



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

17 September 2009

Australian Government acts on South Australian Nursing Home

The Australian Government last night (16 September 2009) imposed sanctions on Northgate Aged Care Pty Ltd, the approved provider of The Churchill Retreat in South Australia.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency (The Agency) identified serious risk to the health, safety and well-being of residents during a review audit following a referral from the Department of Health and Ageing.

The Churchill Retreat is a 46 bed high care home with 10 residents aged over 90.

Preliminary information from Agency assessors indicates the home has not complied with numerous accreditation outcomes. The Agency is yet to make a final decision on the non compliance, however serious risk was identified.

Areas of serious risk identified by the Accreditation Agency include:

- Management and staff do not have the knowledge and skills required to ensure residents clinical care needs are met;
- Residents care needs not routinely and regularly monitored resulting in inadequate and inappropriate care delivery;
- Pain management, palliative care, skin care, nutrition and hydration, continence, behaviour management, mobility and dexterity maintenance and sensory loss care is inadequate;
- Unsafe medication practices;
- Ineffective and inadequate of fire and emergency systems; and
- Inability for the home to demonstrate that volunteers and contract staff have current police checks.

In response to the serious concerns, the Department of Health and Ageing has enforced a number of measures to immediately address resident care, including:

- Revocation of approved provider status unless the approved provider appoints an experienced nurse adviser– approved by the Commonwealth for a period of six months; and
- Cessation of Commonwealth subsidies for new residents entering the home for a period of six months.

The Agency will visit the home each day while serious risk remains and the Department of Health and Ageing will closely monitor the home to check that action is taken promptly by provider.

Minister Elliot said: “When aged care providers fail to meet their obligations the Government will act to protect our frail and elderly citizens”.

“This Government is committed to continuing to work in partnership with older Australians, their families, staff, unions and providers to improve the quality of aged care in Australia,” Minister Elliot said.

Anyone with concerns about the care or welfare of residents should immediately contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme on **1800 550 552**.

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