ageing

#### MEDIA RELEASE

February 25, 2009

#### **More Help for Older Victorians Affected By Bushfires**

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today announced \$1.5 million in emergency funding to help older Victorians affected by the bushfires.

The funding would help cover costs of emergency nursing home care, motorised wheelchairs, walking frames, mechanical hoists and personal care items lost in the bushfires.

As part of the funding, the **Australian Government is providing up to \$500,000 to the Victorian Government** for extra Home and Community Care services, such as help at home and meals on wheels in fire-affected regions.

“This is about getting practical help – whether it is emergency access to a nursing home bed, replacing a walking frame lost in the bushfires or receiving extra care services at home,” the Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said.

**So far, 18 older Australians from the bushfire areas have been assisted by the Australian Government and provided with respite care in nursing homes.**

During the bushfires, eight nursing homes and hostels with more than 300 residents were evacuated.

Mrs Elliot commended nursing home staff, volunteers and communities who assisted with the evacuations.

The additional funding builds on the one-off measure in which the Australian Government fast-tracked the care by removing care assessments, enabling older Australians to get emergency respite care in aged care homes.

On February 10, the Australian Government removed the requirement for an aged care assessment for older people affected by the fires. The measure gave them immediate access to both accommodation and care. This was until they are able to make longer-term arrangements or decide that they wish to be admitted to aged care on a permanent basis.

The Department of Health and Ageing would work closely with the Victorian Department of Human Services, Centrelink and local Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres to ensure the delivery of the support.

**Details: please contact the Minister's office on 02 6277 7280.**