



**THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT MP
MINISTER FOR AGEING**

Mr Bryan Lipmann
Chief Executive Officer
Wintringham
PO Box 193
Flemington Vic 3031

Dear Mr Lipmann

Age Care Assessment of Homeless People Aged 50 and over

Thank you for your hospitality during my visit with the Deputy Prime Minister to Wintringham's facilities on 8 January 2009.

It was my great pleasure to see first-hand the work you and your organisation are doing to help older homeless people.

It is a terrific achievement that Wintringham has been operating for 20 years and now provides aged care and housing services to more than 800 people in Melbourne each night, including nearly 200 people in its residential facilities.

It was also satisfying to be able to announce the \$3 million capital funding to establish a new aged care service in Dandenong which will allow you to expand your services to homeless older Australians.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring equitable access to care for all older Australians. A very practical demonstration of this is our recent decision to include homeless people as a "special needs" group in aged care legislation which will better allow the needs of homeless older people to be taken into account during the annual allocation of aged care places.

In your email of 30 January 2009, you raised a concern about older homeless people and accessing aged care services.

The *Aged Care Act 1997* does not specify a particular age when a person is considered an 'aged person', which means there is no requirement that a person be over a certain age to be eligible for assistance.

In addition, the Aged Care Assessment Program guidelines state that a person (who is not an aged person) is eligible to receive residential or community care – if there are no other care facilities or care services available to meet the person's needs.

Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) should be aware that some people in their local community have difficulty obtaining aged care services due to their special needs.

ACATs should also develop appropriate mechanisms at the local level to ensure equitable access to services by special needs groups, including older homeless people.

I hope that this letter provides an assurance that ACATs will continue to approve people aged under 65 years of age who are homeless for residential or community aged care where there are the most appropriate service available such as Wintringham.

If you continue to have problems with your clients accessing aged care services, where this is the most appropriate form of care, please contact | Program Manager,
Victorian State Office on (03) 9665 8654 who will be able to discuss the matter with the relevant local ACATs.

Yours sincerely

JUSTINE ELLIOT

12/02/09