



## **THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP**

### **Minister for Ageing**

#### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Aged care complaints to get a better hearing**

From today, people who receive Australian Government-subsidised aged care have a new and better way of having concerns and complaints dealt with.

The introduction of the new Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme coincides with Australia's first independent Aged Care Commissioner, Rhonda Parker, taking up her position.

"The new complaints investigation scheme – a free, independent and confidential investigation service – is a vital step forward in helping to safeguard older Australians in care," the Minister for Ageing, Christopher Pyne, said.

"The Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme within the new Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance has been designed to better protect older people who are in Australian Government-subsidised aged care.

"Anybody can contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme – someone who is receiving care, a family member or friend, a volunteer, an aged care worker, a GP or an interested member of the community.

"We want to hear from anyone who sees something that isn't quite right, in any area where they think the aged care standards set by the Australian Government are not being met. Complaints can be made anonymously or a person's name can be kept private if they wish."

Mr Pyne said the investigating officers would examine concerns or complaints about any aspect of care or service in a residential or community aged care setting. The new scheme replaces the Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme, which relied on mediation between the complainant and the aged care provider. The new scheme will have a much greater capacity to investigate and act on complaints.

The new scheme is part of a package of Australian Government reforms to protect older Australians receiving government-subsidised residential and community care services. It is part of the Government's continuing commitment to ensure safety and quality in aged care services.

The \$100 million, four-year reform package also includes:

- establishing a new Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance (OACQC) within the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- police checks for aged care staff and volunteers

- the compulsory reporting of sexual and serious physical assault by residential aged care providers and staff
- legislative protection for approved providers and staff who report these assaults
- an increase in the frequency of unannounced inspections of aged care homes by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

People can contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme on freecall 1800 550 552.

Under the new arrangements, the Aged Care Commissioner will provide an independent avenue of review on decisions which the Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance makes about complaints.

“The Aged Care Commissioner will also examine complaints about due processes used to investigate complaints and the conduct of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency in undertaking their assessments of aged care homes” Mr Pyne said.

“Ms Parker brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the office from her background in education, government and management. I look forward to working with her.”

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