



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Government Supporting Carers and their Special Needs: \$38 Million

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today announced funding for a \$38 million two-year program to help with the special services for carers.

The two programs to receive funding offer specific services throughout Australia for those carers who work and for those whose loved ones require overnight care.

The funding extension will allow 97 employed carer services and 79 overnight respite services to continue to deliver much needed respite and care.

Mrs Elliot made the formal announcement at the Marco Polo aged care facility in Unanderra near Wollongong with Federal MP for Cunningham, Ms Sharon Bird, while officially opening the new onsite café for the nursing home and presenting certificates to a number of the dedicated staff at the facility.

The \$38 million is funded under the Australian Government's commitment to carers through the National Respite for Carers Program, which is providing \$194 million in 2008-09.

Almost 2.6 million Australians provide care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who are frail aged. Of these about 500,000 are primary carers – the people who provide the majority of the care.

Pending contractual arrangements, three services in the Illawarra and South Coast region are set to have their contracts renewed. These services would receive more than \$1.2 million over two years. The services are:

- Bay and Basin Community Resources Incorporated (BBCRI);
- Greek Welfare Centre; and
- Kiama Council on behalf of Southern Councils Group.

Mrs Elliot said: "Respite services provide valuable time-out for people who care for their friends or family members with conditions such as dementia and Alzheimer's."

"The overnight respite program provides planned, unplanned and emergency accommodation for care recipients – so this allows carers to take a break from their responsibilities for a short period.

"The program for employed carers assists carers of frail older people find time to combine their caring duties with employment or study. It provides services such as transport to medical appointments and social support groups, and meal preparation," Mrs Elliot said.

Ms Bird said: "Carers across this nation and the Illawarra region play an important role in our society. They dedicate so much to improve the quality of the lives of our nation's elderly and for people with disabilities."

"Caring for someone full time is physically and emotionally demanding and carers need to be able to take deserved breaks," Ms Bird said.

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