



MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

Tony Abbott MHR

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Bear Cottage grant

Commonwealth Government funding will help Bear Cottage children's hospice in Manly to provide better palliative care services to children with terminal illnesses.

A grant of \$33,660 under the Local Palliative Care Grants Program has allowed Bear Cottage to modify a hospice vehicle that will be used to transport children to and from other palliative care services.

The newly modified vehicle was put on the road today. Bear Cottage, an initiative of the Children's Hospital Westmead, is a place where terminally-ill children from all over NSW can stay to receive rest and medical care in a home-like environment.

Access to Bear Cottage has previously depended on families using their own transport. Now Bear Cottage will be better able to provide transport to children to and from the Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney Children's Hospital and John Hunter Hospital, as well as homes across the greater Sydney metropolitan area, from the Blue Mountains in the west, Wollongong in the south and Newcastle in the north.

Government funding enabled Bear Cottage to modify a vehicle to include anchors for removable seats, additional wheelchairs and/or a stretcher. The modified vehicle will also be used to train staff and volunteers to transport patients safely.

The funding provided to Bear Cottage to modify the vehicle is part of the Government's \$23 million direct commitment to improving palliative care services, announced as part of the \$189 million Strengthening Cancer Care measure in the 2005 Budget.

For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.