



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia's Oldest Documented Person Turns 112 Today

Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd and Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today officially congratulated Australia's oldest person Mrs Emily Beatrice "Bea" Riley on her 112th birthday.

Mrs Riley was born on October 13, 1896 in the Gippsland dairy town of Poowong. Her husband, Alec died in 1986.

The France-based International Database on Longevity's Scientific Advisory Board documented Mrs Riley as the world's 30th oldest person.

She is also part of a select group known as a supercentarian – a person who reaches 110. Another Victorian woman turns 112 in December, but Mrs Riley is Australia's oldest documented person. (There are 76 known documented supercentarians in the world.)

This morning (October 13), both Mr Rudd and Mrs Elliot wrote to Mrs Riley to mark her birthday.

Mrs Riley is attending a small private birthday gathering at her Melbourne nursing home.

"I congratulate Mrs Riley on reaching this remarkable milestone," Mrs Elliot said.

"In her lifetime Mrs Riley has witnessed two Halley's comets, watched man land on the moon and witnessed the Federation of Australia," Mrs Elliot said.

Australians have now the world's second longest life expectancy – after the Japanese.

There are 2800 people aged over 100 and this number is expected to rise to more than 78,000 by 2055. Centarians are the fastest growing demographic group in Australia. They have grown by 8.5 per cent a year for the last 25 years.

Australians are now living longer because of advances in medicine and active lifestyles.

"An ageing population creates so many opportunities; we can learn so much from the wisdom, knowledge and experience of older Australians like Mrs Riley," Mrs Elliot said.

The Australian Government is responding to the challenges that come with an ageing population. Over the next four years, funding for aged and community care will reach record levels of more than \$40 billion - \$28.6 billion on residential aged care alone and \$11.4 billion on home care.

"No government in Australian history has spent more on aged care and community care than this one. We are proud of our plans for aged and community care," Mrs Elliot said.

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