



## **THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP**

### **Minister for Ageing**

#### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Meeting the Needs of Older Australians: Additional Residential And Community Care Places**

Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, today announced 10,447 new aged care places worth more than \$347 million a year will be provided for care for frail older Australians under the latest Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR).

The 10,447 aged care services include 5,748 new residential aged care places – two-thirds of them high care places - and 4,699 community care places to be provided to aged care facilities and community care services.

Of the new residential places, 535 have been approved for extra service.

The Rudd Government has also allocated a record \$51 million in capital grants – the largest single capital grant allocation by any Australian Government since the Aged Care Act came into effect in 1997.

A further \$4.8 million will be allocated as Community and Flexible Care Grants that will help to establish new community and flexible services in remote areas or for groups with special needs. This would enable, for example, the purchase of essential equipment such as office equipment or motor vehicles or providing funds for staff recruitment.

“As the service demands of older Australians change, so too must the mix of services provided through Australian Government funding”, Minister Elliot said.

“Older Australians have told the Government that they wish to remain independent, in their own homes and in their communities. Community care services help many people stay at home instead of moving prematurely into a residential aged care facility.

“Not everyone will need a residential facility but if they do older Australians want to be able to access a high quality and affordable nursing home that meets their care needs.

“The Rudd Government is committed to providing the type of care that people need, when they need it and in the form that they prefer,” Minister Elliot said.

The additional community care services are made up of:

- 2,944 Community Aged Care Packages that provide support services for older people with care needs living at home. They are designed as an alternative to low care residential aged care.
- 1,193 Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) packages which deliver care in people’s own homes equivalent to high care residential aged care, including the provision of nursing care; and
- 562 Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD) packages for people who experience behaviours of concern and psychological symptoms associated with dementia.

This brings the total number of community aged care places allocated in the 2008-09 ACAR to 4,699 at a cost of more than \$110 million a year.

“The boost to community care is directed at nursing, personal care support and providing assistance to people with dementia” Minister Elliot said.

The new community care places are in addition to the Home and Community Care (HACC) services provided to elderly and disabled people through the \$1.2 billion in Australian Government funding that will be provided to the states and territories for 2009-10. Last year this program assisted more than 830,000 Australians.

On average, over the next four years, the Commonwealth will contribute nearly \$45,000 a year per resident. In addition, on average, residents contribute approximately \$20,000 a year to their care. (The Government pays for those who are unable to afford this).

Minister Elliot said: “No Australian Government has provided more financial support to aged and community care than the Rudd Government.

“Over the next two years, thousands of new aged care places will be created – building on the more than 220,000 aged and community care places already operational.”

Today’s announcement is in addition to the 1,311 beds that are being created under the first round of the \$300 million Zero Real Interest Loan (ZRIL) initiative. Applications for the second round of the \$300 million program will be called for later this year.

Additional information on the 2008-2009 Aged Care Approvals Round is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/acar2008-2009>

Decisions on aged care places are made independently by the Department of Health and Ageing. The aim of the process is to ensure that the allocation of aged care places best meets the identified needs of the community.

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