

Disabled get new home

THE launch by Federal Minister for Ageing Julie Bishop of a group home for disabled people living in Victorian nursing homes, was good news for the three women involved, but only the tip of the iceberg for the growing population of young disabled people living in nursing homes, Alan Blackwood, Manager of Policy and Community Partnerships at the MS Society of Victoria.

Blackwood said funding for the home, to which three young women with MS who currently living in Melbourne nursing homes will be able to move, was the result of a historic partnership between the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, "the first of its kind in Australia."

"This type of partnership, where both tiers of government take responsibility for returning these young people to the community is the way of the future," Blackwood said.

However, he said the situation was still bleak for the estimated other 6197 people under 65 with disabilities who are currently living in aged care

facilities across the country.

Director of the Young People in Nursing Homes National Project Dr Bronwyn Morkham said that one young person entered a nursing home somewhere in the country every day. "At this rate of admission, we are looking at over 10,000 young people in AC facilities by 2007." She said it was imperative that State governments and the Commonwealth worked together to get at least 800 young people out of nursing homes and into accommodation and support services that met their needs.

The Federal government has committed funding of \$830,000 for two pilot programs to assist these young people to live in

more appropriate home environments. The Victorian program provided funding to assist the three women with MS to move into a group house that has been modified for disabled access. The other program will provide 16 flexible aged care places to support disabled people in their current accommodation.

Bishop said the pilot programs were in addition to funding to the States for disability services, and were funded through the Aged Care Innovative Pool Program. The government is seeking further proposals from State and Territory governments, community organisations and people with disabilities.



MS sufferer Sally Robinson tries out the ramp at her new house.



Federal Minister for Ageing, Julie Bishop (centre), with Evette Pinter and Sally Robinson: looking forward to real home.