



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP
Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck

The Hon Warren Entsch MP
Member for Leichhardt

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

13 March 2019

New \$19m Building Expand Torres Strait Aged Care

Residential aged care in the Torres Strait has taken a major step forward, with the official opening today of a new, purpose-built building at Blue Care Star of the Sea Elders Village, with record support from the Liberal Nationals Government.

Up to 38 senior Indigenous people will receive specialist, culturally appropriate care in the new, air-conditioned building. There is also provision to provide accommodation for homeless people.

Blue Care Star of the Sea Elders Village, on Thursday Island, is the only residential aged care service in the Torres Strait. It has operated for some time from a building which was steadily deteriorating.

Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM, and Federal Member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch, both welcomed the opening of the new facility. Mr Entsch also attended the opening ceremony.

Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q) who operates Blue Care Star of the Sea, received more than \$19 million from the Australian Government in the 2014 Aged Care Approvals Round to extend, upgrade and refurbish the facility.

It is the largest grant ever provided from the Government's Rural, Regional and Other Special Needs Building Fund for aged care.

The Morrison Government also provided an additional \$5.8 million in 2015 through the Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Fund to assist with the construction of 24 one-bedroom units to accommodate aged care staff.

Minister Wyatt said the Morrison Government's investments in Blue Care Star of the Sea would enable it to continue providing culturally appropriate care for elderly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Blue Care Star of the Sea is providing a much needed service to people in the Torres Strait," Minister Wyatt said.

“It’s important that senior Australians can receive quality aged care close to their communities, no matter where they live across this wide land.

“As well as a comfortable room and pleasant surroundings, residents will receive care that is non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, especially elderly Indigenous Australians who are among our most vulnerable citizens.”

Mr Entsch said Blue Care Star of the Sea Elders Village was an excellent service.

“This new building will enable the dedicated staff of Blue Care Star of the Sea to continue providing physical, emotional and spiritual support to people from Thursday Island and the Torres Strait,” Mr Entsch said.

“I congratulate the Uniting Church on the completion of this major project.”

In 2017–18, Blue Care Star of the Sea Elders Village also received \$2.4 million in operational funding from the Morrison Government.

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Authorised by Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Member for Hasluck.