



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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More Help for Homeless Victorians

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today made two major announcements in Melbourne today that will benefit thousands of older homeless people.

The announcements made at Wintringham's McLean Lodge were:

- The recognition of homeless people, or those at risk of becoming homeless as a 'special needs' group under the Aged Care Principles; and
- A \$900,000 joint funding boost to Home and Community Care services from the Australian and Victorian Governments.

McLean Lodge is an aged care facility in Flemington specifically caring for 20 older residents (most of whom have been homeless) and is one of five residential aged care services operated by the Victorian based organisation known as Wintringham.

Changes to the legislation were one measure contained in the Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness released by the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Minister for Housing Tanya Plibersek in December last year.

In addition to amending the Aged Care Principles to include homeless older people as a "special needs" group, the Rudd Labor Government is also responding to the special needs of homeless older Australians by:

- Allocating aged care places in future Aged Care Approval Rounds – to allow aged providers with a proven track record in the field of homeless older people to apply for specific beds; and
- Providing capital funds for at least one new specialist facility for homeless older people a year for the next four years to 2012.

The White Paper outlines a plan for reducing homelessness in Australia by 2020, with specific goals to – halve overall homelessness; and provide accommodation to all rough sleepers who seek it.

Older homeless people can have more complex health needs and requirements as they have been 'living rough' and often do not have the family and social support networks of other older Australians.

In addition to the regulatory changes, the Rudd Labor Government and the Brumby Government are providing joint funding of \$900,000 to support a new meals program in Melbourne. This joint funding is through the Home and Community Care Program and will provide up to 43,000 extra meals to homeless older people in inner Melbourne.

It will also support more than 11,000 hours of social support for vulnerable people.

The total HACC funding to Victoria under the HACC agreement will be \$440.45 million, of which \$264.09 million will be contributed by the Australian Government and \$176.36 million by the Victorian Government.

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