

promoting *independence*
after spinal cord injury

Government Grant Kick-starts New Accommodation

ParaQuad NSW's CEO, Max Bosotti, today thanked the NSW Government for its \$7.5 million support of ParaQuad's new community living development for people with spinal cord injury. The occasion was marked with a sod-turning ceremony performed on the site of the new development at Lidcombe by the Minister for Disability, Ageing & Home Care, the Hon. John Della Bosca.

"The current facility, Ferguson Lodge, was built in 1979 for people requiring a high level of nursing and medical care. It is in desperate need of refurbishment so that it exemplifies today's philosophy of care for people with spinal cord injury," Max Bosotti said. "Its communal bathrooms, lack of privacy and minimal recreational facilities reflect attitudes which prevailed before the introduction of the NSW Disability Standards, and are no longer acceptable."

"Consequently, ParaQuad has been working on new accommodation to meet the needs of residents, and the broader spinal cord-injured community, giving more independence and privacy within a non-institutional environment. We are delighted with the architects' plan for a 48-bed community living development within a 'village green' concept. Currently, the available funds will enable ParaQuad to build 40 beds and as further funds become available the total concept can be completed. The whole site will be regraded so as to be flat, and the design provides for 24-bed high-care accommodation, as well as 12, two-bedroom units for independent living/respite," he explained.

"Ferguson Lodge's 24 current residents have been involved in the planning, and are pleased with the progress," Max Bosotti said. "We are all looking forward to the start of building, which we expect will begin in late 2007."

ParaQuad NSW (the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of NSW) was founded over 45 years ago to promote independence after spinal cord injury, and provides accommodation; personal care; nursing, occupational therapy and social work consultancy; education and training; information; and advocacy for people after such injury.

The most recent report from Dr Raymond Cripps of the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW) shows that transport-related accidents: both motor vehicle occupants and unprotected road users (such as pedestrians & motor cyclists), accounted for 49 per cent of all new cases of spinal cord injury in 2004-2005. Men account for 82 per cent of all new spinal cord injuries, which occur most frequently in those aged 15-34.

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Media enquiries

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