



## THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

### Minister for Ageing

#### MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 26 May 2008

#### **\$6.5 MILLION TO IMPROVE PALLIATIVE SUPPORT**

##### ***National Palliative Care Week 2008***

Minister for Ageing Mrs Justine Elliot today announced extra Federal Government funding of over \$3.5 million - for the next three years to fund the *Palliative Care for People Living at Home* initiative.

Mrs Elliot said this project will investigate new ways to allow people requiring palliative care to remain in their homes with their carers.

“This program is an example of the co-operation between the Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments,” Mrs Elliot said.

“This new initiative will look at ways to improve and bring together existing clinical and nursing services, in-home support, in-house respite and training of carers.

Mrs Elliot said: “It has been estimated that terminal illness affects around half a million Australians as patients, carers, family members or friends - every year.

“All Australians can expect to know someone who needs palliative care during their lifetime,” she said.

##### **Mrs Elliot announced the new *Palliative Care for People Living at Home* program at the launch of the 11<sup>th</sup> National Palliative Care Week.**

Mrs Elliot also launched an innovative web site that gives people with a terminal illness, their families and carers 24-hour access to practical information, support and advice.

“This information site will be a crucial support tool for what is a very difficult and challenging time for so many Australians,” Mrs Elliot said.

Mrs Elliot said CareSearch is one of the key features of the National Palliative Care Week 2008 and was funded by a \$3 million grant from the Australian Government.

The CareSearch web site includes information for the terminally ill, carers and families, as well as health professionals and researchers.

The site also contains links to other resources and covers sensitive issues – such as what to say to someone who has found out they are dying, and what to do after a death.

“The theme for the National Palliative Care Week is ‘A Matter of Life and Death’ because palliative care is as much about life as it is about death.

“It is about the quality of life of those in palliative care and the lives of those caring for them,” Mrs Elliot said.

Mrs Elliot said the Australian Government recognised the importance of palliative care as an integral part of the health system and community.

**Facts:**

Over the past five years, the Australian Government has provided funding of \$188 million under the *Australian Health Care Agreements* to the states and territories for palliative care.

The *National Palliative Care Grants Program* has also helped community-based groups around Australia, with \$34 million over six years to improve access to and the quality of palliative care in local communities.

CareSearch has been developed over three years by researchers at Flinders University—the centre of the Australian Palliative Care Knowledge Network project.

**Media contact: Ruci Fixter – 0415 359 023**