



MEDIA RELEASE

FIGURES SHOW MORE MUST TO BE DONE TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE IN NURSING HOMES

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Figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare this morning confirm that a joint Federal and State program to keep young people out of nursing homes has worked and must continue.

The Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance and MS Australia came together today to welcome the release of the data which shows the Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) program has helped 1,141 young people with disabilities like multiple sclerosis (MS) over 5 years stay out of aged care facilities.

National Director of the Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance Dr Bronwyn Morkham said the program, funded by a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement in 2006, must continue.

While the Federal Government has committed funding to maintain support for those already assisted through the YPIRAC program, growth funding is needed to help the 6,500 young Australians still waiting for assistance in aged care facilities.

“The figures released today prove that the problem of young people living in nursing homes is one that can be solved. But we are nowhere near finished,” Dr Morkham said.

“We are glad that people assisted to regain their lives through this program will continue to be supported. Those young Australians still living in nursing homes, simply want the same chance.”

MS Australia’s Manager of Policy and Community Partnerships Alan Blackwood said without all Governments working together, the problem of younger people in aged care would never get addressed.

“Solving this problem is a long haul job and stopping younger people with disabilities like MS from going into nursing homes will only happen if Governments continue to commit to constructive reform and growth funding,” Mr Blackwood said.

“All Governments can contribute in different ways but there must be commitments made urgently. Governments know what is needed: better coordination and

improved services across state health and disability programs, as well as new State dollars.”

Dr Morkham said State Governments must come to the table and that the COAG program must develop critically needed partnerships between health and disability services.

“The YPIRAC initiative has shown where reform must happen and the reform direction this program must take. State governments must get their health and disability services collaborating so that the vital supports these young people need over their lifetimes, are available.

If we lose this opportunity for reform, we won’t get another.”

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Note to editors and producers: Interviews with Dr Morkham, Mr Blackwood or young people at risk of entering nursing homes are available upon request.

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