



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

4 March 2008

JE08/16

\$2.6 million to improve aged care services for Tasmanians

Three projects, totalling **\$2.6 million in capital grants** will be delivered to aged care facilities in Tasmania as part of the **2007 Aged Care Allocations round**.

The grants were announced at Hawthorn Village in southern Tasmania today (March 4) by the Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, during her first visit to the state as Minister.

In addition, she officially announced **an additional 63 new residential aged care places** for older Tasmanians.

“The Australian Government is committed to meeting the challenges of an ageing population,” Mrs Elliot said.

“Australians now have the highest life expectancy in the world – even more than the Icelanders, the Swedes and the Finns,” Mrs Elliot said.

Tasmania has an older population on average than most Australian states. The 2006 Census reported Tasmania’s average age was 39 years, with 14.9 per cent of the population aged 65 years and older.

“This is about keeping families closer together; when people retire or move into aged care facilities, they want to remain near their children and grandchildren,” Mrs Elliot said.

The grants are:

- Tandara Lodge Hostel in Sheffield will receive \$1.475 million to upgrade seven existing rooms and build two new rooms;
- North East Aminya Hostel in Scottsdale will receive \$99,000 to create a dementia specific wing; and
- Hawthorn Village at Blackmans Bay will receive \$1 million to extend and improve its facilities for older Tasmanians, building a new-12 bed wing.

These grants are part of the 2007 Aged Care Approvals Round – an annual competitive assessment process that allocates new aged care places and capital grants to providers who best demonstrate they can meet the needs of the ageing population within a specified region.

This process was commenced under the former Howard Government. Decisions on aged care places are made independently by the Department of Health and Ageing. Details of all allocations are available at: www.health.gov.au/acar2007

“The Hawthorne Village grant will expand services, which will better meet the need for residential care in Blackmans Bay and the surrounding area,” Mrs Elliot said.

The Federal Member for Franklin, Julie Collins, welcomed Mrs Elliot to Tasmania, and to her local area.

Ms Collins said: "I believe today demonstrates the beginning of a new relationship between the Minister for Ageing and Tasmanians – a relationship aimed at ensuring our older people have the choice, quality and security of aged care that they need and deserve."

"Most older residents prefer to continue living close to their families, friends and local community once they require aged care accommodation," Ms Collins said.

"The expansion of facilities here will give residents and their families peace of mind that their care needs will be met now and into the future," she said.

The funding is provided as a capital grant under the 2007 Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR). The capital grants will allow these facilities to extend and improve their buildings, ensuring Tasmanians continue to have high quality aged care accommodation.

Mrs Elliot reiterated the Rudd Government's election commitment to encourage aged care providers to establish services where they are needed most.

Mrs Elliot also announced an additional 63 new residential aged care places for older Tasmanians.

Mrs Elliot said the allocation of beds, totalling \$1.9 million a year, was an investment in the wellbeing of the ageing Tasmanian population.

"Over the next 20 years the number of people aged over 70 is expected to double. The government is committed to tackling the challenges of an ageing population.

"We will tackle this problem head-on across Australia by making available \$300 million in zero-real-interest loans to aged care providers willing to establish services where they are needed the most.

"We will also create 2,000 more transition beds over the next four years, and invest \$7 million over five years to encourage 1,000 qualified nurses to rejoin the health workforce to work in aged care.

"To make sure that older Australians have a strong voice and a direct link into the Rudd Government, we look forward to soon announcing an Ambassador for Ageing, who will promote programs and activities to better meet the needs of older people."

"I look forward to working with aged care providers and local communities to deliver both the quality and appropriate quantity of aged care places that Tasmania needs."

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

Aged Care in Australia – the facts

The Department of Health and Ageing oversees more than 2870 accredited nursing homes with 167,070 aged care beds across Australia, providing permanent residential care each year to one in every ten Australians aged 70 or over.

There are 1.9 million Australians aged 70 years and over, comprising 9.3 per cent of the population. The average age of people entering residential care is 82.