

LOTTERIES COMMISSION, AGED CARE FUNDING POLICY

486. Hon Barry House to the Minister for Racing and Gaming

- (1) Can the Minister confirm that the Lotteries Commission has stopped funding of \$3 500 per new bed licence for furniture and equipment for residential retirement facilities?
- (2) If so, why has this policy been changed?
- (3) Is the Minister concerned about the negative impact of this change on many facilities, particularly in country areas?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS replied:

- (1) Following a review of its aged care funding policy, which included an extensive consultation process with the key stakeholders, the Lotteries Commission determined that its previous formula funding of \$3,500 per new bed licence was no longer appropriate.
- (2) The policy was changed as a result of a routine review of this funding area, which included extensive community consultation. The Commission's position is that the provision of core facilities for residential care for elderly people is the responsibility of the Commonwealth. The Commission believes its funding should be to support residential care services for facilities and services which will improve the quality of services, and believes that the flexibility in the new funding guidelines will be of benefit to the service providers and the residents of the facilities. Grants will therefore continue to be made for capital items, but the previous funding formula which did not respond to particular project requirements, will be abolished.

The implementation of new guidelines will be monitored by the Commission, and modified if experience demonstrates this is required. The Commission remains committed to supporting the elderly in our community. The budget for funding aged care services will, in fact, increase by \$500,000 in the forthcoming year.

- (3) I had concerns but am assured the new guidelines should be welcomed by all members of the aged care services sector and therefore I trust the impact will be a positive one, and will, in fact, provide a benefit to country areas by the increased flexibility available.