

# *The National Report*

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS**



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## **Challenges for 2009 - We Must Try Harder**

The last couple of weeks have seen a series of reports on the year that's nearly finished, including various accounts of the Rudd Government's first year in office and a media release from Minister Elliot outlining what has happened in ageing and aged care. National Report had a brief report on this in the last issue. It was brief because 2008 is almost gone and we should look forwards not backwards.

Here then is a set of seven challenges for the Government in the year ahead:

1. Implement a fair and lasting solution to the decade old problem of user-charges for accommodation. The current system is inequitable and inadequate and must be scrapped.

2. End the hand-to-mouth, makeshift system of indexation of care subsidies for residential and community care and introduce an index that accurately tracks the costs of providing quality care and stop the steady decline in the amount of care that can be provided to older people .
3. Expand the availability of services across the continuum of care including filling gaps such as community care.
4. Develop, in conjunction with the key stakeholders, a strategy for addressing workforce issues.
5. Replace the punitive approach to quality control with a model that recognises a partnership between government and providers in pursuit of a common goal and, for example, funds research into the reasons *why* things go wrong so that mistakes can be avoided.
6. Stop putting out media releases every time someone in aged care makes a mistake
7. Start thinking about how much better we could support older people in the future and how great aged care could be. Put in the effort to make it so.

## Review of the Conditional Adjustment Payment

Almost 70 submissions, including a joint submission from ACSA and ACAA, were received by the Australian Government's Review of the Conditional Adjustment Payment (CAP) in residential aged care. Submissions were received from for-profit commercial providers, not-for-profit mission-based providers, unions, associations, state and local governments and individual members of the community.

The submissions are now being considered by the Australian Government within the context and deliberations of the 2009-2010 Federal Budget.

The full submissions can be examined at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-cap-submissions-received-2008.htm>

## Minister's Awards for Excellence in Aged Care

The Minister for Ageing, Mrs Justine Elliot has called for nominations for the 2009 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Aged Care.

The 2009 Awards are open to Commonwealth-subsidised nursing homes and hostels, Community Aged Care Package providers, Extended Aged Care at Home and Extended Aged Care at Home (Dementia) providers, Home and Community Care aged care providers and National Respite for Carers Program providers.

The 2009 award categories for organisations are:

- Innovation in Staff Recruitment and Retention;
- Excellence in Training and Staff Development; and
- Innovation in Information Technology.

The award categories for individuals are:

- Leadership and Achievement; and
- Achievement in Service Provision in a Regional, Rural or Remote Area.

Nominations close on 27 February 2009 and winners will be invited to an award ceremony in Canberra in June 2009. Nomination kits are available on the Department of Health and Ageing web site at [www.health.gov.au/agedcareawards](http://www.health.gov.au/agedcareawards)

## Microsoft Software Prices

Discussions are proceeding between the Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council ACIITC and Microsoft about software pricing especially for charities. ACSA CEO, Greg Mundy and ACIITC Chair Suri Ramanathan met with Microsoft in Sydney this week. Microsoft have undertaken not to progress any auditing of tools until the discussions are finalised in the New Year. Please advise ACSA if this is not your experience.

## Invitation to Join IAHSA - the Global Ageing Network

ACSA and IAHSA are proud to be able to give all ACSA members the **WORLD!**

Beginning on 1 January 2009, ACSA members\* will be able to join *IAHSA – The Global Ageing Network*, at a greatly reduced rate as a new ACSA Federation benefit.

It's the mission of IAHSA to connect and support ageing-service providers around the world and most important, enhance the quality of care for the people we all serve.

