



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Improving Aged and Community Care for Indigenous Australians

The Federal Government is calling for tenders to develop new workforce training resources to help improve home and community care for frail and older indigenous Australians.

It will focus on the training needs of community care workers looking after remote, rural and urban people in the Northern Territory.

The new plan aims to train people to help older indigenous Australians remain independent in their own homes rather than entering nursing homes.

“This is a practical and common sense plan. It is about training and providing better resources for indigenous care workers who specialise in indigenous care so they have long-term employment prospects,” Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said.

“Indigenous Australians have particular aged care needs. It has been found that their overwhelming preference is to remain in their communities - especially remote ones - rather than enter a nursing home.”

Mrs Elliot made the announcement today in a major speech to Australia’s Ageing Population Summit 2008 – in Melbourne.

The new plan is part of the Australian Government’s Northern Territory Emergency Response and will be delivered by the Department of Health and Ageing.

“Home and community care is about helping people avoid premature admission into residential aged care,” Mrs Elliot said.

“This project will assist in providing support for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to have healthy independent lives for as long as possible.

“Frail older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those with a disability need culturally appropriate care.”

The program will provide up to \$400,000 to improve training and resources for indigenous home and community care workers who care specifically for indigenous people.

It is anticipated that the project will have national application for the some 1,400 people in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HACC (Home and Community Care) workforce.

The Australian Government is seeking tenders from organisations or consortia with relevant expertise to run the project, with advertisements appearing in newspapers this weekend.

The Australian Government supports aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by providing residential and community-based aged care under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program as well as programs such as the National Respite for Carers Program and programs jointly funded with the states, such as the Home and Community Care Program and the Multi-Purpose Services (MPS) Program.

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