



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP

Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

25 March 2009

AGED CARE NURSE SCHOLARSHIPS -- \$1.6 MILLION

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot today announced more than \$1.6 million in scholarships – as part of the Australian Government’s plan to support and retain aged care nurses.

“This is a long-term practical investment in the aged care sector. Nurses are the backbone of the health and aged care sector,” Mrs Elliot said.

Mrs Elliot made the announcement at the Aged Care Queensland State Conference on the Gold Coast.

So far, nurses across the country have received 270 scholarships under two separate programs this financial year

“This is about retaining and supporting our nation’s aged care nurses,” Mrs Elliot said.

The programs are:

- The *Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme* which provides Registered/Division 1 nurses who are studying for their Masters with scholarships valued up to \$15,000 a year. It also offers up to \$10,000 a year to assist Registered/Division 1 and Enrolled nurses working in aged care facilities for further education and training. **Up to \$780,000 will be available to nurses in this round.**
- The *Postgraduate Community Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme* provides up to \$10,000 to eligible Registered/Division 1 nurses working in the community aged care sector for tertiary studies, TAFE programs, vocational education, training courses and attendance at conferences. **Up to \$876,000 will be available to nurses in this round.**

The Australian Government has already awarded 181 new scholarships to community aged care nurses under the *Postgraduate Community Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme* and 89 postgraduate scholarships under the *Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme* this financial year.

Applications for the 2009-10 rounds of the two *scholarship schemes* opened on 21 March and close on 17 April 2009.

Other Australian Government nursing initiatives include:

- \$39.4 million over five years to bring 8,750 nurses into the Australian workforce including places for 7,750 extra nurses and midwives in public and private hospitals, and 1,000 nurses in residential aged care homes and community aged care services;

- An allocation of an additional 500 Commonwealth supported nursing places at universities to commence in second semester 2008 and a further 1,000 places to commence in 2009;
- Assisting enrolled nurses to access recognised and approved medication administration education and training programs; and
- Funding the Diploma in Nursing (Enrolled Nurse Qualifications) for residential aged care workers through the Better Skills Better For Better Care program.

Over the next four years, funding for aged and community care would reach record levels of more than \$41.6 billion.

The Australian Government would be providing an average of \$43,000 for every aged care home resident per year. In addition, the average amount a resident contributes is \$20,000 a year. (However, the Federal Government pays for those who are unable to do so).

Those interested in applying for a scholarship should contact the Royal College of Nursing Australia on **1800 116 696** for the *Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme*, or **1800 551 201** for the *Postgraduate Community Aged Care Nursing Scholarships Scheme*.

Potential applicants can also download the information packs at www.rcna.org.au.

For media requests only please call Kathryn Conroy on 02 6277 7280 or 0448 249 447.