HELP FOR SENIOR TERRITORIANS BOOSTED

Senior and disabled Territorians who want to continue living in their own homes will be able to access domestic assistance, personal care and nursing, due to a $728,000 boost to the Home and Community Care (HACC) program.

The funding increase was announced today by the Australian Government Minister for Ageing, Senator Santo Santoro, and the NT Minister for Family and Community Services, Delia Lawrie.

“More older Territorians will now receive support services under HACC, ranging from care and nursing to Meals on Wheels and community transport,” Senator Santoro said.

“This underpins the Australian Government’s commitment to helping people remain in their own homes and their own communities for as long as possible.”

This year’s total of more than $9.3 million in Territory HACC funding will provide: recurrent funds; support for approved providers to establish or expand new HACC services; and indexation of the funding for all current providers.

HACC is a joint Australian and Territory government program that helps community agencies provide services to frail aged people, younger people with disabilities and their carers.

Ms Lawrie welcomed the increased funding offered by the Australian Government, with its investment of $6.4m to be matched by more than $2.9m from the Territory.

“Frail aged people and younger people with a disability prefer to stay at home, in contact with their family, friends and community,” she said.

“Both our Governments want to strengthen the links of family and community, and to help individuals lead healthier lives. The HACC program enables community-based services to work towards these goals.”

Ms Lawrie said the 2006-07 NT HACC program priorities are establishing new services in major remote communities where none presently exist, and three new services in Central Australia at Anmatjere, Amoonguna and Urapantjais.

“The funding will also allow the Territory Government to expand services to respond to some unfunded demand, complex HACC issues and support for older people who are in transition from hospital to the community.

“I congratulate Territory providers, including Alzheimer’s NT, Anglicare NT, and the Kunbarllanjnja, Thamarrurr and Tapatjatjaka communities, who will receive additional funding to expand their services.
“Several provider organisations in the Top End and Central Australia will also gain one-off funding towards vehicles, kitchens and laundry upgrades,” Ms Lawrie said.

Senator Santoro also congratulated the Northern Territory on becoming the first state or territory to sign up to the national HACC Review Agreement.

“This new HACC agreement will ensure that 750,000 frail older and disabled Australians will continue receiving the in-home support that they need to live independently,” Senator Santoro said.

“It will create close ties between the different levels of government, leading to smoother and more efficient service delivery.

“I thank the Northern Territory for taking the lead on this important agreement.”

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