



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Maintaining Quality of Care for Bridgewater Residents

The Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, today announced further steps taken by the Rudd Government to protect the residents of the privately owned Bridgewater Aged Care in Melbourne following the financial collapse of the Home and the appointment of Administrators on 23 May 2008.

“I am pleased to announce that the Commonwealth has entered into an agreement with Uniting Aged Care to temporarily take over the running of Bridgewater while allowing the Administrators, Stephen Longley, David McEvoy and Tim Cuming from PricewaterhouseCoopers, to focus on investigating the financial affairs of the former approved provider of the home (Vitality Care) and to continue to seek a sale of the facility,” Mrs Elliot said.

“This is about the residents and their welfare.

“Uniting Aged Care is one of Australia’s largest not-for-profit organisations and will be responsible for ensuring that residents of Bridgewater continue to receive the high standard of care they deserve.

“The engagement of Uniting Aged Care will also benefit the employees of Bridgewater who will be able to continue to deliver quality aged care confident that their salary, wages and other employee entitlements will continue to be met.

“Uniting Aged Care has extensive experience in the delivery of aged care in Victoria. They currently operate a number of residential aged care services and care for several hundred residents across the state.”

Mrs Elliot said meetings with residents, relatives and staff have been held to inform them of the new arrangements which begin today.

“Officers from the Department of Health and Ageing and the administrators will continue to work closely with Uniting Aged Care and keep staff, their representatives and unions, and residents and their families informed of developments.”

The agreement with Uniting Aged Care is the latest in a number of steps the Rudd Government has taken to protect the residents and staff at Bridgewater Aged Care since Vitality Care went into administration. These have included:

- the appointment and funding of a clinical nurse adviser team to assist the administrators to maintain quality of care;
- reimbursement of the administrators for paying staff salaries and wages owed prior to 23 May 2008;

- funding for the administrators to cover liabilities directly incurred in connection with the continued operation of Bridgewater, professional fees directly associated with the administrators' responsibilities in operating Bridgewater and expenses directly associated with the investigation of the accommodation bond balances; and
- the appointment of case managers for each resident and their family to provide information and assistance.

The Department of Health and Ageing and the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency are working closely with the home to ensure that the care and wellbeing of residents are maintained.

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