



## MEDIA RELEASE

### GOVERNMENTS URGED TO RENEW FUNDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN NURSING HOMES

EMBARGO: 7.00 AM Monday 27 June 2011

**A vital program funded by the Federal and State Governments to keep young people out of nursing homes runs out of money this Thursday, prompting peak bodies to appeal for it's urgent renewal.**

The Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance and MS Australia have joined forces today to call for Federal and State Governments to renew funding for the Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) program.

The program, funded by a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement in 2006, has helped over 800 young people with disabilities like multiple sclerosis (MS) over 5 years stay out of aged care facilities. While the Federal Government has committed to continue support for the people already assisted as part of the funding, no agreement has been reached to assist any new cases.

The National Director of the Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance, Dr Bronwyn Morkham said that the problem of young people living in aged care needed urgent government action.

"The aged care system is designed for the frail and aged - not for younger people with disabilities with lives to live," Dr Morkham said.

"Over 6,500 young people are living in these facilities across the country," Dr Morkham said.

"Even though 800 people were helped by this program over a 5 year period, almost 2,000 people under 65 still went into nursing homes in 2008 alone."

MS Australia's Manager of Policy and Community Partnerships Alan Blackwood said without renewed funding for the program, young people at risk of entering aged care homes faced a bleak future.

"Failing to renew funding for this program will leave too much unfinished business in the fight to right this national wrong," Mr Blackwood said.

"Any delay in continuing this program will only put more pressure on an already overburdened health system.

"Over 2,400 older people are stuck in hospital waiting for aged care beds that are occupied by young people with disabilities like MS who should not be there," Mr Blackwood said.

"The Federal Government must take a lead role in the establishment of new money to extend this program," Dr Morkham said.

The Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance and MS Australia said they would be fighting for a new program to:

1. Enable support for young people at risk of entering aged care facilities beyond July 1 2011;
2. Develop service pathways for those with Acquired Brain Injuries and neurological conditions across health, disability and aged care programs;
3. Reform aids and equipment programs;
4. Establish lifetime care models for those with high and complex needs; and
5. Develop infrastructure in anticipation of the future implementation of a national disability insurance scheme, a report into which will be handed down to the Federal Government next month.

**Ends**

**For more information or to arrange interviews contact:**

**Note to editors and producers: Interviews with Mr Blackwood, Dr Morkham and families of younger people in nursing homes can be arranged upon request.**

**Prue Guillaume**  
**Public Relations Manager**  
**MS Australia**  
**Ph: 0450 659 811**  
**Email: [prue.guillaume@msaustralia.org.au](mailto:prue.guillaume@msaustralia.org.au)**