

The National Report

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Aged & Community Services Australia

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There will be a special Budget edition of National Report sent out on Wednesday 14 May.

The next regular edition of National Report (No. 179) will appear the week following the National Community Care Conference in Sydney from 14-16 May.

Only Two More Weeks!

**Magic and Myths: ACSA National Community Care
Conference 14-16 May**

Important news on Assistance to Rural and Remote Delegates; New Additions to Program; Final Reminder to book for one of the Pre-Conference Workshops on 13 May, and a special guest at the Conference Dinner on 14 May.

- **A unique opportunity for rural and remote providers to attend National Community Care Conference**

If you are a community care, including indigenous, service provider living in a rural or remote community and would like the opportunity to attend the upcoming National Community Care Conference in Sydney from 14 – 16 May 2008 as a sponsored delegate then apply now!

There are 4 sponsored delegate places available. The places are proudly sponsored by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care. Sponsorship of \$1,000 is available as a contribution towards your airfares, accommodation and attendance at the conference.

To apply to attend as a sponsored delegate simply email the ACSA office by **no later than Monday 5 May** and explain in 200 words or less why you would like to attend the forum and what you will do with the knowledge and networks you gain from attending.

ACSA will be advising all successful applicants by Wednesday 7 May so travel arrangements can be made in time.

If you have any questions please contact Pat Sparrow or Lesley Dredge at the ACSA office on 03 9686 3460. E-mail applications to psparrow@agedcare.org.au

➤ **CEO Forum - 2020 Leadership - Wednesday 14 May 2.00 - 3.30pm**

The Forum will be facilitated by conference MC Glen Sorenson. Greg Mundy, Chief Executive Officer, ACSA will outline some of the key Rudd Government and community care agendas.

Each table/group will discuss one of the new Agenda areas and identify the leadership required by community care providers and industry to ensure benefit for services to older people, younger people with disabilities and their carers.

Then, just like the 2020 summit in Canberra, there will be a **Big Idea Report Back**.

➤ **Developing A Community Care Research Agenda - Thursday 15 May 2008, 2.30 - 4.00pm**

Research is extremely important to support service development and to inform policy and program management. ACSA and the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well are collaborating on an ongoing program of work aimed at developing a community care research agenda.

The aim is to build a deeper and longer-term relationship between researchers and community care providers. This workshop is the first activity in this program and will:

- bring together leading community care practitioners and researchers;
- launch the findings of recently undertaken community care research by Baptcare on Predictors Influencing the Change in Health (PITCH) of community care clients;
- Identify & discuss why research is important and the tools available to support research;
- highlight preliminary thinking about research priorities; and
- give you the opportunity to have input into a research agenda.

➤ **Two, Reservation only, Pre Conference Workshops to help community care workers - Tuesday 13 May 2008**

• **Chronic Self Management Support Empowering People to Manage**

Sue McKechnie, Executive Manager, Community Services at Resthaven in South Australia is coordinating the workshop on Chronic Condition Self Management Support prior to ACSA's National Community Care Conference.

Participants will learn problem solving strategies, how to set measurable goals and write appropriate assistance plans.

This workshop is in response to the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions in Australia. Resthaven has worked in partnership with the Flinders University Behaviour and Health Research Unit in the development of such a model of service and four health professionals from Resthaven and Flinders University will conduct the workshop.

Last year, nearly 7000 South Australians benefited from Resthaven's range of community services and self management programs. The ability to effectively support a person with a chronic condition to remain successfully at home has many benefits for the community.

- **Challenges and Rewards of Dementia Care**

The workshop will discuss many challenges commonly encountered by staff who work in dementia care. It will also highlight the rewards that accompany effective care, particularly by knowing the wonderful difference that practical assistance and emotional support can make in the lives of vulnerable people with dementia and their families.

A key theme of the workshop will be the rewards of focusing on the abilities and skills of people with dementia. Opportunities for fun and engagement in life need not stop just because a diagnosis of dementia has been made. This positive approach will assist people engage in meaningful activities and maintain their connections with family.

A practical, Person Centered approach, focuses on and appreciates the person behind their dementia. It is an approach that cares for the whole person and also values and works in partnership with family carers.

Workshop participants will be given opportunities to share and discuss practical ways to implement a Person Centered approach to care in their organization.

