

The National Report

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Aged & Community Services Australia



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ACAR Outcome Raises Concerns

The 2008-09 Aged Care Approval Round (ACAR) was announced on 30 June with residential care places being undersubscribed in almost all parts of Australia. A total of 1915 places that had been offered as beds were instead allocated as community care places. South Australia, where only 123 residential care places were on offer, was the only state where all the beds were taken up.

A total of 10,447 places were allocated: 3756 residential high care, 1992 residential low care; 2445 CACPs (up from 1809 planned) 1193 EACH (652 planned) 562 EACHD (323 planned). (These figures include deferred allocations).

Commenting on the results of the round ACSA CEO Greg Mundy said: “The unsustainable cost of providing high care accommodation for older Australians has been underlined by a shortfall in the latest round of bed licences. The economics of establishing and maintaining residential care means that these services cannot be sustained at current funding levels.”

“While more community care places are welcome, the results of this year’s Approvals Round show that the planning system is being undermined by inadequate subsidies and accommodation payments. The additional community care places will have fewer hours of care in them than they would have had five years ago.”

“This is not the way to plan services for an ageing population. Changing 20% of the planned allocations from residential to community care at the last minute looks a bit like panic buying by the Government.”

Additional information on the 2008-2009 Aged Care Approvals Round is available at:
<http://www.health.gov.au/acar2008-2009>

Productivity Commission's Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business

Excessive red tape governing Australia’s aged care is hindering quality service provision, Greg Mundy said in response to the Productivity Commission’s draft *Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business*.

The Productivity Commission is asked to conduct ongoing annual reviews of the burdens on business arising from the stock of Government regulation. Following consultation with business, government agencies and community groups, the Commission reports on those areas in which the regulatory burden on business should be removed or significantly reduced as a matter of priority and options for doing so. The Commission was to report by the end of October 2007, and subsequently by the end of August each year. The Commission consulted with ACSA in compiling this report and met with a number of aged care providers in different parts of Australia

Commenting on the draft Review, Greg Mundy said it highlighted “long-standing concerns that onerous regulations in the aged care sector come at a cost.”

“The human and financial costs of red tape are unnecessary, unreasonable and unsustainable.”

“The Commission reinforces our concerns that the excessive duplication of regulatory requirements from all levels of government impacts on service delivery. The report acknowledges the extensive list of compliance measures demanded of aged care facilities and has included in its recommendations the removal (as far as possible) of ‘onerous duplicate and inconsistent regulations’.”

“The Commission’s finding that a disproportionate desire to “regulate risk out of the system” can lead to unintended adverse consequences in service delivery, is a common experience for aged care providers who agree with the conclusions that regulations ‘are highly prescriptive with excessive reporting requirements’.

“We also support the view that governments use regulations to respond to adverse incidents attracting intense media coverage so they can be seen to be ‘doing something’.”

The report is available at:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/regulatoryburdens/social-economic-infrastructure/draft>

Two Week Extension for Early Bird Registrations

Thank you to those who have registered to attend the ACSA 2009 National Conference; the interest in the Conference over the early bird phase has been great, and we look forward to welcoming you all to an exciting event.

ACSA is keen to ensure that you don't miss out on what promises to be an exciting, vibrant and informative event, and would like to give you more time to register at the discounted rate now that the new financial year is upon us.

Due to requests from the sector, **the early bird registration for the Conference has been extended by two weeks and will now close on Friday 17 July**. Standard registration fees will apply to all new Conference registrations made after this date. This will mean a fee increase of between \$105 and \$170 across the various categories.

Remember that a further discount is available for group registrations, when four or more delegates from the one organisation (larger metropolitan provider), country regional groupings or metropolitan groupings of smaller providers, register together. This discounted rate is only available until 17 July 2009. Conditions apply - please refer to the registration brochure.

Register online to ensure you receive the significant savings on offer for early birds or download program and registration brochure at: <http://www.acsa2009.com.au/>

For any enquiries, please contact the Conference secretariat on phone: 08 9389 1488.

