



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Government announces 7,700 extra training places for aged care workers: Preparing for our ageing population

Up to 7,700 new training places over four years in aged and community care will be created under a \$41 million training plan – as part of the Rudd Government’s response to the challenges of Australia’s ageing population.

Federal Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today announced details of the training package for people wanting a career in aged care.

A total of 2,700 community training places and up to 5,000 residential aged care training places will be made available through the **Community Aged Care Workforce Development** and the **Better Skills for Better Care** programs, respectively.

“This is about preparing for the challenges of the 21st century and our nation’s ageing population,” Mrs Elliot said.

“We need a well trained workforce to help provide quality aged and community care in Australia.

“This is a practical and commonsense measure – it is about helping people gain additional work skills and build a long-term career in residential and community aged care.

“Australia is facing a major demographic challenge and we are preparing. Australians now have the world’s second longest life expectancy – after the Japanese.”

Currently, there are some 2.8 million Australians – about 13 per cent of the population – aged 65 and over. This number is expected to triple over the next 40 years.

The training would be nationally recognised and include places in:

- Certificate III in Home and Community Care;
- Certificate III in Aged Care Work;
- Certificate IV in Service Coordination
- Certificate IV in Aged Care Work and Community Services; and
- Diploma in Enrolled Nursing.

As part of a plan to reduce red tape, *Community Aged Care Development Program* and *Better Skills for Better Care Program* will be advertised together – for the first time – allowing Registered Training Organisations to apply for both programs simultaneously.

The joint round allows the vocational and educational training sector to better coordinate and plan its training delivery and will provide more certainty to providers and staff.

Advertisements will appear in major newspapers shortly and further information is available from the Department’s website: www.health.gov.au/tenders.

The Australian Government’s other aged care workforce initiatives include:

- the Bringing Nurses back into the Workforce program which supports the return of 7,750 nurses to hospitals and 1,000 nurses to residential aged care homes;
- providing scholarships to encourage more people to enter or re-enter aged care nursing, especially in rural and regional areas through the Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme;
- provide postgraduate scholarships to assist community aged care nurses to gain higher qualifications in the provision of home-based aged care;
- A further 1,400 aged care workers in rural and regional areas will be offered places to receive further training under a new round of the Australian Government's four-year \$30 million Support for Aged Care Training Program; and
- providing training places for aged care workers to access dementia-related education and training.

The Australian Government is responding to the challenges that come with an ageing population. Over the next four years, funding for aged and community care will reach record levels of more than \$40 billion - \$28.6 billion on residential aged care alone.

“No government in Australian history has spent more on aged care and community care than this one. We are proud of our plans for aged and community care,” Mrs Elliot said.

Community Aged Care Workforce Development Program

The Community Aged Care Workforce Development program strengthens the skills and knowledge of aged care workers who provide home-based care to frail older Australians with complex care needs, including the provision of care in their own ethnic and Indigenous communities.

The program will provide up to 8,700 training places over four years to assist aged care workers to attain accredited aged care related certificate courses.

Up to 2,000 of these training places will be allocated to workers from culturally diverse and indigenous backgrounds.

About the Better Skills for Better Care Program

A total of \$75.6 million will be invested through the Better Skills for Better Care Program to assist 18,100 personal care workers over four years to upgrade or obtain full certificate qualifications.

The Better Skills for Better Care Program assists approved providers of residential aged care services to meet their training requirements by funding training for personal care workers involved in direct care of residents in residential aged care facilities.

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