Membership gives access to a global network of providers, researchers, policy makers and businesses who are dedicated to the building a community across borders. Here are just a few of the benefits received with membership:

- The *Alliance* monthly newsletter – filled with global news, network updates and important industry reports from around the world
- Discounts on the IAHSA 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference taking place in London, England, 19-22 July 2009 (visit [www.iahsa.net/london](http://www.iahsa.net/london) for more information)
- Opportunities for collaboration on international research and educational initiatives
- Access to regional IAHSA events including the Asia Forum on Ageing 2009 taking place 12 - 14 January in Singapore (visit <http://asiaforum.tsaofoundation.org> for more information)

IAHSA looks forward to welcoming ACSA members as an individual member of our global community. Join Today! [www.iahsa.net/network/chapters/AUS.asp](http://www.iahsa.net/network/chapters/AUS.asp)

For more information on *The Global Ageing Network* visit: [www.iahsa.net](http://www.iahsa.net) or email: [iahsa@aahsa.org](mailto:iahsa@aahsa.org).

\*Members of State Associations affiliated with ACSA

## New Appointments to Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

Minister Elliot, has announced five new appointments to the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, effective from December 10, 2008 to December 9, 2011.

The appointments are:

- **Ms Kate Carnell** AO, currently the CEO of the Australian Food and Grocery Council;
- **Dr Sally Goold** OAM is a registered nurse and leader in Indigenous health care. Dr Goold is the executive director of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and was Senior Australian of the Year in 2006;

- **Dr June Heinrich** OAM, CEO of Baptist Community Service NSW & ACT;
- **Dr Andrew Refshauge** former NSW Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Health, Planning and Education Minister over 10 years from 1995 to 2005;
- **Dr Mike Rungie** is CEO of Aged Care and Housing (ACH), in South Australia.

This brings the total number of Board members to 14. Accreditation Agency board chairman, Mr James Harrowell and CEO, Mr Mark Brandon have also been reappointed.

## Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement Review: Residential Aged Care

As part of the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement the Australian Government and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia agreed to ‘undertake a review of the existing PBS supply arrangements in the context of aged care residential facilities (RACF) and private hospitals.’

Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA) has been engaged to undertake the Review, including conducting extensive consultations with key organisations, dissemination of a discussion paper and facilitation of workshops open to stakeholders, healthcare providers and consumers in each state and territory.

HMA is now seeking submissions/responses to the discussion paper from organisations and individuals with an interest in the supply of PBS medicines in RACF and/or private hospitals.

A Discussion Paper has been prepared, covering issues associated with the existing supply arrangements of PBS medicines in RACFs that have been identified by the key stakeholders during the consultation phase. These issues include:

- Difficulty for pharmacists to meet prescription timing requirements
- Residents may move between a RACF and a hospital (both directions), and sometimes this transition may happen without appropriate information about prescribed medications being provided to the RACF in timely manner,
- Dose Administration Aids (DAAs) are often used in the care of residents which take multiple medications in RACFs, the management of which may be challenging.
- Using DAAs may also lead to the wastage of, sometimes expensive, medicines
- IT infrastructure in RACFs may not always support clinical decision making in relation to medications or support decision making to ensure safe prescribing.

These issues are discussed in more detail in Part C of the *discussion paper*. The Discussion Paper is available at <http://www.guild.org.au/content.asp?id=2039>

Submissions must be received by 9:00am (AEST) on Wednesday 21 January, by email: to [PBSreview@hma.com.au](mailto:PBSreview@hma.com.au). ACSA is reviewing the paper and may make a submission.

## 2007 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey

The report of this research, conducted by the National Institute of Labour Studies for the Department of Health and Ageing assesses important aspects of the evolution of the residential aged care workforce, provides the first picture of community based aged care workers, and compares the residential and community based workforces.