Trudy Neal, an Educator in Dementia and Aged Care with Roscol Consulting Pty Ltd, and other presenters, including service providers and a family carer, will share their experiences of the challenges and rewards of dementia care.

Trudy has great practical experience in managing community based dementia services and in dementia education. She has a genuine interest in, and compassion for, people with dementia and their families and has seen first hand the positive difference that a compassionate, individualized approach to dementia care can make in people's lives.

The workshop should be of particular interest to service managers, co-ordinators and experienced staff who care for and support people living with dementia and their families.

Details of the two workshops are on page 12 of the official program . To register for this workshop, fill in the relevant sections on the registration form on pages 17-18. Registration form is at www.agedcare.org.au.

Registration for this workshop is essential as numbers are strictly limited. Details on time, cost, location etc are available on line on the Registration form. www.agedcare.org.au.

➤ **Ambassador for Ageing to speak at conference dinner**

Although her appointment was announced after Conference details and invitations were settled, ACSA invited the new Ambassador for Ageing, Noeline Brown, to attend the conference at any time that was convenient for her.

We are pleased that she has been able to attend the conference dinner and has agreed to say a few words during the proceedings. She has not advised if she will bring her dancing shoes, but will be warmly welcomed by all those attending

The First Rudd Budget: The First Big Test

The Rudd Government's first Budget, to be brought down on Tuesday 13 May, the night before the Community Care Conference kicks off, will be a major test of its recognition that we live in an ageing Australia and its commitment to the care of older people.

ACSA identified five major priorities in its 2008 Budget Submission and we, like all of the stakeholders in aged and community care, will be looking to see how well these are addressed.

To ensure the continued provision of quality care to older people we need:

- Subsidies that meet the cost of care. At an absolute minimum we need renewal of the 1.75% Conditional Adjustment Payment for residential aged care and ideally its replacement by a proper index for measuring movements in aged care costs. Without this the decade long decline in hours of care per resident per day will accelerate. This is as true for community care as it is for residential.
- A sustainable capital system that raises sufficient funds to ensure that the aged care homes we will need in the future can be built on an equitable basis.
- Cutting unnecessary red tape. Every increase in the compliance burden on aged care, and there have been plenty, further reduces the staff time able to be spent with residents and clients. Reducing the productivity of the aged care workforce is the last thing we can afford.
- Addressing the unmet demand for care at home.
- Ensuring that the ACFI does not, even inadvertently, create barriers to accessing care e.g. for people in rural settings or for those with special needs.

ACSA will be looking to the Budget for commitments in these areas.

Australia 2020 Summit - Older people missing in action

➤ **ACSA CEO Greg Mundy comments**

You wouldn't know that Australia was an ageing society from reading the *Initial Report* of the 2020 Summit. Of the documents published at the conclusion, there is one explicit reference to 'the aged', as being people who may require carers, and one to 'retired people' - as a source of free labour as mentors in the workplace.

The report on *A Long Term National Health Strategy* refers to Australians 'at all stages of life', but all of the examples it refers to are children and people of working age.

The discussion of *Strengthening Communities* similarly talks about issues that are equally relevant to all ages, such as 'housing affordability' and 'increased funding for community services provision and community infrastructure', but it only specifies children and disabled *young* people among the beneficiaries of such services.

A full version of Greg's comments are on ACSA's website: www.agedcare.org.au

➤ **Ageing experts push for greater focus on aged care and ageing at 2020 Summit**

Summit delegates involved in ageing issues prepared a paper arguing for a greater focus on ageing and aged care issues in the health stream at the **2020 Summit**. Gerontologist, Dr Anna Howe, from Victoria and Dr Catherine Yelland from Queensland, co-ordinated the preparation of a submission identifying ageing and aged care priorities.

It was circulated to other delegates interested in ageing issues and took into account views of the Australian Association of Gerontology and submissions to the summit lodged by a number of not-for-profit agencies and peak bodies.

