



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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GRIERSON SEEKS MORE AGED CARE PLACES FOR NEWCASTLE

The Federal Member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson, today called on the Howard Government to provide an increased allocation of aged care places for Newcastle and the Hunter.

In a submission ahead of the 2006 Aged Care Approvals Round, Ms Grierson outlined serious unmet need for aged care services in the region.

The Aged Care Approvals process sets the number of Residential (high and low care), Community Aged Care, Extended Aged Care at Home, and Dementia-specific aged care places to be allocated around Australia.

"The Hunter region is estimated to have a shortage of 377 aged care beds, even measured against the Howard Government's own target," Ms Grierson said. "And with 1,500 people on waiting lists, waiting up to 50 weeks each, it is time the Government raised its sights."

"The people of Newcastle and the Hunter can't wait any longer. Our ageing population needs the flexibility to live at home longer or to move into accommodation as the need arises."

"Older people with acute care needs should not be in hospital beds because they cannot wait for high-level aged care."

"I have also asked the Government to provide resources for younger people with high-level needs who are often inappropriately accommodated in aged care facilities."

"With the number of people living with dementia in the Hunter expected to triple in the next forty years, there is also a pressing need for more dementia-specific places."

"I call on the Government to take urgent action so that the infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of our ageing population now and into the future."

For more information contact Sharon Grierson on 4926 1555

Canberra
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Ph: 02 6277 4221
Fax: 02 6277 8461



Newcastle
427 Hunter Street
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300
Ph: 02 4926 1555
Fax: 02 4926 1895
www.sharongrierson.com