The report contains a wealth of information which can assist the industry, the government, and education and workforce planners and providers. Findings include:

- The Workforce estimates of employment in residential aged care homes show steady increases between 2003 and 2007. Total employment in aged care homes rose from about 157,000 to about 175,000, with direct care employees increasing from about 116,000 to about 133,000. Proportionately, the rise in equivalent full time (EFT) direct care workers was smaller, with increase from about 76,000 in 2003 to about 79,000 in 2007.
- Greater use of Personal Carers (PCs), and reduced reliance on Registered Nurses (RNs). Between 2003 and 2007, total employment of RNs fell by about 1,600 to 22,400, while PC employment rose by about 17,500 to nearly 85,000. Employment of Enrolled Nurses (ENs) and Allied Health workers rose slightly to just over 16,000 and nearly 10,000 respectively.
- Community based outlets providing aged care under Commonwealth supported programs employ about half the number of workers found in residential homes employing about 87,500:
- Two-thirds of residential home workers and 60% of community based workers are permanent part-time employees. The proportion who are casual has risen slightly amongst residential home workers since 2003, while the proportion of permanent full-time workers has fallen. At 29% of workers, casual employment is more likely in the community based than in the residential sector.
- Overall, the residential workforce would still like to work more hours than they actually do, and community based workers are more likely than residential workers to want more work.
- Aged care workers tend to enter the area at more mature ages, so that the older profile of the aged care workforce does not necessarily presage an ageing crisis.
- Workers find considerable reward and satisfaction in the work of providing care for the elderly who cannot look after themselves, expressing reasonable levels of job satisfaction compared to the relevant Australian workforce, with some evidence of small increases in satisfaction amongst residential workers since 2003. However, workers remain strikingly dissatisfied with pay, even though residential workers' pay satisfaction is somewhat higher than in 2003. Residential care workers also continue to be unhappy with the amount of time they are able to spend with the residents they care for.
- Community based workers are generally more content than residential ones. This is because they spend more of their time in direct care work, they are more able to spend the amount of time they wish with those they care for, they are under less pressure and stress, and they have more autonomy in deciding how to do their work.
- Turnover of the workforce continues to be an issue that has to be managed by the industry. The data suggest that a quarter of PCs and CCWs and one in five nurses have to be replaced each year by their current employer, if not by the whole industry.
- Most workers perceive their pay to be inadequate for the social importance of the work they do. Workers gain greater satisfaction when they spend more of their work time in direct care work, are able to spend the time they feel is necessary with each person they care for, have control over how they do their work, and do not feel pressured and stressed in their jobs.
- There continues to be evidence of real excess capacity in the aged care labour force in that a significant group of workers is prepared to work longer hours than they currently do.

- Residential workers have become much less likely to wish to change their shift arrangements since 2003. This may occur as employers seek to attract and retain workers in a tighter labour market.

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/AAB95DEA18120153CA257512000423CB/\\$File/workforce%20final%20report.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/AAB95DEA18120153CA257512000423CB/$File/workforce%20final%20report.pdf)

## Nurse Workforce Initiative Expanded to Community Care Settings

The Rudd Government is expanding its *Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce* Program to include community settings, community-based aged care and day surgery hospitals. The aim is to support some of the 30,000 qualified nurses currently not working as nurses to return to the workforce.

Cash bonuses of up to \$6,000 will be available to nurses and midwives who return to work in eligible hospitals, community health settings and aged care homes participating in the program. In addition, the employers of eligible nurses will now receive a full \$1,000 payment to help re-train and re-skill each nurse - whether they are full time or part time.

The announcement made reference to Community nursing being an integral component of the health care system, and building capacity in this sector is consistent with the Government's commitment to develop a national primary health care strategy and place a greater emphasis on preventative health.

It also mentioned community-based nurses working in the aged community sector coordinating and providing packages of care to older people with complex care needs through services such as Extended Aged Care in the Home.

## Funding available for innovative aged care workforce projects

The National Health Workforce Taskforce, established by the Council of Australian Governments, is inviting proposals from providers of innovative aged care services in two categories:

- **Category 1:** *Demonstration projects addressing workforce innovation (via an Expression of Interest due by January 28, 2009)*
- **Category 2:** *Dissemination of information through publication, sharing of tools, guidelines and frameworks and/or workshops or conferences (via an Application Form due by January 21, 2009)*

Details are available at <http://www.nhwt.gov.au/olderpeople.asp> questions can be directed to [taskforce@nhwt.gov.au](mailto:taskforce@nhwt.gov.au) or telephone (03) 9092 2010 for more information.

