



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

THE HON WARREN SNOWDON MP

Member for Lingiari

MEDIA RELEASE

14 April 2009

Transition Care: Helping Older Territorians Regain Their Independence

More than 80 older NT residents have participated in the Australian Government's \$293.2 million Transition Care Program since November 2007 – allowing most of them to move from hospitals and back into their own homes.

Transition care places provide low intensity therapy services, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, podiatry, speech therapy, nursing and/or personal care services, for up to 12 weeks of care with a possible extension of six weeks, either in the client's own home or in a bed-based residential setting.

Almost all (81 out of 82) older Territorians, who have used the program received transition care in a bed-based residential setting.

The Transition Care Program currently operates 22 transition care places in the NT and this will rise to 29 by 2010.

The NT services are:

- Northern Territory Transition Care Program in Casuarina (six places);
- Darwin Transitional Care Unit (four places);
- Katherine Transitional Care Unit (eight places); and
- Alice Springs Transitional Care Unit (four places).

Last week, Mrs Elliot officially created seven further places for the NT as part of the second release of 470 places under the four year \$293.2 million plan.

“Put simply, transition care places change lives for older Australians,” Mrs Elliot said.

“It is an example of the Australian and NT Governments – through their relevant health departments – working together in partnership to improve the quality of life for older Territorians,” Mrs Elliot said.

Federal Member for Lingiari, the Hon. Warren Snowdon MP said Indigenous elders are often important community leaders, and it is vital that they receive a level of care that assists them return to their families and their communities.

“Transition care is significant not only for the wellbeing of the individual, but also for the strength and integrity of our NT communities.”

Nationally, last financial year, more than 10,100 older Australians received transition care.

Last year, the Federal Government provided \$52.8 million for the Transition Care Program and in 2008-2009, it is expected to provide up to \$78 million.

Over the full four years, it is expected to provide \$293.2 million to transition care in all states and territories.

By mid-2012, when all 4,000 transition care places are fully operational, up to 30,000 older Australians would benefit each year.

Each funded place can be used by up to seven or eight different older Australians a year.

Department of Health and Ageing data found that 78 per cent of transition care participants in 2007-2008 had improved or maintained their functioning.

And almost half (49 per cent) were able to return to the community after taking part in the program.

Mrs Elliot said: "Older Australians after a hospital stay want to return to their own homes rather than staying in hospital or going into a nursing hostel prematurely. This is about helping older Australians to remain independent."

"Australians have the longest life expectancy in the English speaking world," Mrs Elliot said.

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