Award Modernisation for Residential and Community Aged Care

ACSA convened a meeting of interested parties on 22 June to discuss the approach to be adopted for stage IV of the Award Modernisation process which deals with Home Care.

We are aiming to develop a consistent approach from all those involved in Home Care including services for people with disabilities, so representatives of the ACSA Federation were joined by others from the Disability peak - National Disability Services (NDS), ACAA and some church peaks.

A submission will be prepared for the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to suggest the terms and conditions that the industry would like to see in a Home Care Award. Stage II of the process that deals with the Nurses Occupational Award and the Aged Care Award is still before the Commission and ACSA has made submissions on the terms and conditions in the draft award and the transitional arrangements.

The awards set in Stages II and IV will come into effect on 1 July 2010.

Grim Financial Picture for Residential Care

Stewart Brown Business Solutions have released their latest Aged Care Financial Performance survey for the year to 31 March 2009. It continues to paint a grim picture of the viability of residential aged care with only 40% of facilities surveyed making an operating profit. Just over 60% are making an overall surplus because the majority of respondents are eating into capital income sources to prop up their recurrent operations.

Commenting on the results ACSA CEO, Greg Mundy said:

“This can’t go on. These results show that many aged care providers are effectively eating their young in order to survive - by using up their capital (on these figures). Unless the Government acts on long term sustainable solutions to aged care funding, we will not have an aged care system.”

For further information about the Stewart Brown survey – visit their website:

http://www.sbbsolutions.com.au/html/s01_home/home.asp.

ACFI Advisory Services - Deadline for Applications

KPMG has been commissioned by the Department of Health and Ageing to provide eligible residential aged care providers with free advisory services to assist them in managing the change to the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI).

The services are available to eligible providers during the implementation period. Providers with only a small number of services, with a high percentage of low care residents and those that are in regional and remote locations will receive prioritisation of service.

Scope of Advisory Services

KPMG is able to provide the following types of services:

- Financial modelling of the likely financial impact of the transition to ACFI for the next five years.
- Estimates of the optimal ACFI mix for a facility including the required resident mix to achieve a given level of profitability.
- Strategic planning and related budget forecasting (for example, the impact of increasing occupancy, expanding the facility or merging two facilities into one).
- Business analysis and operational reviews including benchmarking and analysis of in-house vs. outsourced service provision (for example, laundry, cleaning and kitchen services).
- Analysis and recommendations on human resource management and workforce planning with the aim of realising savings on employee costs or improving care management of residents.

KPMG’s services focus on specialist business advisory services. KPMG’s team comprises accountant, financial business analysts and specialists with clinical backgrounds and each member of the team has significant experience advising in the aged care sector.

Importantly, KPMG does not duplicate accounting or auditing services that aged care providers already obtain from their own accountant.

Contact details

To confirm eligibility, get more information about ACFI Advisory Services or to download an application form, please go to www.acfi.kpmg.com.au.

Alternatively, KPMG can supply a hard copy of the form by mail or fax following a request on their Hotline 1800 633 719 or email ACFI@kpmg.com.au

Applications must be lodged directly with KPMG **before 31 July 2009** to be considered

Residential Aged Care Accreditation Review

Don't forget DoHA is currently reviewing the accreditation process for residential aged care facilities and has sought comment from organisations and individuals with an interest in improving the process. A discussion paper has been released to assist comment and submissions are due on 17 July 2009.

ACSA is preparing a submission to the current stage of this review and has prepared some advice based on this to assist members wishing to make their own submissions. This will be available through State Associations and on ACSA's website. For more information and to access the discussion paper, please go to:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-quality-accreditation-review.htm>

Energy Efficiency Programs

We have reported in previous *National Reports* details of the aged care industry's eligibility for the range of Commonwealth Government Energy Efficiency programs.

