



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

2 September 2008

\$3 million boost to support carers of people with dementia

The Australian Government today approved a further \$3 million to support the individual needs of the carers of people with dementia.

The Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot made the announcement today (September 2) at the meeting of the Minister's Dementia Advisory Group co-chaired by Ms Sallyanne Atkinson AO and Ms Sue Pieters-Hawke.

"Carers of people with dementia have an incredibly challenging job and it is a 24 hour one. They need our understanding and support," Mrs Elliot said.

Funding will be provided to Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCCs), to be used to provide skill enhancement activities that help carers in their valuable role.

It is estimated that more than 200,000 people in Australia currently have dementia and it affects the lives of nearly one million Australians who are involved in caring for a family member or friend with dementia.

The number of people affected is expected to double within the next 20 years with our nation's ageing population.

The average rate of moderate to severe dementia among Australians is about one in 15 aged over 65.

Among people aged 80 to 84, the rate is one in nine, and among people over 85, it is one in four.

"According to the World Health Organisation, Australia has the world's second longest life expectancy. As the population ages and longevity increases, we need to meet the challenges of increasing prevalence of dementia, Mrs Elliot said.

Funding of more than \$3 million through the Dementia Education and Training program will be made available over the next three years as part of the Dementia Initiative.

CRCCs will be able to apply for funding to provide specialised services for carers in their local area.

This support comes on top of current record funding of more than \$40 billion over four years for residential and community aged care.

More than \$120 million a year from the Australian Government is provided through the Dementia Initiative. This includes:

- \$90 million a year for Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia Packages
- \$24 million a year for dementia research, prevention, early intervention and improved care, including research grants offered through the National Health and Medical Research Council and funding for three Dementia Collaborative Research Centres.
- \$7 million for training for aged and community care staff, carers and community workers such as police.

The Minister's Advisory Group was formed by the Australian Government to provide advice to the Minister for Ageing and the Department of Health and Ageing on issues relating to the monitoring and evaluation of the Dementia Initiative.

Members of the Dementia Advisory Group are drawn from peak body groups for people living with dementia and their carers, nursing and medical professionals and academia. All have particular expertise and knowledge about dementia. It also includes people directly affected by dementia.

The 16-member advisory group is co-chaired by former Brisbane Lord Mayor, Ms Sallyanne Atkinson AO, and Ms Sue Pieters-Hawke, author of the bestselling book *Hazel's Journey*, the story of her mother's experience of Alzheimer's disease.

<http://www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?infopageid=1795> (*Hazel's Journey*)

The other members of the advisory group consist of experts drawn from dementia peak organisations, the aged care sector, nursing and medical professions, and from academia.

- Professor Henry Brodaty AO MB BS FRACP FRANZCP – Professor of Psychogeriatrics, University of New South Wales; Director, Aged Care Psychiatry and Head of the Memory Disorders Clinic, Prince of Wales Hospital
- Dr Mark Yates MBBS FRACP – Geriatrician and Clinical Director Aged Care and Rehabilitation Medicine, Ballarat Health Services
- Mr Glenn Rees – National Executive Director, Alzheimer's Australia
- Ms Sharon Davis – Northern Regional Manager, Uniting Church Australian Frontier Services
- Professor Jennifer Abbey – Professor of School of Nursing (Aged Care), Queensland University of Technology; Director, Queensland Dementia Collaborative Research Centre
- Mr Stephen Judd – Chief Executive, Hammond Care Group
- Ms Shirley Garnett – WA Dementia Consumer Advisory Group; Alzheimer's Australia National Consumer Committee; Vice President, Dementia Advocacy Support Network International (WA)
- Ms Kaye Pritchard – Carer and former President of Alzheimer's Australia (ACT)
- Ms Jaklina Michael – Cultural Liaison Coordinator, Royal District Nursing Service (VIC)
- Ms Lily Muthurajah – Centre for Health, Community and Wellbeing, Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT)
- Mr Scott Wilson – Director, Aboriginal and Alcohol Council (SA)
- Ms Joan Hughes – Chief Executive Officer, Carers Australia
- Mr Greg Mundy – Chief Executive Officer, Aged and Community Services Australia
- Ms Wendy Venn – Aged Care Nurse Practitioner, Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service, ACT Health (ACT).

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