



## **THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP**

### **Minister for Ageing**

#### **MEDIA RELEASE**

10 April 2008

#### **More aged care places for NSW**

The Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, today announced that 2,091 additional aged care beds worth \$74.8 million a year in recurrent funding had been allocated across New South Wales as part of the 2007 Aged Care Approval Round.

Aged care providers across the state will also benefit from more than \$10 million in capital grants to assist in the building of residential aged care accommodation.

The official announcement was made on the NSW Central Coast today.

Mrs Elliot said more than two-thirds of the new beds (1,415) will be high-care places, caring for the most frail of our older people. The remaining 676 will be low-care residential places.

Australia-wide, the 2007 Round has provided 6,525 new residential aged care places worth \$233.3 million a year in recurrent funding and \$40.5 million in capital grants.

Mrs Elliot said that NSW also received an allocation of 1,419 community care places in the 2007 Aged Care Approvals Round, including 557 Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) and EACH-Dementia packages which provide high level care for frail older people in their own homes.

“While 2,091 new beds in NSW is good news, more beds are needed,” Mrs Elliot said.

“The outcomes of the 2007 round showed that not enough providers were applying to set up aged care services in some under-supplied areas. The Government has committed to fill these gaps.

“We are tackling this problem head-on across Australia by making available \$300 million in zero real interest loans to aged care providers who are willing to establish services where they are needed most.

“Providers with a strong track record will be invited in April to apply for these loans to quickly build new aged care beds in NSW high-need areas.”

“The Rudd Government is committed to building a modern Australia, capable of tackling the challenges of the 21st century.” Mrs Elliot said.

The new places are 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 commenced under the former Howard Government. Decisions on aged care places are made independently by the Department of Health and Ageing.

### **Aged Care in Australia – the facts**

The Department of Health and Ageing oversees more than 2870 accredited nursing homes with 167,070 aged care beds across Australia.

The average age of people entering residential care is 82.

Currently, there are 1.9 million Australians aged 70 and over, comprising 9.3 per cent of the population.

Within 40 years the number of people aged over 65 will almost triple, from 2.8 million today to around 7.2 million in 2047, or from around 13 per cent of the population today to over 25 per cent.

Australia is facing a demographic shift. Australians now have one of the world's longest life expectancy rates, outliving Swedes, Norwegians and Finns. Australia will change forever.

An Australian born today can expect to live to reach 80.9 years of age; it is 78.5 years for a man and 83.3 for a woman.

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