



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

Responsible Economic Management Residential aged care funding claims – audits

8 July 2008

No one can dispute that under the Rudd Labor Government, aged care providers in Australia are receiving record funding to support the vital role their staff play in caring for our nation's elderly.

No Government has provided more funding for aged care – over the next four years this Government will invest \$40 billion into aged care - \$28.6 billion for nursing homes alone.

We must always remember the aged care sector is about the 170,000 residents who live there.

The reviews of funding claims are responsible financial measures and are about accountability.

This is a budget measure.

It is about making sure, frail and older Australians in nursing homes are getting the care taxpayers are paying for; good aged care providers have nothing to worry about from this process.

There will be no backing away from the protection of older Australians.

That is why the Australian Government has embarked on a range of measures aimed at further strengthening protections. They include:

- the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, the independent watchdog, has been instructed to undertake a record 7000 visits – including 3,000 unannounced ones - to nursing homes across the nation (This will started on July 1, 2008.);
- Expanding the requirement for police checks to be extended to unsupervised staff working in nursing homes;
- Strengthening the powers of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency;
- Requiring Departmental clinical staff to check on actual residents in a facility as a part of their investigations;
- Reviewing the Aged Care Act to close loopholes and/or make improvements to quality in aged care;
- Requiring aged care homes to report any cases of missing residents; and

- Asking the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency to review documentation to include a warning to approved aged care providers of offences under the Criminal Codes Act 1995. Giving false or misleading information to the Agency is a serious offence where the Agency is exercising powers or performing functions under, or in connection with, the Aged Care Act 1997.

The Government has stated since day one that the staff working in our nation's nursing homes are dedicated, hard working and the backbone of the sector.

They are on the front-line providing quality care and these new protections are to complement the care they provide to nursing home residents.

There are world-class facilities and programs in every State and Territory but make no mistake, this Government has no time for anyone who abuses or neglects our society's most vulnerable members.

I have written to the Aged Care Association Australia noting that the overwhelming majority of aged care providers are providing top quality care but have sought their cooperation in improving the protection and the quality of life of people living in aged care facilities.

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