The current state of play for the 3 initiatives is as follows:

- **Insulation.** A subsidy is available to assist with the cost of installing insulation in previously un-insulated homes. This program is primarily targeted to individual homes but the Government has agreed to extend the program to residential care facilities. The Department of Environment is in the process of developing options for translating a domestic scheme to congregate living and ACSA will be consulted on these before a final decision is made by the Minister. This process was to have been finalized by the end of June;
- **Hot Water.** The Commonwealth program relating to solar hot water has not changed since February 2009. A rebate of \$1,600 is available when electric storage systems are replaced by solar hot water. However this rebate is only available to individuals and not to residential facilities; and
- **Solar Power.** The Solar Homes and Communities Plan did provide a subsidy to install solar power and a healthy number of residents in retirement villages have successfully applied. The government cancelled the scheme without notice on 9 June 2009 but applications lodged before that date will be covered. ACSA has been advised by the Department of Environment that the scheme will be replaced by a "renewable energy certificates" system which will effectively provide a discount at the point of sale. However solar panels will cost the applicant more under this new arrangement. This scheme was also just designed for individuals.

Due to the complexity of the programs the Department of Environment suggested that ACSA members contact the call centre with any queries or proposals on 1800 808 571 and request that a departmental officer ring them to discuss their individual situation. Information about the Commonwealth Government initiatives is contained on these websites www.environment.gov.au or www.orer.gov.au.

Members should also remember that some State governments offer additional rebates in these areas.

Nursing Scholarships Target Aged Care

The Australian Government scholarship scheme to support students and nurses in aged care is now open for applications.

Under the Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Scheme, applicants can receive funding to support them in undertaking continuing education at undergraduate or postgraduate level. The scholarship scheme, administered by Royal College of Nursing, Australia (RCNA), aims to address workforce shortages in the aged care sector. Applicants must be able to demonstrate a commitment to working in this particular nursing specialty.

Undergraduate scholarships are available under the scheme for people who wish to undertake undergraduate nursing education at an Australian university and can demonstrate a commitment to aged care.

Postgraduate scholarships are available to registered nurses studying for their masters, and to both registered and enrolled nurses working in aged care facilities, to undertake further professional development including workshops, short courses and tertiary level study.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact RCNA on 1800 116 696 or visit www.rcna.org.au

H1N1 Influenza Update

DoHA has written to all Community Care Providers, to provide information to assist staff in managing the H1N1 Influenza virus in the PROTECT phase, for care recipients, family, friends, visitors and visiting health professionals.

It states, inter alia, that the PROTECT Phase aims to identify and provide early treatment to those who are suffering a moderate to severe illness and the early treatment of those identified as vulnerable to severe infection. Elderly people with underlying chronic medical conditions can suffer a more severe illness when they get influenza and a more rapid deterioration, due to underlying disease, ageing of the immune system, immobility and debility.

Identifying vulnerable care recipients for whom H1N1 Influenza 09 may have severe outcomes are people with:

- Chronic respiratory conditions including asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.
- Persons with morbid obesity.
- Indigenous people of any age.

- Persons with chronic illness predisposing to severe influenza such as:
 1. Cardiac disease (excluding simple hypertension).
 2. Diabetes mellitus.
 3. Chronic renal disease.
 4. Haemoglobinopathies.
 5. Immunosuppressed (including cancers, HIV/AIDS infection, drugs).
 6. Chronic neurological conditions.

Current information from outbreaks in other parts of the world suggests that the H1N1 Influenza 09 virus is more contagious than seasonal influenza. This means that the basic infection control principles which apply to seasonal influenza also apply to H1N1 Influenza 09. Such measures can substantially reduce the risk of being infected by or spreading the influenza virus. Infection control mechanisms apply to all care recipients, family, friends, visitors and visiting health professionals.

Careful attention to good hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette combined with early identification and treatment of acute respiratory illnesses by carers will minimise the suffering associated with severe influenza in the elderly.

For further information about Australia's response: www.healthemergency.gov.au

Translated Influenza Posters

As part of Benetas Victoria's pandemic planning and response arrangements "Cover your Cough" posters have been translated into Italian and Greek. Benetas acknowledges that these translated posters may be useful for other providers and invites other services and providers to download the posters, in English, Italian or Greek from the ACCV website, under the Resources link at: www.accv.com.au/.

