54,000 AUSTRALIANS GET ASSISTANCE WITH CONTINENCE AIDS

An additional 54,000 Australians with permanent incontinence will have access to subsidised continence products from 1 July 2007.

The Government is widening the age eligibility for the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS), which provides products to the value of $470 a year to eligible people.

The new Budget measure adds people in the five to 15 age group and those aged 65 and over who have a neurological condition leading to incontinence, as well as people in those age groups with non-neurological causes of permanent incontinence such as dementia, prostate disease and cancer who hold a Pensioner Concession Card and their dependants.

"Although incontinence can often be caused by age-related conditions, rather than neurological ones, until now the subsidy was only available to people of working age with a neurological cause of incontinence,” the Minister for Ageing, Christopher Pyne said.

“The Government understands that incontinence can cause a major reduction in quality of life. For older people, it is one of the major factors that lead people to be admitted into residential aged care.”

Mr Pyne said the Budget measure would also help the parents of many young people aged from five to 15 who were previously ineligible.

The Government is committed to assisting people with permanent incontinence to live and participate in their community with confidence and dignity,” Mr Pyne said.

As well as CAAS, Mr Pyne said the Government provided targeted support services for people affected by incontinence to allow them to remain active in their homes and community, as much as possible.

The expansion, costing an additional $98.5 million in new funding, will more than treble the number of people receiving assistance under CAAS, from 20,000 to over 74,000.

The expenditure brings total funding for the CAAS over the next four years to $148.7 million.

Media contact: Adam Howard 0400 414 833