



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP
Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

October 30, 2008

Central Coast Nursing Home – Notice of Non-Compliance

Last night (October 29), the Department of Health and Ageing issued a formal Notice of Non-Compliance to Peninsula Village Retirement Centre.

This was in relation to:

- The failure to report an alleged assault;
- The employment of staff without proper police checks; and
- Providing misleading information in regard to police checks.

The nursing home now has 14 days to respond to the notice.

An inadequate response may lead to the imposition of sanctions by the Department of Health and Ageing.

In addition, NSW Police are investigating the alleged assaults.

Peninsula Village Retirement Centre is a 263-resident facility located in Umina on the NSW Central Coast. It has 96 high care and 167 low care places.

On October 22, during an unannounced visit by the Department of Health and Ageing's Complaints Investigation Scheme officers identified that the nursing home failed to report a reportable assault within the legislated 24-hour timeframe.

On October 24, the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency identified nine staff with expired police checks.

Those staff at Peninsula Village Retirement Centre – without proper police checks – have been stood down by the nursing home.

Accreditation Agency assessors were at the nursing home on the weekend to ensure that an adequate level of staffing was available until the matter has been resolved.

Under the Aged Care Act, nursing homes are currently required to conduct police checks on staff with unsupervised access to residents.

On October 21, the Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot announced plans to further strengthen police checks for aged care staff by as early as January 1, 2009.

A police check is obtained from State/Territory Police, the Australian Federal Police or through direct application to CrimTrac – the agency which is used by all police jurisdictions to obtain information on an individual's criminal history.

“Police checks are important. They are about protecting the most vulnerable members of our society – the frail and aged,” Mrs Elliot said.

“The Australian Government is committed to ensuring older Australians in nursing homes and hostels receive quality care in a safe and secure environment.

“Police checks are about preventing people with serious criminal convictions working with frail and aged people,” Mrs Elliot said.

On October 23, Mrs Elliot asked the independent Aged Care Commissioner, Ms Rhonda Parker to examine the Department of Health and Ageing's handling of previous complaints at Peninsula Village Retirement Centre.

The examination would include visiting the facility and meeting family members as well as examining the actions of the Department of Health and Ageing's Complaints Investigation Scheme and its predecessor, the Complaints Resolution Scheme.

The Aged Care Commissioner has been formally asked to personally conduct the examination.

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