ACSWA has also produced a Business Continuity planning kit for Pandemics which can be downloaded at www.acswa.org.au.

Legislative Changes from 1 July

Quality and Compliance Checks

From 1 July the public can access information on the compliance records of Australia's 2,830 aged care facilities, by logging onto the Aged Care Australia website www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au

ACSA has raised a number of concerns about this development with the Government in terms of the accuracy of the picture it can give consumers about the quality of care they are likely to receive and will continue to make such representations.

Aged Care Assessment Program

Legislative changes made in December 2008, aimed to reduce the number of ACAT assessments needed and improve timeliness in assessments. These changes are effective as of 1 July, 2009.

For more details go to:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-mailfax-2009-2306a.htm>

Fair Work Act and Regulations

The Fair Work Act came into effect on 1 July and will mean that employers take a different approach to collective bargaining. The legislation potentially provides an opportunity for unions to apply to Fair Work Australia for bargaining orders to ensure that bargaining representatives meet the mandated good faith bargaining requirements.

Employers will require much more strategic consideration surrounding negotiation of agreements and allocate resources to collective bargaining.

Unfair dismissal rules lifted by the previous government have been re-instated. The Fair Work Act (FWA) Regulations are now available and provide a formula for calculating the new high-income threshold, employers' record-keeping obligations and the method for deducting pay for partial work bans.

ACSA (in conjunction with ACAA) has been funded to run some education sessions on the new industrial relations environment. Details will be made available when finalised.

The Fair Work Act and Regulations are available at

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/Act1.nsf/0/40A41410F3DF7719CA25759E0011E7FF?OpenDocument>

New Disability and Human Rights Legislation

Both Houses of the Federal Parliament have passed the *Disability Discrimination and Other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill 2008*. The Attorney-General has also announced that the Australian Human Rights Commission will be given specific responsibilities for monitoring Australia's implementation of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Grants for Culturally Appropriate Aged Care

Minister Elliot has announced details of \$2.7 million in funding for Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) to help aged care service providers deliver culturally appropriate care for older people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

PICAC funds an organisation in each state and territory to work collaboratively with aged care providers, ethnic communities and DoHA to improve access to culturally specific aged care information and services. The funding will assist in providing:

- More aged care services delivering culturally appropriate care to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities with increased access to culturally appropriate residential and community based aged care services including aged care support services; and
- Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities having greater capacity to make informed decisions about residential and community based aged care.

In addition the Rudd Government will be providing more than \$15 million in funding for the Community Partners Program over the next three years.

Further information on the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care program, including contact information for PICAC providers, is available at:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-specneed-picac.htm

Police Checks - Correction

The last National Report provided a link for a Police Check fact sheet on the DoHA website. We now believe that the information on the DoHA website is out of date as it has not been updated since the changes in regulatory requirements came in at the end of 2008.

Until the information is updated, members should use information and fact sheets on the DoHA website with caution, cross referencing with other sources to confirm whether the down loaded information contains any recent legislative changes.

Thomson Adsett - New National Partner

ACSA is very pleased to welcome Thomson Adsett Architects as our newest National Partner.

Thomson Adsett is a well-known and respected company in the aged care sector.

ACSA is particularly looking forward to working closely with the team at Thomson Adsett on one of the year's key initiatives in "Innovative Housing Solutions for Older Australians".

Some of the many services Thomson Adsett provides are:

- facility planning and design
- clinical advisory
- care planning
- project management
- project cost modelling
- industry research
- design consultancy

They also support the industry through the SAGE study tours.

Election of Rosemary Bryant to Presidency of the International Council of Nurses

Australia's Chief Commonwealth Nurse, Rosemary Bryant, has been elected President of the International Council of Nurses. Ms Bryant was last year appointed as Australia's first Chief Commonwealth Nurse.

Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index

The ABS has released an information paper outlining the new Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI).

The Pension Review Report completed in February 2009 concluded that an alternative measure of price change more fully responsive to changes in pensioners' purchasing power would be appropriate.

