

S04.1
GM/jw

31 October 2008



MAYOR'S OFFICE

The Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

INQUIRY INTO RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY AGED CARE IN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the above inquiry.

Dubbo currently has the following places available:-

Self Care Units	582
Aged Care Low Care facilities	164
Aged Care High Care facilities	160
Respite Care	10
Dementia Accommodation	62
TOTAL	<u>978</u>

Facilities in Dubbo report waiting lists with acute need still in the area of nursing home and hospital places.

There is a strong demand for Housing NSW self care aged units with a long waiting list. Housing NSW currently has 184 seniors self care aged units.

The 2006 census showed 12% in Dubbo, with Australian Bureau of Statistics' projections to 2051 of 26% of total population of people over the age of 65 in Australia. As can be seen by the growth, facilities available for those older people will need, particularly in the area of high care places, to be progressed accordingly. Dubbo continues to service and support those satellite communities who do not have access to appropriate facilities. As these communities' demands increase, accordingly the stress placed on Dubbo aged care accommodation will only get much stronger. Accommodation services are already reporting large waiting lists particularly from communities outside of Dubbo.

Dubbo, due to its range of health, recreational and commercial facilities is already viewed by retirees from Western NSW as a desirable location to choose as a retirement location. Any formula for the provision of aged care facilities in Dubbo should take account of this lifestyle choice of retirees.



A further issue worthy of consideration in any formula for aged care services is the differing needs of the Aboriginal community. Whilst 70 years may be a reasonable figure to generalise the average community age around which people start requiring aged services, it is certainly not the general case with the Aboriginal community. Due to many socio economic and lifestyle issues Aboriginal people in general require aged services well before they reach 70 years. I believe that a separate disability factor recognising the Aboriginal population of a Local Government Area should be a component of any aged care service/facility allocation needed in NSW.

Other service providers within the community that provide assistance to older people are reporting demand rising and ongoing problems in either recruiting volunteers or accessing appropriate funding to carry on their services. Services such as Meals on Wheels and the Community Visitors Scheme report that their volunteer base is aging, therefore those undertaking these activities are now becoming reliant themselves on those same services. Home Care and Community Transport are under demand not only from Dubbo but also from other communities, and with limited places being funded demand will continue to be unmet.

This lack of funding and volunteers whilst not directly related to Aged Care places planning will impact on the independence of older people and will eventually place a greater burden on the numbers of places available within the community.

Should you wish further clarification please contact John Watts, Manager Social Services, Dubbo City Council, phone 02 6801 4403.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Greg Matthews
Mayor