



Carers delighted with new grant program

A LONG-TIME Portland child carer said she was very pleased with the Federal Government's decision to give one-off \$350 grants to day carers.

Pauline Storrie, who has been a carer for nearly 10 years, said she was surprised and delighted by the news. "When I first heard about this, I thought the \$350 was for all of us in Portland. Then I learned it was for each of us. That's great. Until now we'd never received any money and we had to pay for all supplies out of our own pockets. It really adds

up."

Ms Storrie said she knew of Portland people who had been unpaid carers for more than 25 years. She said she took care of four children, all of whom were under school age, through bookings organised by Glenelg Shire. Carers were very carefully selected, she added.

Nationally, more than 12,500 family day care carers will receive the grants so they can buy educational equipment, toys and training materials to further develop high quality care. The program, to cost \$4.5 million, was announced by Childcare

and Youth Minister Kate Ellis earlier this month.

Family Day Care Capability Grants will be available from next month to registered day care carers. In Victoria, such carers must hold a Certificate III in Children's Services by 2012.

Ms Storrie said getting the qualification had cost her \$1000 of her own money, but she was glad she'd done it. She is considering further training, the costs of which will be largely subsidised.

Family day care spokeswoman Sarah-Lucy Rice said research had shown the single

most important element in stimulating a child's learning is strong relationships with significant adults, bonds that are created by family day care.

She added that any carer who was not a member of Family Day Care Australia should e-mail the organisation at enquiries@fdca.com.au to be sure of getting the payment.

Nearly 62 per cent of family day care is provided in rural and regional parts of the nation.