The government has funded the ABS to produce such an index. In the 2009–10 Budget, the government has indicated that it will use this PBLCI to index base pension rates where it is higher than the CPI.

The ABS will publish the PBLCI quarterly commencing on 24 August 2009. This Information Paper provides an overview of the new index including how it is calculated and its relationship to the CPI.

Further information is available in the Information Paper: Introduction of the Pensioner Cost Living Index (PBLCI) (cat. no 6466.0.0)

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/3B28DED413D2A628CA2575E40020B558?Opendocument>

UK My Home Life Program for Aged Care

The UK voluntary sector has developed a new program of work called *My Home Life* to promote and improve the quality of life of people living in care homes.

My Home Life has been developed around research commissioned by the former charity Help the Aged and the National Care Forum. (ACSA's UK equivalent).

The research identified eight best-practice areas which offer a vision for best quality of life in care homes, underpinned by a concept called relationship-centred care, which regards a care home as a community where the quality of life of staff, family, friends and residents are all crucial to improvements in practice.

Relationship-centred care also revolves around the principle that everyone in care homes needs to have a sense of security, continuity, belonging, purpose, achievement and significance.

These are the so-called Six Senses Framework, as developed by Professor Mike Nolan and colleagues at the University of Sheffield.

A crucial factor in the early success of *My Home Life* has been the importance of allowing the care sector to own the programme.

An important aspect of *My Home Life* is that it is based on an “appreciative inquiry” approach, which emphasises examples of what works rather than what doesn't work. As a result *My Home Life* is profiling the positive examples of practice and the expertise that are already out there in care homes. It is about communicating back to the sector that this is their expertise and their programme. More information is available at www.myhomelife.org.uk

Still largely on the Outside: The Caring Experiences of Relatives and Friends of Older People who live in Aged Care Facilities in Victoria'

The experiences of carers and staff from aged care facilities are documented in this publication. This innovative project conducted by Carers Victoria provides a different perspective of the need for reform in residential aged care.

Copies are available from Carers Victoria (at \$30 a copy) by calling the information service on 03 9396 9500 or sending an email to cav@carersvictoria.org.au. Alternatively download an order form by copying and pasting the link below into your browser www.carersaustralia.com.au/?/vic/article/view/via:17:421

New Online Options for Centrelink Nominees

The Minister for Human Services, Chris Bowen, has detailed improvements to Centrelink's eServices which give nominees more choice in how they do business with the agency.

"If you're a nominated person who conducts business with Centrelink on behalf of a customer, you can now register to deal with Centrelink using Centrelink's Online Service," Mr Bowen said.

This means nominees can now update contact details and view payment details online, without having to visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre, and more than 2,000 nominees have already registered to use the online services since they became available in March."

Minister Bowen said the new service will be particularly helpful for carers, many of whom act as a nominee for the person they care for.

Nominees can use Centrelink's Online Service by visiting www.centrelink.gov.au.

To register, or for information on support for carers or becoming a nominee, go to: www.centrelink.gov.au, call 13 27 17 or visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

UK Training - by Aged Care Channel

A UK media report on July 3 says that care and support staff from Polars care home, Newport, are to receive some of their training via a satellite TV network, when the Australian-based Aged Care Channel launches in Britain next month.

The Somerset Care Group, the parent company of Isle Care, is one of the first groups in the country to receive the new method of training.

The Aged Care Channel will be an addition to the Group's already extensive training scheme. Chief Executive Andrew Larpent explained more than 240 employees were currently completing a formal apprenticeship. Polars provides residential care for elderly people and adults with disabilities.

Australasian Journal on Ageing

The June Issue 2, Vol 28 of the Australasian Journal on Ageing, co-published by ACSA, is now available to subscribers.

Articles of interest to members include:

- Mainstream versus ethno- specific community aged care services: it's not an 'either or',
- Longitudinal Study of falls and accidents screening, and
- Under-nutrition and the older person.

Subscription details for AJA are on the ACSA website www.agedcare.org.au.

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