

Speech Notes: Don Rennie, Chair, Sprrott House

I warmly **welcome you all to Sprrott House** to witness this historic occasion of the opening of **Duncan Lodge** a facility dedicated to improving the care of our residents who suffer from dementia.

I extend a special welcome from the Board of Trustees to the Hon. Tony Ryall the Minister of Health.

1. **SPROTT HOUSE** has a long history. It was established in 1898 first as a refuge for fallen or wayward young girls in a house in Newtown Wellington. In 1900 a property was purchased in Messines Road Karori on the present site as a children's Home and Orphanage. It was not until 1952 that Sprrott House was established as a home for aged women. Following a tragic fatal fire in 1969 a new building was constructed which became known as the North or Hospital Wing. In 1976 the first man was admitted and in 1979 the South Side was completed and occupied. In 1998 the south side was converted to a secure area for the care of residents with dementia.

2. The **Sprrott House** organisation was originally set up in 1898 as the St. Mary's Guild which later in 1900 became a **Trust**. In 1971 it became a **charitable Incorporated Society** and as the legal and operational needs changed a new Trust Deed was executed in 1989 under which the Trust is currently operating as **Sprrott House Trust**. In 2006 the Board made a decision to form a Charitable Company **Sprrott Care Limited** to operate the day to day business of the Trust while the Trust retained the assets.

3. From examining international trends and from local experience the Trust Board soon realised that care of people with dementia is becoming an increasing problem. The **World Alzheimer Report** recently published under the auspices of **Alzheimer Disease International** emphasizes that, with the global increases in population size and life expectancy, **Alzheimer's** disease has become a **world health problem**. The report went on to say:
Governments urgently need to develop specific programmes for the

management of Alzheimer Disease and related disorders, similar to those that have been launched in France, England, Australia, and South Korea.+

One important reason for prioritizing AD management is that AD not only affects the patients but also the families who often for a number of years, have to cope with a progressively increasing burden.

4. Since 1989 when our dementia wing was first established the Board has had an **increasing focus on dementia care** while still trying to meet the need for hospital beds. Spratt House was originally licensed to care for 32 dementia patients but has not been able to manage more than 24 at any one time. The **dementia care facilities** we could offer our residents in the buildings constructed in **1979** were **nowhere near adequate for their needs** and managing and protecting residents with dementia (which often requires **one on one care**) became more and more difficult. With careful husbandry of our funds and with several generous donations we have been able to design the new purpose built facility we see here today.

5. The Trust is heavily dependent on government funding for the care of its residents. The Board has been painfully aware that the level of funding for dementia care which is **currently at rest home level** intended for people who are **independent and need little or no nursing care** and is significantly below that for residents assessed as needing **hospital care**, is **not sufficient** to provide **even the basic level of care and protection** for dementia patients. It was obvious to the Board that with the level of funding available, **no private providers would be constructing purpose built dementia care facilities or be providing the necessary trained staff** and that it would be left to “not for profit” organisations such as **Spratt House Trust** to provide what is essentially currently a **charitable service**.

6. **Spratt House Trust** has not only provided the **physical facilities with some ground breaking innovations** for the care of dementia patients but has also built **training facilities** for our staff. The Board is concerned to see that Spratt staff receives the best training available for the needs of all our residents and thanks to the dedication and loyalty of our staff we have built an **enviable reputation** for the **quality of care** provided to our residents.

7. We are naturally **hoping** that the **government will increase the funding for dementia care to at least the hospital level**. However, against the possibility that funding will not be increased we have had to design the new facilities in a flexible way so as to **ensure the financial viability of the Trust**. The design of the new **Duncan Lodge** allows it to be used for hospital patients.

8. It has been encouraging to hear the Minister say that dementia care will have some priority in government thinking and I look forward to hearing the Minister's remarks on the **formal opening** of this facility **Duncan Lodge** which I now invite him to do.