



**AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR AGEING, MRS JUSTINE ELLIOT  
AND  
ACT MINISTER FOR AGEING, MR JOHN HARGREAVES  
MEDIA RELEASE**

April 7, 2009

**Transition care: helping older Canberrans regain their independence**

More than 230 older ACT residents have benefited from the Australian Government's \$293.2 million Transition Care Program since November 2007.

This allows most of them to move from hospitals, back into their own homes instead of prematurely into aged care homes.

Transition care places provide up to 12 weeks of care with a possible extension of six weeks, either in the client's own home or in a bed-based residential setting following a hospital admission.

It provides low intensity therapy services, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, podiatry, speech therapy, nursing and/or personal care services.

Of the 231 older Canberrans, who have used the program:

- 27 per cent received transition care in a bed-based residential setting;
- 40 per cent received care in their own homes; and
- 33 per cent received a mix of both.

The Australian Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot and the ACT Minister for Ageing, Mr John Hargreaves provided a report on the impact of the Transition Care Program in the ACT.

They made the announcement at Baptist Community Services' Mullangarrie Transition Care Unit in Red Hill.

"Put simply, transition care places change lives for older Australians" Mrs Elliot said.

"Older Australians – after a hospital procedure – want to return to their homes rather than staying in hospital or going into residential aged care prematurely.

"Transition care is an example of the Australian and ACT Governments working together to improve the quality of life for older Canberrans," Mrs Elliot said.

Nationally, last financial year, more than 10,100 older Australians received transition care. The Federal Government provided \$52.8 million for the Transition Care Program in 2007-2008 and in 2008-2009, it is expected to provide up to \$78 million.

Over the full four years, it is expected to provide \$293.2 million to transition care in all states and territories.

Each funded place can be used by up to seven or eight different older Australians a year.

By mid-2012, when all 4,000 transition care places are fully operational, up to 30,000 older Australians would benefit each year.

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Department of Health and Ageing data found that 78 per cent of transition care participants in 2007-2008 had improved or maintained their functioning.

And almost half (49 per cent) were able to return to the community after taking part in the program.

Mr Hargreaves said: "Older Australians after a hospital stay want to return to their own homes rather than staying in hospital or going into residential aged care prematurely. This is about helping older Australians to remain independent."

The Transition Care Program currently operates 37 transition care places in the ACT. Of these, 22 are provided in a community setting; and 15 are provided in a bed-based residential setting.

**Last week, Mrs Elliot officially created four further places for the ACT as part of the second release of 470 places under the four-year \$293.2 million transition care plan.**

**In addition, Mrs Elliot has written to all State and Territory Health Ministers formally offering the places.**

"Australians have the longest life expectancy in the English speaking world," Mrs Elliot said.

"We are helping Australia and the ACT prepare for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and our ageing population."

#### **Ageing in the ACT**

Overall, as a jurisdiction, the ACT has the highest life expectancy in Australia for both men and women at 80 and 83.9 years, respectively.

Currently, the ACT has 22,533 people over the age of 70, comprising 6.6 per cent of its population and that is expected to almost double to 40,235 by 2020, comprising 10.3 per cent of the population.\*

*Population Projections for the ACT population 70+*

Year	2007	2010	2015	2020
Population 70+	22,533	25,120	31,025	40,235
Per cent of population	6.6 per cent	7.1 per cent	8.3 per cent	10.3 per cent

\*Based on 2006 census

#### **Residential aged care funding in ACT**

Over the next four years, the Australian Government will provide record funding and support of almost \$300 million to the ACT's 24 approved residential aged care homes operating 1,793 places.

From 2008 to 2012, the Australian Government will provide \$294 million to the ACT for residential aged care.

And in 2008-2009 alone, ACT aged care providers will receive record funding of \$65 million for residential care – an increase of 12.1 per cent over the previous financial year.

**For more information, contact Mrs Elliot's office on (02) 6277 7280 or Mr Hargreaves' office on (02) 6205 0300**