## Senate Standing Committee on Economics Report: Inquiry into the Disclosure regimes for charities and not-for-profit organisations

This Senate Committee report recommends a new national regulatory body and a comprehensive shake-up for the not for profit sector of the economy, that makes up 7.5% of GDP - bigger than the entire state of South Australia.

The report recommends that as well as a new regulator, there be a mandatory, specialist legal structure adopted for all not-for-profit organisations, through a referral of state and territory powers.

There would be a compulsory register of not-for-profit organisations and all would have to make basic financial information accessible and searchable.

The regulator would also have the power to investigate complaints about organisations.

The report has 15 major recommendations

[http://www.apf.gov.au/Senate/committee/economics\\_ctte/charities\\_08/report/b01.pdf](http://www.apf.gov.au/Senate/committee/economics_ctte/charities_08/report/b01.pdf)

## **New Drug use Evaluation (DUE) Toolkit for Aged Care Homes**

The National Prescribing Service has developed its suite of DUE toolkits to encourage better use of medicines in residential aged care. The latest is Analgesic use for persistent pain in aged care homes.

The publication and the two other kits available will assist in promoting better use of medicines, compare current drug usage against best practice, and guide aged care homes toward making changes that have a positive effective on resident well being.

The kit has been developed using the Australian Pain Society guidelines Pain in residential aged care facilities and independent, evidence based publications such as the Australian Therapeutic Guidelines.

The other two kits are Hypnotics (benzodiazepine and non benzodiaseine) for insomnia, and Antipsychotic use in the management of behavioural and phycological symptoms of dementia

The three DUE publications are available in hard copy or can be downloaded at [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au)

## **Virtual Visiting between Residents and Families**

Minister Elliot today has launched Virtual Visiting, an initiative linking older Australians living in rural aged care accommodation with their loved ones via video conferencing. The Virtual Visiting allows aged care residents, especially those with hearing problems, to speak with their families and friends anywhere in the world through video conferencing technology and the internet.

Virtual visiting is being implemented by the Western District Health Service in Victoria, with \$120,000 in Australian Government funding over two years.

As part of the funding, the Western District Health Service is developing a resource kit that will be distributed to other aged care facilities throughout Australia to help explain how to introduce this project.

## **Medicare Review**

Prevention will be given a boost, and red tape for doctors will be slashed in a review of Medicare items due to be finalised by March 2009, according to Health and Ageing Minister Nicola Roxon.

The review has identified a number of areas for action. The Rudd Government will now conduct consultations with the profession on the details of the changes. The new simplified schedule will come into force on 1 July 2009.

This review is being undertaken alongside development of the National Primary Health Care Strategy, which includes a focus on how to use the health workforce more effectively, and how to better encourage prevention.

Any more significant changes to the Medicare schedule that are necessary will be examined in light of this strategy, a draft of which is to be delivered to the Minister in mid-2009.

Some changes are of interest to both residential and community aged care. They include:

- Changes to the chronic disease management allied health items, to prevent claims for allied health consultations being rejected if some items being claimed before the others are able to be claimed. This will be implemented on 1 January 2009.
- Confusion surrounding the items relating to longer consultations, which have both a time and complexity element that must be fulfilled before they can be used will be clarified and amended to enable GPs to provide better support for prevention, provide greater certainty to the profession, and reduce unintentional misuse of the items.
- Simplifying the health checks currently on the schedule based on the complexity of the check.
- Continue to reward GPs for visits to residential aged care facilities – but simplify management of arrangements for all other out of surgery visits made
- Simplify arrangements for after hours care to make them easier to use and rational in their value.
- Current MBS structure, involving 18 separate item numbers for multidisciplinary case conferencing, to be simplified.

