



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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On Budget night the Ministers for Social Security, Health, and Veterans' Affairs, announced a new home and community care program, which will provide a more comprehensive range of intergrated home and community care services targetted primarily at the frail aged and younger disabled people.

It is proposed that the new program be cost-shared with the States and Territories. An additional \$10 million has been provided in the 1984-85 Budget to be available on an unmatched basis from January 1, 1985 to those States and Territories which have reached agreements with the Commonwealth. Subject to these agreements the Commonwealth's contribution to the new program will be more than \$300 million over the first three years.

In order to advance the discussions as quickly as possible, a high-level team has been established, headed by Mr E. Visbord, a Deputy Secretary in my Department. The team's task will be to seek to arrive at draft agreements with the states on the financial arrangements which are required to put the new program in place. I have written to the State Premiers and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory seeking their assistance in expediting these negotiations.

The negotiating team will conduct these financial negotiations with the States during the forthcoming Federal election period and will report to the incoming Government in December.

I envisage that following the election, detailed discussions on the composition of the program and administrative arrangements will be conducted by the responsible Minister. This will include consultations with service providers and users.

Arrangements for these consultations will be announced by the appropriate Minister in the incoming Government. The final shape of the program will not be determined until these consultations have occurred.

Arrangements are also being made at this time to give effect to a program to provide home help for veterans which was also announced on Budget night.