



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP
Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

Three of nine nursing homes under sanction identified through Government's unannounced visits program

In the last seven months, the Australian Government has imposed sanctions on nine nursing homes in Australia – with three identified as a result of unannounced visits.

The three nursing homes identified as a direct or indirect result of an unannounced visit were:

- Parkdale House, Parkdale, Victoria;
- Kirralee Residential Aged Care Facility in East Ballarat, Victoria; and
- Sir James Terrace, Deception Bay, Queensland.

On July 1, the Australian Government increased the number of unannounced visits by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency. In 2008-2009, the agency is expected to conduct at least 7,000 visits to the nearly 3,000 nursing homes; of which at least 3,000 will be unannounced.

So far, the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency and the Department of Health and Ageing have conducted 501 and 178 unannounced visits, respectively.

(The following tables indicate the number of unannounced visits conducted by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency and the Department of Health and Ageing from July 1, 2008 to August 14.)

Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency

NSW/ACT	Victoria	Tasmania	SA/NT	QLD	WA	Total
163	147	18	64	64	45	501

Department of Health and Ageing

NSW/ACT	Victoria	Tasmania	SA/NT	QLD	WA	Total
43	39	6	38	47	5	178

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot made the announcement today (August 20) at the 2008 Australian Health Congress in Sydney where she spoke on "How the Health Revolution will impact on the growing ageing population".

The increased monitoring, including unannounced visits, assists in the early identification of non-compliance and helps to ensure that the high standards of care are being met on a consistent basis across Australia. An unannounced visit can range from a check of a sub-set of key standards to a full assessment across all 44 accreditation outcomes.

“This is about protecting the frail and aged in our community. Accreditation of Australia’s nursing homes is about the health, welfare, safety and well-being of residents,” Mrs Elliot said.

“The overwhelming majority of aged care providers are providing top quality care for our nation’s elderly. In every State and Territory, I have seen world-class facilities, but I have also seen areas where improvement is needed.

“They are backed by hard working dedicated staff. In fact, a number of matters about resident safety have been brought to the Australian Government’s attention by nursing home staff concerned about residents.”

Currently, the nursing homes under sanction are:

State	Nursing home	Approved Provider	Sanction Imposed	Sanction Expiry
SA	Ridleyton Greek Home for the Aged	Greek Orthodox Community of SA Inc.	29 February 2008	28 August 2008
QLD	Ny-Ku Byun	Cherbourg Community Council	13 June 2008	12 December 2008
QLD	Yaralla Place	Queensland Health	20 June 2008	19 December 2008
QLD	Albany Gardens Nursing Home	Shownoff Pty Ltd	4 July 2008	3 January 2009
SA	Salisbury Gardens Aged Care Service	Arcanola Pty Ltd	9 July 2008	8 January 2009
VIC	Parkdale House	McKinnon Retirement Pty Ltd	11 July 2008	10 January 2009
VIC	Kirralee Residential Aged Care Facility	Aged Care Services 27 (Kirralee) Pty Ltd	18/25 July 2008	24 January 2009 & 24 July 2009
QLD	Rockingham Cardwell Shire Home for the Aged	Cardwell Care Incorporated	14 August 2008	13 February 2009
QLD	Sir James Terrace	SJT Aged Care Services Pty Ltd	16 August, 2008	15 February 2009

In addition to the unannounced visits, the Australian Government has embarked on a range of measures aimed at further strengthening protections, including:

- Expanding the requirement for police checks to be extended to unsupervised staff;
- Strengthening the powers of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency;
- Requiring departmental clinical staff to check on actual residents in a facility as a part of their investigations;
- Reviewing the Aged Care Act to close loopholes and/or make improvements to quality in aged care;
- Requiring aged care homes to report any cases of missing residents;
- Reviewing the accreditation process and standards which have now been in place for 10 years to determine whether these remain the most effective way of ensuring residents of aged care homes receive the best possible care.

- Asking the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency to review documentation to include a warning to approved aged care providers of offences under the Criminal Codes Act 1995. Giving false or misleading information to the Agency is a serious offence where the Agency is exercising powers or performing functions under, or in connection with, the Aged Care Act 1997; and
- Introducing new guidelines on gastro outbreaks in nursing homes.

Mrs Elliot pledged to work in partnership with older Australians, aged care providers, unions and consumer groups to improve the quality in residential aged care and ensure the long-term viability of the sector.

“For the past 12 years, the previous government neglected nursing homes and neglected our older Australians; we plan to change that,” Mrs Elliot said.

Over the next four years nationally, the Rudd Labor Government will invest more than \$40 billion; of that \$28.6 billion will go to aged care homes alone. No Government has invested more into aged and community care.

The Department of Health and Ageing may impose sanctions in a range of circumstances, including where there is a continued failure to comply with the obligations of the Aged Care Act, or where there is an immediate and severe risk to the health and safety of residents.

There are systems in place to monitor care and services, which include accreditation of nursing homes and quality reporting for community care services. These systems are underpinned by a Complaints Investigation Scheme and an avenue of review through the Aged Care Commissioner.

Sanctions

A penalty imposed by the Department on operators of residential aged care facilities in cases of serious non-compliance with the provisions of the *Aged Care Act 1997*.

The decision to impose sanctions is not taken lightly and includes consideration of issues such as: whether non-compliance is minor or serious; whether it has occurred before; and whether it threatens the health, welfare or interests of the residents.

Different sanctions may be imposed depending on the circumstances of the non-compliance, but they may include revocation of approved provider status, loss of Commonwealth subsidies for new residents or revocation of allocated places (beds).

When a sanction is imposed, letters are sent to the residents of the facility and their nominated family members/carers advising them of the sanction, and that the approved provider (operator) has been asked to hold a meeting with the residents and families to explain how necessary improvements will be made.

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