



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP
Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck

Nola Marino MP
Member for Forrest

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$46.1 Million to Combat Loneliness in Local Communities

Today the Turnbull Government is committing \$46.1 million to the national Community Visitors Scheme, which is seeking the assistance of local organisations across the country to help combat loneliness and social isolation.

Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM, said the new funding would support local organisations to recruit volunteers to provide vital friendship and companionship, through regular visits to ageing people receiving Commonwealth-subsidised aged care services.

“I have raised concerns that up to 40 per cent of aged care home residents have no family members or friends who come to see them. I recently visited one WA home where the residents received no visitors for a whole year,” Minister Wyatt said.

“These are devastating statistics and demonstrate the importance of the Community Visitors Scheme, whose volunteers can play such crucial roles in the lives of ageing Australians.”

Minister Wyatt said isolation was not restricted to older people in residential care.

“A recent study found up to 70 per cent of clients receiving aged care in their own homes also experience loneliness,” said the Minister.

“Research shows men over the age of 55 are the most likely to feel the impact of loneliness, especially after divorces, separations, the death of their partner or leaving the workplace.

“With around 1.3 million Australians receiving Commonwealth aged care assistance each year, including 240,000 in residential care, there are so many who could benefit from visitor support.”

Member for Forrest, Nola Marino, commended the local volunteers who were already providing visitor services.

“I know how much the older people they visit look forward to the social interaction,” Mrs Marino said.

“It can be as simple as taking the time to ask how their day has been but it is fundamentally important for their wellbeing.

“That is why we would like as many local community groups as possible to consider applying for Community Visitors Scheme funding.”

There were approximately 11,000 CVS volunteers last year. Visits to people in residential aged care facilities can be to groups or one-on-one, while home care package recipients can benefit from individual visits.

In late 2016, the Turnbull Government commissioned a review of the Community Visitors Scheme and has now developed new guidelines and a draft operational manual to drive a nationally consistent approach to its implementation. The manual will be finalised in conjunction with funding recipients in 2019.

The funding covers the period from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2021.

Applications close at 5pm (AEDT) on Tuesday 12 June 2018. Information about how to apply is available through the Government’s grants information system: [GrantConnect](#).

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