



Margaret May MP

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Shadow Minister for Ageing

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### MAY SLAMS ELLIOT FOR PUTTING OLDER AUSTRALIANS AT RISK

Margaret May Shadow Minister for Ageing has slammed the Ageing Minister Justine Elliot accusing her of inaction and neglecting frail and vulnerable older Australians.

Following media footage on Lateline last night showing older Australians' health being put at serious risk because of rotting teeth, Mrs May has called on the Minister to take immediate action.

Mrs May said: "Its outrageous that the Minister has not intervened immediately and directed her Department to investigate aged care facilities as a matter of urgency.

"The matter needs to be investigated today, not tomorrow.

"It's a damning indictment on the Minister that she has allowed older Australians' health to be compromised in this way.

"The images last night were the most disturbing I have seen for a long time and it beggars belief that such images come from an advanced country with a rigorous regulatory regime for the aged care industry.

"Some of the footage showed mouths so ravaged with tooth roots, ulcers and rotten teeth oozing pus that the health of older Australians was clearly at risk.

"The decay and neglect of some mouths was so appalling, that they could be at risk of early death.

"The Minister continually goes on about spot checks and the increased number of unannounced visits that have been taking place since the election of the Rudd Government but how can residents' teeth which are so glaringly neglected be overlooked by those undertaking the inspections.

"To meet accreditation standards, aged care services must provide a high quality of personal care to every resident.

“This clearly has not happened and there’s a serious breakdown in the system which needs to be investigated.

“Poor oral health has been linked to poor general health, heart disease, stroke and in some cases pneumonia.

“If people have rotten teeth they can’t eat their food and will be malnourished and oozing pus poisons the whole body.

“It’s simply outrageous and incomprehensible to think that older Australians have been abused and neglected in this way.

“The Rudd Government has attempted to roll the Medicare Dental Scheme which deals with chronic and complex dental health problems on two occasions.

“I call on the Minister and the Rudd Government to stand up and support the scheme so that older Australians with chronic dental problems can continue to receive the oral health care they need.

“The images last night were some of the most disturbing I have viewed for a long time and it’s a damning indictment that the Rudd Government has allowed this to occur and I call on the Minister to take immediate action to ensure the health and welfare of older Australians”, Mrs May said.

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