



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Carers to benefit from \$12 million local grants

The Australian Government today announced a \$12 million national grants program to improve respite services for carers in their communities.

“This is about allowing carers to have time to themselves or get a much needed break as they give so much to others,” the Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said.

Almost 2.6 million Australians provide care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who are frail aged. Of these about 500,000 are primary carers – the people who provide the most care.

Mrs Elliot made the announcement at the launch of annual Carers Week (19-25 October). She joined Prime Minister Mr Kevin Rudd and Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Ms Jenny Macklin to mark the occasion.

The \$12 million – over two years – is part of the Australian Government’s commitment to carers through the National Respite for Carers Program, which is providing \$194 million in 2008-09.

Officially launched by Mr Rudd, this year’s theme for Carers Week is “...**because I care**”.

“Carers across this nation play an important role in Australian society. They dedicate so much to improve the quality of others lives,” Mrs Elliot said.

Carers make a significant difference in the lives of our nation’s elderly and for people with disabilities.

“Caring for someone full time is physically and emotionally demanding. Carers need to be able to take breaks from their caring,” Mrs Elliot said.

There are currently more than 600 community-based respite services for Australian carers.

Community-based respite services are funded to provide respite opportunities in a variety of settings, such as:

- Day care centres which provide respite for a half or full day;
- In-home respite services, including overnight care and personal care services;
- activity programs;
- Respite for carers of people with dementia and challenging behaviour; and
- Flexible respite in community settings.

In addition to today’s funding Minister Elliot launched the new Carers Australia website (www.carersaustralia.com.au) and a book of stories told by carers who look after disabled and elderly people.

The book *because I care*, has stories from carers in a variety of personal and family situations.

“There is no greater way to educate than through the first hand experience. I thank the contributors and I am honoured to launch this valuable resource,” Mrs Elliot said.

Advertisements will appear in major newspapers from this week.

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