



**THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP**

**Minister for Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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29 August 2008

**Record funding and support for ACT aged and community care**

Over the next four years, the Australian Government will provide record funding and support of almost \$300 million to the ACT's 16 approved nursing homes and their 1,600 residents.

From 2008-2012, the Australian Government will provide \$294 million to the ACT.

And in 2008-2009 alone, ACT aged care providers will receive record funding of \$67 million – an increase of 12.1 per cent payment per resident over the previous financial year.

This is part of the more than \$40 billion being provided nationally to residential and community care in Australia over the next four years- \$28.6 billion of that on nursing homes alone.

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today released a snapshot on the ACT aged care sector – showing that it was preparing for the territory's ageing population.

"This is record funding and no government has provided more financial support to residential aged care and community in Australia and the ACT," 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," Mrs Elliot said.

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+**

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

**\*Based on 2006 Census**

Mrs Elliot said Australia and the ACT have world class aged care facilities and hard working dedicated staff.

In fact, the ACT had the second lowest number of cases of complaints from residents and their families reported to the Department of Health and Ageing's Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme.

Every Aged Care Approvals Round in the ACT has for many years been fully subscribed – showing a strong sector.

Mrs Elliot said she was optimistic about the state of the sector with recent significant investment including the opening of two new facilities – 100 bed and 108 bed facilities in the ACT recently.

In addition, in 2007-2008, the Australian Government provided \$27.905 million for community care to ACT residents who wished to remain independent in their homes.

Almost 750 people and 162 people receive support to stay at home through Community Aged Care Packages and Extended Aged Care packages, respectively.

As for carers, 586 are supported through six organisations by the National Respite for Carers Program in the ACT.

Last month, the Australian Government announced the appointment of the Royal College of Nursing Australia to administer the \$6.9 million aged care component of the *Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce* program.

The program will provide a cash bonus to nurses who are returning to the profession after an absence of more than 12 months. Nurses who meet the eligibility criteria and have returned to work in Commonwealth funded nursing homes on or after 15 January 2008 may be eligible to receive cash payments of up to \$6,000.

The cash payment will be paid in two instalments; one payment at six months of up to \$3,000, with the second payment of up to \$3,000 available at 18 months.

Applications for funding can be obtained from the Royal College of Nursing Australia who will coordinate the payments to eligible nurses and aged care providers.

These measures are in addition to the Australian Government's recent scholarships offer for undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students. The scholarships are for students interested in specialising in aged care and offer up to a maximum of \$30,000 per undergraduate applicant and up to \$10,000 per postgraduate applicant.

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