



## THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

### Minister for Ageing

#### MEDIA RELEASE

10 June 2008

#### **New Day Respite Service Gives Western Australian Carers a Break**

Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today officially opened the Coolibah Day Centre as part of a \$34.6 million commitment to fund innovative day respite services within aged care homes.

The Coolibah Day Centre is a day respite service within the Mandurah Retirement Village in Mandurah, Western Australia.

Mrs Elliot said there are more than 247,000 people caring for the elderly or the disabled in WA alone and 2.6 million people across Australia.

“The new respite services located in aged care homes will provide carers with a well-earned rest in the knowledge that their loved ones are being well looked after,” Mrs Elliot said.

This program falls under the *National Respite for Carers Program* which helps around 130,000 carers across Australia access services such as respite care, counselling and support – every year.

At the end of last year, 30 residential aged care homes across the country were awarded grants totalling \$34.6 million over four years to establish and operate day respite services in aged care homes.

Mrs Elliot said, unlike residential respite, the person receiving care does not need an *Aged Care Assessment Team* assessment to take advantage of the service.

“Establishing new innovative respite centres within residential aged care homes makes a lot of sense - because they take advantage of the existing infrastructure, services and skills,” Mrs Elliot said.

The Coolibah Day Centre provides high, low and emergency respite care seven days per week – assisting up to 84 carers per week - and 3,822 hours of respite per year.

As part of the funding, Coolibah Day Centre receives \$1,173,450 over four years to provide day respite care to the local community.

Mrs Elliot said it is estimated that within 40 years the number of people aged over 65 will almost triple from 2.8 million to 7.2 million.

“The Australian Government is strongly committed to supporting carers as our ageing population grows,” Mrs Elliot said.

In welcoming Mrs Elliot, the federal Member for Brand, Gary Gray said he was pleased to see the great services at the Coolibah Day Centre – and the support they provide carers.

“The Coolibah Day Centre provides access to professional staff including visiting GPs, pharmacy reviews, clinical and psychiatric nurses – and also through activities such as outings and entertainment for care recipients.

“As Coolibah Day Respite operates seven days per week, carers have flexibility in meeting their individual respite needs,” Mr Gray said.

**More information:** Carers wanting to find out more about services offered under Government initiatives can contact their local Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 059 059.

### **General facts about respite services and carers**

A Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2003 showed that 2.6 million carers were providing assistance to people who needed help because of disability or age.

About one fifth of these (19 per cent) were primary carers – that is, people who provided the majority of the informal help needed by someone with a disability.

Just over half (54 per cent) of all carers were women. Women were also more likely (71 per cent) to be primary carers. Of those providing care, 1 million (39 per cent) were in the 35-54 year age range.

The National Respite for Carers Program is an Australian Government program that provides respite, counselling and other support for carers. It funds more than 600 community-based respite services, which are delivered in a wide range of settings including overnight respite cottages, day centres and carers' own homes. It also provides funding to 54 Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres located across Australia, which are able to assist carers locate and access local services and can be contacted on 1800 059 059.

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