It points out the lack of attention to aged care in the background paper prepared for the health stream group discussion and calls for ageing and aged care to be recognised in all elements of a national health strategy for the future

It identified seven priority areas, but acknowledged that the list was 'by no means exhaustive'. The priorities are:

1. Make ageing and aged care a priority in a National Health and Aged Care strategy for the future (addressing attitudes towards older people as users of health and aged care services, and also addressing disadvantages, as well as recognising diversity in ageing);
2. Promote active and healthy ageing;
3. Enhance access to assistive technology;
4. Extend the scope of aged care in a long term national health and aged care strategy (including the changing roles and potential of aged care providers, filling in gaps and extending the range of services and workforce development);
5. Implement measures to ensure efficient and sustainable funding;
6. Involve stakeholders in policy development; and
7. Acknowledge the need to expand the existing range of dementia care services, funding levels, research and support for carers.

The full submission can be found at <http://www.australia2020.gov.au/>

➤ **Comments from ACSA members**

Alan Pidgeon -CEO ACQ

The 2020 Summit was an interesting experience, but the real test will be in seeing what "big ideas" emerged that can or will be translated into action to improve our society. ACQ arranged a pre Summit "Round Table" to allow Summit participants to consider the impact of our ageing population.

Unfortunately media reporting during the Summit itself focused on "media friendly sound bites", so the opportunities and challenges presented by ageing were not highlighted.

Greg Mundy suggests that "Generation X hi-jacked the Summit", but also wondered if the real reason was that "My Generation" has not really moved beyond 'I hope I die before I get old' (The Who) and still identifies itself with youth as opposed to the reality of being a generation now in their 50's and 60's."

Mike Rungie, CEO, ACH Group

Broadly, the 2020 Summit must be seen as a great success for older people. The Prime Minister was clear that the Summit was about ideas being an important part of our future, compassion about people being foremost, and that involving citizens continuously was part of Governance. Both the Productivity and Health streams picked up on the idea that people should be able to and expected to continue to be, productive and contributing throughout the life course.

We could learn from the Summit how/why even in the minds of very bright ideas people, ageing doesn't loom big (even when the PM raised demand on hospitals and aged care as an issue). However, there is tons to build on from the Summit and I reckon we could construct a position coming out of the Summit built on ideas from a number of streams, even when Ageing wasn't specifically mentioned.

There was a constant sense of people wanting national policy and national approaches. While ageing/aged care wasn't specifically mentioned, the desire for national approaches was intended to spread across all areas and therefore is another platform for us to be stating an ageing position arising out of the Summit.

Medicare Australia

Medicare Australia is pleased to report that the take up of Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) online has been successful. As at 30 April 2008 the following events were received by Medicare Australia:

Number of ACFI web forms received: 1341

Number of Business to Business (B2B) ACFIs received: 109

ACFI Application for Classification can be lodged online by using:

- the web based form - all you need is internet access (preferably broadband), and
- a user ID and password from Medicare Australia or
- Aged Care Online Claiming software via either the B2B channel or a file upload channel - available from industry software vendors.

How to register:

To submit your ACFI forms online you will first need to register. Registration forms are available on the Medicare Australia website.

To register to use the web based form - complete the ACFI authorisation form B2B or file upload channels and complete the Residential authorisation form.

For more information visit <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au> or call 1800 195 206** and select option two. ** Call charges apply from mobile or pay phones only

Aged Care Agendas

ACSA's quarterly magazine – *Agendas* - winter issue #46 is now out. A bumper edition, it has challenging articles focussing on workforce issues, including a report from the USA by Dr Robyn Stone, who will be one of the keynote speakers at ACSA's 2008 National Conference in Adelaide.

This magazine is sent free of charge to ACSA members, and costs \$30 a year to subscribe for non-members. Details are at the ACSA website: <http://www.agedcare.org.au>

ACSA Submission to Industry Skills Council on Community Services Training Package

ACSA has responded to the latest draft of the Industry Skills Council's review of the Community Services Training Package.

The submission is on the ACSA website at www.agedcare.org.au

Aged Care Industry Awards Modernisation

The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations has approved an award modernisation request under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (the WR Act) which will cover the aged care industry awards, excluding nursing which is proposed to be the subject of its own award.

Section 576A of the WR Act provides, among other things, that modern awards must be simple to understand and easy to apply, must be of a safety net character, must promote flexible modern work practices and efficient and productive workplaces and must be in a form that promotes collective bargaining.

