



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP
Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

Meals on Wheels Day: 15 million meals delivered a year

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today paid tribute to the 80,000 volunteers and workers who deliver about 15 million meals a year from 750 kitchens to frail aged and people with disabilities across Australia.

Mrs Elliot made the comments on National Meals on Wheels Day. She marked the occasion by delivering a meal to a Garran couple in the Australian Capital Territory from the Red Cross' facility in Holder.

Later in the day, Mrs Elliot will also launch the "Meals on Wheels Parliamentary Friends Group" at Federal Parliament this afternoon. It will be chaired by Hindmarsh MP, Mr Steve Georganas and Parkes MP, Mr Mark Coulton.

"Meals on Wheels is a wonderful service," Mrs Elliot said.

"It provides nutritious meals to our nation's frail aged and people with disabilities across Australia.

"Meal on Wheels also provides important social contact for people who are housebound with many of the meal delivered by volunteers." Mrs Elliot said.

Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector, Senator Ursula Stephens also paid tribute to Meals on Wheels and its volunteers.

"Meals on Wheels is a huge part of Australia's invaluable volunteering effort, and I congratulate everyone involved in this important work." Dr Stephens said.

Meals on Wheels started 55 years ago providing meals to eight people and it has grown to about 50,000 people daily.

It provides both fresh and frozen meals as well as pre-prepared for easy cooking.

Meals on Wheels now provides greater choice with meals with some services offering up to eight different meals as well as catering for special dietary requirements.

Around 20 per cent of the Meals on Wheels' budget is provided by State, Territory and Federal governments. Last year, the program allocated around \$30 million to Meals on Wheels organisations for meal delivery services. This paid for 11 million meals alone.

This 11 million provides in NSW 3.048 million meals a year; 2.99 million in Victoria; 2.067 million in Queensland; 1.048 million in Western Australia; 1.06 million in South Australia; 335,000 in Tasmania; 277,000 in Northern Territory and in the Australian Capital Territory 118,000.

"The Rudd Government is committed to fostering a nurturing and innovative environment for volunteer organisations such as Meals on Wheels, to give all of us the opportunity to give something back and encourage strong, inclusive communities." Dr Stephens said.

National Meals on Wheels Day is held annually on the last Wednesday in August and this year's theme is "Fast and Friendly".

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