



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP
Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Community aged care reaching those in need – AIHW Report

The Australian Government has welcomed an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report showing that nearly 56,000 people received help at home through community care packages.

“Home packages help older Australians continue to live in their own homes and remain independent and active,” Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said.

Mrs Elliot was commenting on the AIHW annual report – **Aged Care Packages in the community 2006-07** released today.

The 56,000 community care packages complement the nearly 170,000 residential aged care beds supported by the Federal Government.

The AIHW report examined the use of three packages funded by the Australian Government. They are:

- Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs), which provides support services for older people who would otherwise require low-level residential aged care;
- Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH), for people who need high-level care; and
- the specialised Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia packages (EACH Dementia), which provide the equivalent of high-level residential care in the home for people with dementia.

(This covers July 2006 to June 2007 – a period under the previous Government.)

Mrs Elliot said the report shows that the three services examined are working, with more people than ever benefiting from these services.

There has been strong growth in community aged care service delivery in recent years which is planned and is expected to continue to grow for several more years with Australia's ageing population.

In response, the Rudd Labor Government is providing more than \$40 billion over the next four years for aged and community care. In 2008-2009, \$2.2 billion of that will be spent on community care.

“The Australian Government is significantly increasing the level of assistance provided to older Australians and their families,” Mrs Elliot said.

Australians now have the second longest life expectancy in the world at 81.4 years after the Japanese.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, using World Health Organisation 2007 figures for selected countries, report that Australian women have a life expectancy of 83.7 years and Australian men 79 years.

By 2060, an Australian woman can expect to reach the age of 90 and by mid-century most Australians can expect – on average – to reach the mid-to-late 80s.

The AIHW report found that more than 2,600 new CACPs were provided during 2006-07, up seven per cent to a total of nearly 38,000.

“The number of EACH packages grew by 28 per cent to 3,302 operational packages, while the new EACH Dementia packages doubled from 600 to nearly 1,300,” Mrs Elliot said.

The occupancy rate for CACPs was 94 per cent across the country, ranging from 97 per cent in Tasmania to 85 per cent in Queensland. EACH packages had a national occupancy rate of 89 per cent.

“The report also found some interesting trends in demographics, with women making up the majority of care recipients – 71 per cent for the CACP program,” Mrs Elliot said.

“CACP recipients were also the oldest profile, with 65 per cent 80 years and over, compared with EACH recipients who were a younger demographic.

“By the end of 2006-07, the combined total for CACPs, EACH and EACH Dementia packages was 21.8 packages per 1,000 Australians 70 years and over, which the Government plans to increase to 25 per 1,000 by 2010-11,” Mrs Elliot said.

To access CACPs, EACH and EACH Dementia packages, an older person must be assessed and approved as eligible by an Aged Care Assessment Team.

For further information, contact your local Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222 or go to www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

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