



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

March 27, 2009

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ACTS ON YARRA VALLEY NURSING HOME

Last night (March 26), the Australian Government imposed sanctions on Yarra Valley Nursing Home at Yarra Junction in rural Victoria – citing serious risk to the health, safety and well being of its nursing home residents.

The independent Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency identified serious risk to the health, safety and well being of residents – on a review audit conducted at the nursing home between March 17 and March 25.

This followed concerns about the aged care facilities failing to fix non-compliance which were first identified in October 2008.

The aged care facilities were given until February 6 to fix their problems, but failed to do so.

However, compliance action had to be suspended when the home and the adjacent hostel were evacuated during the bushfires. Residents were evacuated on February 22 and were returned on March 9.

The Accreditation Agency found that the aged care facilities had:

- failed to remedy non-compliance identified in October 2008 and a continuing decline in compliance with standards since that date;
- insufficient qualified staff;
- inadequate provision of clinical care;
- inadequate pain management;
- inadequate nutrition and hydration;
- ineffective and inadequate behaviour management; and
- residents' privacy and dignity were compromised by staff practices.

As part of the Australian Government's response, a range of tough measures have been put in place including:

- appointment of an adviser, with nursing experience, approved by the Commonwealth, who has the appropriate skills, qualifications and background to assist the home to comply with their responsibilities for a period of six months; and
- cessation of Australian Government subsidies for any new residents admitted during the period of the sanctions for a period of 6 months.

Accreditation Agency assessors are to be on-site daily until the serious risk is mitigated and the Department of Health and Ageing staff will continue to closely monitor the nursing home.

The official sanction was issued and served on March 26 to Caulfield Drive Pty Ltd.

Yarra Valley Nursing Home is a 65-bed high care aged care facility.

There are currently 16 residents over the age of 90.

In the 2007-2008 financial year, Yarra Valley Nursing Home received \$2.567 million in Australian Government funding.

There are now four Victorian nursing homes under sanction out of 790. Nationally, there are 11 nursing homes under sanction out of a possible 2,830 aged care homes.

Yarra Valley Nursing Home will soon organise a family/residents' meeting to inform them of the situation at the facility.

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot, said: "We want to work together with aged care providers, staff and families to help Yarra Valley Nursing Home provide quality care for their residents, but we make no apologies for placing a nursing home under sanction and looking after the welfare of frail and aged Australians."

"We recognise that this has been a particularly traumatic time in light of the bushfires for the residents and their families.

"The Rudd Labor Government is committed to improving the care and quality of Australia's nursing homes and its residents – after 12 years of neglect by the previous government," Mrs Elliot said.

Anyone with concerns about the care or welfare of residents should immediately contact the Department of Health and Ageing's Complaints Investigation Scheme on **1 800 550 552**.

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