



VICTORIA POLICE

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MEDIA RELEASE

25 February 2004

VICTORIA POLICE WELCOME SAFE RETURN HOME

Victoria Police will today embark on a new community partnership aimed at reuniting missing people with their families.

Melbourne based company Applied Aged Care Solutions has developed an innovative web site program dubbed "Safe Return Home IDAssist".

The on-line program allows carers and relatives to register details, including photographs, of persons at risk of going missing.

Today Victoria Police has received free and unlimited access to the program, enabling members to quickly identify and return missing people who may not be able to articulate where they are from.

Safe Return Home IDAssist is also supported by the Department of Human Services, the Minister for Aged Care, Dementia Victoria and the Alzheimers Association Victoria.

Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon said the program would be of enormous benefit to police, carers and relatives.

"On average about 6500 people are reported missing to Victoria Police each year, many of whom are elderly people," Ms Nixon said.

"IDAssist has the potential to free up police resources, while speeding up the process of identifying missing people and reuniting them with carers and family members," she said.

Applied Aged Care Solutions Managing Director Dr Richard Rosewarne said IDAssist was already being trialed by Tasmanian police and negotiations were currently under way to expand the program to Queensland.

"IDAssist is a self-managed program which means control of the system rests in the hands of the carers, family members and the person at risk," Dr Rosewarne.

"They alone can decide what information is included, who has access and to what parts of the system," he said.

Aged Care Minister Gavin Jennings said the program would be an invaluable resource for police and the community.

"This computer program will provide police with identifying information about a missing person to broadcast to the community as part of their search efforts," Mr Jennings said.

"The Bracks Government is proud to support a scheme that will help return frail older people to the safety of loved ones and carers."

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Alzheimer's Australia Vic Executive Director Lynette More said an ageing population meant the numbers of people with dementia would increase from 45,000 to 120,000 by 2050.

"This service is a much needed part of our community services which enables people with dementia to be safer and supported," Ms Moore said.

Sheree Argento
Media Officer
Pressreleases/2004/Feb/Safe Return Home

SAFE RETURN HOME LAUNCH

WHEN: 10am Wednesday 25 February, 2004

WHERE: Victoria Police Centre, Concourse Level, 637 Flinders Street, Melbourne

WHO: Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon,
Minister for Aged Care Gavin Jennings, Applied Aged Care
Managing Director Dr Richard Rosewarne, Alzheimer's
Australia Vic Executive Director Lynette Moore.

A family spokesperson for a person with Alzheimer will also be available for media interviews.