



**THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP**  
**Minister for Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Australian Government takes action on two Aboriginal nursing homes**

The Australian Government has taken action to improve resident care in two far North Queensland Aboriginal nursing homes.

As part of the plan, the Department of Health and Ageing is supporting the consolidation of the two services in one location as they are about one hour apart.

The nursing homes are:

- Fred Leftwich Rest Home, a 15 place low care service, which has eight residents in Mareeba; and
- Dija Meta Aged and Disabled Hostel, a 40 place hostel service with 33 residents in Cairns.

Both nursing homes are operated by the same approved provider - Aborigines and Islanders Alcohol Relief Services Ltd (AIARS). (On July 31, the Department of Health and Ageing appointed a funds administrator to assist AIARS – due to financial viability concerns.)

As accredited nursing homes, Fred Leftwich Rest Home and Dija Meta Aged and Disabled Hostel are covered by the *Aged Care Act 1997* and must meet 44 outcomes as assessed by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency – the independent watchdog.

Last week, the Accreditation Agency revoked the accreditation of Fred Leftwich Rest Home in Mareeba – effective from November 14, 2008.

The Accreditation Agency found that Fred Leftwich Rest Home was non-compliant in 27 outcomes out of 44 and the home was not adequately working to improve its performance.

The issues of concern at Fred Leftwich Rest Home include:

- Managing residents with aggressive behaviour;
- Residents' clinical care needs;
- Medication management;
- Information systems involving infection control; and
- Safe physical environment such as fire safety and protection for residents who may wander.

As for Dija Meta Aged and Disabled Hostel, the Accreditation Agency had concerns about three areas outside resident care. They involved management and infrastructure.

It was agreed that it was best to move the Fred Leftwich Rest Home residents to Dija Meta Aged and Disabled Hostel. This would occur over a two week period.

The Department of Health and Ageing is working with AIARS and a major proven not-for-profit aged care provider to assist the two nursing homes to improve care of residents. (Financial negotiations with the major provider are underway.)

The support plan includes:

- Assisting with the relocation and settlement of residents from Fred Leftwich Rest Home to Dija Meta Aged and Disabled Hostel;
- Overseeing clinical care and governance at Dija Meta Aged and Disabled Hostel; and
- Providing independent advice on all accreditation outcomes to improve resident care.

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said the Australian Government is committed to working to improve Indigenous aged care.

“This is about protecting frail and aged indigenous Australians – and making tough decisions when they are needed,” Mrs Elliot said.

Yesterday, the Australian Government announced a major package to improve Aboriginal flexible aged care services in remote areas. This included \$46.2 million which will fund and support a quality framework to improve resident care, training and capital works.

There are 10 nursing homes in Australia under sanction out of nearly 3,000 homes. Of those, one is an Aboriginal nursing home – Ny-Bu-Byan in Cherbourg Queensland.

In Australia, there are 30 nursing homes with a significant proportion with residents who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

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