



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing MEDIA RELEASE

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More transparency with new members on Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today said the new membership of the Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees will increase accountability and transparency.

Mrs Elliot has called for **nominations to the Aged Care Planning Advisory Committee** – to provide input into the 2008 Aged Care Planning process.

The Department of Health and Ageing is seeking applications for appointment to the Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees. These committees are being established in each State and Territory.

Their principal functions are to assess the aged care needs of the community and advise the Department on an appropriate distribution of aged care places, within specified aged care planning regions.

The decision on allocation is made independent of the Minister and at arms length.

Members are appointed for up to two years in an honorary capacity. Nominations, which close on June 27, will be assessed and members will be appointed following a national advertisement and a competitive assessment process undertaken independently by the Department of Health and Ageing.

In line with the Rudd Government's election commitment to make the bed allocation process more efficient, the committees will assist the Department to identify those regions where the need for additional aged care places is high, and will provide advice on prioritising the allocation of new places to those areas.

"This is about transparency and increased accountability in relation to aged care planning," Mrs Elliot said.

"For 12 years, the previous government limited discussion in the area of aged care. We are about a new openness in aged care.

"The work of the Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees will ensure that the record funding levels by the Australian Government will be well targeted to areas of greatest need in line with census data.

"Over the next four years, funding for aged and community care will reach record levels of more than \$40 billion -- with \$28.6 billion of that on residential aged care alone.

"No government in Australian history has spent more on aged care and community care than this one. We are proud of our plans for residential and community aged care.

"This is about planning for Australia's future and the challenges of the 21st century.

“We want to ensure that older Australians can live independent lives and age in their own homes, but also have the option to enter aged care homes if they need to,” Mrs Elliot said.

There are three distinct levels of decision-making in aged care planning. They are:

- Level one: The Minister for Ageing determines the number of new aged care places to be made available in each State and Territory for the coming year.
- Level two : Features the distribution of the new places across aged care planning regions based on advice provided by the State and Territory Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees; and
- Level three: Includes the notification of the invitation to apply and culminates in the allocation of places and capital grants – residential, community or flexible – and the changing needs of people with special needs within each aged care planning region.

The Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees comprise up to 11 government and non-government members with the majority of the committee required to be non-government representatives.

As far as practicable, non-government members of a committee should have between them knowledge of, or experience in:

- Operations of aged care providers;
- Aged care services from the perspective of consumers of the service; and
- Delivery of aged care services to people with special needs.

A person cannot be appointed as a committee member solely on the basis of their capacity to represent a particular body or group and key personnel of an aged care approved provider are not eligible for appointment.

Full eligibility criteria is available on – 1-800-500-853.

Federal, state or local government members are also appointed by the Department following a direct nomination from the relevant government authority. Government members are appointed based on their experience in the administration or delivery of aged care services.

The Aged Care Act 1997 makes provision for the establishment of Aged Care Planning Advisory Committees in all States and Territories.

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