The Request mentions that, 'Wherever it is convenient and appropriate to do so industries will be grouped together in the one modern award. In some cases several industries may be dealt with together. The fact that industries may be grouped together at the start of the process does not necessarily mean that there will be only one modern award for that group. The grouping of industries with significant common features will expedite the process and enable the parties to make their views known about the extent to which existing award coverage can be rationalized.'

The Commission's list of awards, classified by industry/occupation and by panel, is available at www.airc.gov.au on the dedicated Award Modernisation page.

The timetable for the whole process begins now and aims to have new modern awards made by 12 December 2008.

ACSA will co-ordinate the response to and participation in the process, and will raise it at the next CEOs meeting as well as referring it to the ACIC Workplace Relations Committee.

Rural Palliative Care Grants

The Australian Government has announced funding of more than \$6.5 million – in the field of palliative care - to provide more coordinated care for rural Australians with a life-limiting illness.

Funding will be shared among 36 Divisions of General Practice in all states and territories to support their efforts to develop a coordinated approach to caring for rural people at the end of their lives.

Participating divisions will be expected to forge strong relationships with local communities, stakeholders and other programs to improve palliative care service delivery in their area.

Fifteen divisions from four states – New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia – have been selected for the first intake of the project. Each will submit a work plan to the project manager, the Australian General Practice Network, for approval before introducing the model to its region.

Victoria: Bendigo and District, Central Highlands General Practice Network, Eastern Ranges, South Gippsland, and Geelong.

Qld: Central Queensland, Sunshine Coast, Capricornia, and Mackay.

SA: Southern Division, Eyre Peninsula, Limestone Coast

NSW: Riverina, Barwon, Tweed Valley.

The Costs and Benefits of Using Private Housing as the 'Home Base' for Care for Older People:

This paper, released by the Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute (AHURI), outlines research into the relationships between the costs and benefits of using private housing as the 'home base' for care for older people.

Residential care requires relocation to the institution but provides both housing and care to older persons, whereas home-based care means that care is brought to the older person within their own home.

The absence of economic evaluations of care at home for older people in Australia is significant, given that policy and care arrangements vary substantially from country to country.

www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/60313_fr

Telstra Seniors Grants

Clubs and community groups with a membership base comprised primarily of seniors can apply for grants through the Telstra Connected Seniors Grant.

The Connected Seniors Grant was created to help older Australians learn more about new technologies, so they can confidently use it to keep in contact with family, friends and loved ones.

The next round of grants for the Telstra Connected Seniors funding is now open. Local community grants start from \$1000 to \$5000, through to State and Territory level grants up to \$50,000.

Applications close 5 May 2008; at www.telstraseniors.com.au.

Aged Care Taking up New Training Places

In a report in the Australian Financial Review on 29 April, the Government defended its skills policy following claims of a low take up rate of the 20,000 'fast tracked' new training places announced in March.

Of the 40 people now undertaking training as part of the policy, nine are studying aged care work, the Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard said.

There had been a take up in Certificate 3 qualifications and a large number of RTOs had also signed up, she said.

People from Ethnic Backgrounds in Commonwealth Funded Residential Care

This report has just been launched by Australian-Polish Community Services Inc (APCS) in Victoria, with assistance from the Reichstein Foundation.

It was written by Alexis Hughes, who has worked for the Department of Health and Ageing.

She reports that there are incidents of poor care or insensitive treatment of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) residents in aged care facilities, with a common theme of communication difficulties.

She recommends that the Accreditation Agency's consideration of CALD residents would be enhanced if assistance with communication/language services was assessed not only against outcome 3.8 but also against 1.8 Information systems; 1.2 Regulatory compliance, and that cultural, ethnic and linguistic factors were consistently considered against all the standards rather than a select few.

There are also recommendations relating to the Department, CALD residents and representatives, ethnic groups, elder rights advocacy and to providers.

She advises providers to "embrace the notion of becoming a culturally competent organisation as espoused by ACSA."

ACSA's policy and position on culturally responsive services is encapsulated in the paper Strength Through Diversity launched last year and available at www.agedcare.org.au.

ACSA has called for additional funding for culturally responsive services in its 2008 Budget Submission.

The report is available from the APCS in hard copy email info@apcs.org.au or phone 03 96899170 and will soon be available on the website: www.apcs.org.au