## Oral and Dental Health in Nursing Homes

Recent media coverage on ABC TV's *Lateline* by Dr Clive Rodgers – a senior dental lecturer with the University of Western Australia, about dental neglect in aged care facilities has prompted a range of responses.

Minister Elliot has pointed out residential care providers' responsibilities under the Aged Care Act, and many people with long memories have drawn attention to the failure by successive Commonwealth Governments to put in place the resources and systems that would enable these responsibilities to be effectively carried out.

The Minister mentioned that the Australian Government is examining the current oral and dental health standards as part of the Review of Accreditation Standards due to be finalised in late-2009. This may provide an opportunity to raise the broader issues about dental care for vulnerable populations that must be part of any solution in this area.

## A Mature Approach to Ageing - Healthy and Positive Ageing

Staying active, eating well, removing hazards from around the home and staying in contact with family and friends are the key ingredients to a mature approach to ageing. Minister Elliot, and the Government's Ambassador for Ageing, Noeline Brown, have launched a series of informative brochures - giving older people sensible tips on how to maintain and protect their health, wellbeing and independence.

Copies of posters and brochures can be ordered at no cost from National Mail and Marketing on (02) 6269 1000. They are also available on the Ambassador's website at [www.health.gov.au/ambassadorforageing](http://www.health.gov.au/ambassadorforageing) Website <http://www.tanyaplibersek.fahcsia.gov.au>

## First Round Offers for National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme will help build up to 50,000 new rental properties across Australia by 2012, which will then be rented out at 20 per cent below market rate.

Letters of offer for 2,800 incentives under the first round of offers for the National rental affordability scheme, have been sent to 31 successful applicants and offers for a further 1,162 incentives should be made in coming weeks, pending final approval.

ACT	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL	
56	507	448	422	587	379	401	2800	Incentives being offered now
0	567	278	0	0	317	0	1162	Possible offers in coming weeks
<b>56</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>3962</b>	<b>Totals</b>

## Transition Care Funding Places

The Rudd Labor Government has begun the process of allocating the second stage - 400 transition care places for 2009-2010 of its four-year \$293.2 million plan. The Rudd Government's new places are fully funded by the Commonwealth.

### Total allocated & operational transition care places - State/Territory as Dec 4, 2008

State Allocated Transition Care Places/Operational Transition Care Places

NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	National
772	570	389	193	178	67	57	37	2,228
768	570	383	193	178	22	16	37	2,202

## Care Farm to Assist People with Dementia

Minister Elliot has officially opened Australia's first solely dedicated care farm to assist older Australians living with dementia.

Overseas research – particularly in the USA and Holland – has found that caring for pets and local-scale gardening has been found to improve a resident's physical and emotional health and assist with behavioural problems often associated with dementia.

The St Laurence Care Farm in Lara, Victoria is patterned on a Dutch model where people with dementia help with farming activities such as caring for animals and gardening.

## Keeping Giving Going: Charitable Bequests Report

The potential of bequests to contribute to the sustainability of charities is immense, with social and economic trends opening up the bequest landscape. Yet so much is unknown about how Australians

think about charitable bequests - particularly about the motivations, barriers and triggers surrounding this behaviour.

*Do bequestors differ from other donors? What prevents good intentions from becoming good actions? Where do charities figure in this process?*

This study aims at a better understanding of those Australians who make a charitable bequest and those who might. It offers individual charities, and the sector as a whole, empirical evidence to support and extend the anecdotal knowledge of those working with donors around this sensitive, but vital, area.

Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Non-profit Studies, Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Download report at <https://wiki.qut.edu.au/display/CPNS/Keeping+Giving+Going>

## Health Care World Australia 2009:17-19 February Sydney

Greg Mundy will speak at this conference which is discussing policy, best practice and initiatives for improved health care delivery and outcomes. [www.terrapinn.com/2009/healthw/](http://www.terrapinn.com/2009/healthw/)