



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

27 January 2009

Australian Government Imposes Sanctions on WA Nursing Home in Derby

On January 23, the Australian Government imposed sanctions on Numbala Nunga Nursing Home, a Western Australian nursing home in Derby – citing serious risk to resident health and safety.

The independent Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency identified serious risk to the health, safety and well-being of residents in the home on an unannounced visit.

It was one of the 232 unannounced visits conducted in WA by the Accreditation Agency between July 1, 2008-January 15, 2009. (There are 252 aged care facilities with more than 13,400 residents in WA.)

Numbala Nunga Nursing Home is a 26-resident high care facility with a mainly Indigenous resident population. It is operated by the Uniting Church in Australia Frontier Services.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency's issues of concern included:

- Staff lack of skills or knowledge to provide appropriate care;
- Staff failure to plan, deliver and evaluate residents' care needs;
- A lack of systems to properly identify residents' dietary needs and monitor weight loss;
- Residents' emotional, cultural and lifestyle preferences not being identified;
- Nursing staff unfamiliar with systems of assessment; care planning; medication management; following up information provided from other health care facilities providing care for residents such as x-rays, pathology; and referral to other health professionals;
- Inadequate attention to the skin care of some residents; and
- Residents at a high risk of falls due to inappropriate toileting procedures.

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

- Accreditation Agency assessors are to be on-site daily until the serious risk is mitigated;
- Department of Health and Ageing staff will continue to monitor closely the nursing home;
- 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
- Nursing home is ineligible to receive Australian Government subsidies for any new residents admitted during the period of the sanctions for a period of 6 months.

In the 2007-2008 financial year, Numbala Nunga Nursing Home received \$1,444,003 in Australian Government funding.

There are currently sanctions imposed on 12 nursing homes in Australia. The other WA nursing home under sanction is John Mercer Lodge in Hilton.

Numbala Nunga Nursing Home is now organising a family/residents' meeting for next week to inform them of the situation at the facility and the approved provider's plans to improve the care and welfare of residents.

"We make no apologies for placing a nursing home under sanction," the Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot said.

"This is about the protection and the welfare of frail and aged Australians and we will act when it is necessary.

"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.

Over the next four years, funding for aged and community care would reach record levels of more than \$41.6 billion -- with \$29.5 billion of that on residential aged care alone.

This year the Australian Government would spend \$5.6 billion on residential aged care. This represents an increase of 10.8 per cent over the final outcome for the 2007-08 financial year.

Over the next four years, the Australian Government would be providing an average of \$43,000 for every aged care home resident.

In WA, this year alone, aged care providers would receive about \$547 million and more than \$2.4 billion is being invested in WA over the next four years.

The Rudd Labor Government is taking a multi-pronged approach to improving aged care nationally, including:

- Record funding of more than \$41.6 billion to ensure that older Australians have quality aged and community care;
- The four-year \$293 million transition care bed plan to help older Australians return to their homes and remain independent after a hospital stay;
- Employment and training programs to support, retain, up-skill and attract aged care workers;
- \$46 million to improve Indigenous aged care through its Indigenous Aged Care Plan; and
- \$300 million in Zero Real Interest loans – targeting areas like WA – which received \$46.6 million in loans to create 347 new beds. This was the biggest single allocation in Australia.

The Australian Government is well placed to meet the challenges of its ageing population. No Australian Government has invested more in aged and community care in Western Australia.

This Government is committed to continuing to work in partnership with older Australians, their families, staff, unions and providers to improve the quality of aged care in Australia.

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 Minister Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280