



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$25 Million for accommodation for aged and disadvantaged

Perth's older, disadvantaged and homeless men will receive more help with the building of a new state-of-the-art hostel in East Perth, which is being jointly funded by the Australian Government and the Western Australian Government.

The Australian Government Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, and Western Australia's Minister for Health, Jim McGinty, said today the joint funding initiative, totalling almost \$25 million, would be used by aged care provider St Bartholomew's House to develop a new and significantly expanded aged and crisis care centre for the region.

It is Mrs Elliot's first visit to Western Australia since she was appointed Minister for Ageing.

"St Bartholomew's existing facility, the James Watson Hostel, presently provides accommodation for 20 frail-aged and disadvantaged men who require care and assistance," Mrs Elliot said.

"The Australian Government's commitment of \$7.33 million, together with state government grants totalling \$17.6 million, will allow the construction of a new 40-place aged care service, as well as a 54-bed crisis and transitional hostel and 39 self-contained units.

"St Bartholomew's House will also receive an extra \$326,820 each year in recurrent funding to provide the 20 additional aged care places.

"This is about working in partnership with our state counterparts.

"Social and economic disadvantage is still a reality, with older, frail people being particularly vulnerable. This new facility will mean that 133 vulnerable men will have a safe and comfortable place to stay.

"Developing a new facility in Perth is a positive step forward and will give frail-aged and disadvantaged people the quality of care and emotional support they deserve."

The new facility, which is due to be completed in June 2009, will be unique in that the facility will be both an aged care facility as well as a crisis care facility for homeless and disadvantaged men, featuring 54 bed crisis/transitional hostel and 39 self contained units.

The Australian Government has committed \$7.33 million towards the project, while the state

government will provide grants totalling \$17.6 million along with the site for the new hostel at a peppercorn rent.

Western Australian Minister for Health Jim McGinty said the facility would complement the state government's program to build community-based accommodation for people with a mental illness.

"St Bartholomew's House does an invaluable job providing crisis and transitional housing for people who are homeless; short-term or respite accommodation for people with an ongoing mental illness; and residential aged care for financially and socially disadvantaged men," Mr McGinty said.

"In addition to contributing toward the cost of the new facility, the WA Department of Health provides St Bartholomew's House with almost \$800,000 in annual funding.

The over-65s comprise 12 per cent of the population in Western Australia, which is slightly lower than the national figure, 13 per cent. This is attributed to a relatively young working population keeping the averages low. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006)

The St Bartholomew's facility is part of the 2007 Aged Care Approvals Round – an annual competitive assessment process that allocates new aged care places to providers who best demonstrate they can meet the needs of the ageing population within a specified region.

This process was begun under the former Howard Government. Decisions on aged care places are made independently by the Department of Health and Ageing.

Further information: Mrs Elliot's office – (02) 6277 7280