

The National Report

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Aged & Community Services Australia



Contents

National Health and Hospital Reform Commission Final Report
Major NHHRC Report Recommendations Involving Aged and Community Care
ACSA 2009 National Conference. GET UP, STAND UP!
September 13-16, 2009 Perth, Western Australia
Aussie Heads up IAHS
Review of the Accreditation System
Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme Review
Award Modernisation Update
New Education and Training Package for Aged Care Workers
Free Flu Vaccine Coverage - Next Year
Household Income and Expenditure Survey
On Line Forum for National Compact
National e-Health System
DVA Community Nursing Request for Tenders
2009 National Continence Conference Scholarships
Young People and Nursing Homes Pilot
Providing Culturally Appropriate and Inclusive Aged Care Manual
Small Business Tax Calendar Updated for Charities and N-F-Ps
Counting the Homeless Report
Effects of an Ageing Population and Changing Health Policies on GPs
Innovation in Affordable Housing in Australia Report
UK Changes Residential Care Policy
Age Care Informatics Symposium: Canberra, 19 August.
4th International Conference on Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia

National Health and Hospital Reform Commission Final Report

The Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Ageing released the Final Report of the NHHRC, on 27 July. The Report and recommendations will be on the table for debate for the next six months, then a special COAG meeting will be held in late 2009 to discuss with a 2010 meeting being presented with a reform plan. If the states agree reform will go ahead - if they don't the PM said he would seek a mandate from the people for the Commonwealth to take over all aspects of health care.

Mr Rudd said the reasons for not making a decision immediately on the Report were the massive implications and the need to get change right, the need to consider this report with the Henry report, the next Intergenerational report due later this year, and the need for fully informed debate. He and the Minister, Nicola Roxon say some of the recommendations such as increased funding and new programs for primary care have already started. However he also flagged that whatever the Government decides to adopt will be done with regard to the need for fiscal discipline and returning the budget to surplus.

Acting CEO Pat Sparrow attended the Prime Minister's briefing on the Report in Canberra. She reports that while he did not focus on aged care, he highlighted the:

- growth in GDP on health and aged care that would result if no policy changes were made with the need to double aged care places to 464,000 by 2030;
- need for greater flexibility in aged care;
- greater scope for efficiency in aged care, (citing Hogan's 17% efficiency dividend claim) that could be made if all providers operated as efficiently as the best providers (ACSA will be working to rebut this erroneous assertion).

On the specific aged care recommendations he mentioned uncapping the supply on places, consumers having choice between residential and community care, use of technology and streamlined and consistent assessment across residential and community.

In its public response, ACSA has welcomed the forthcoming debate on reforms for aged care included in the Report. Pat Sparrow commended the Government for its commitment to genuine reform of the health sector of which aged care is an increasingly important element.

“Aged care as we know it must change to cater for the dramatic rise in the numbers of older Australians in the coming years.”

“The current system isn't working to meet existing needs. Major reform is critical if we are to have the ability to provide quality care and support for older Australians when and where they need it.”
“How the system was funded now, and into the future, had to involve all stakeholders in the sector including consumers, providers, carers and Government.

“Australia needs an innovative and creative approach to providing and funding aged care. These reforms provide that opportunity.

“While we have to recognise and work within global and national economic constraints, we must prioritise the care of older Australians strategically, effectively and compassionately.

“We look forward to an expansive and robust debate and welcome the opportunity, along with leading consumer groups, to make a significant contribution to creating a system providing high quality sustainable services and real choice for consumers.”

Major NHHRC Report Recommendations Involving Aged and Community Care

Recommendation 88.6 is for the Commonwealth Government to assume full responsibility for public funding of aged care. This would include the Home and Community Care Program for older people and aged care assessment.

There are 123 other specific recommendations, covering many aspects of hospital and health care issues, with section 4.2 covering “*Connecting and integrating health and aged care services for people over their lives*”. *Improving access to palliative care services* and *Increasing choice in aged care* come under this section.

The full 292 page report can be downloaded at the following link; and for ease of access an executive summary and list of recommendations can be downloaded separately.

<http://www.nhhrc.org.au/internet/nhhrc/publishing.nsf/Content/nhhrc-report>

ACSA 2009 National Conference. GET UP, STAND UP!

September 13-16, 2009 Perth, Western Australia

- **Got something to tell us?**

The ACSA National Conference is only six weeks away! When we decided on ‘Get Up, Stand Up’ as the theme of this year’s ACSA National Conference, we meant what we said.

Conference attendees will be given the opportunity to air their views at a dedicated ‘Speaker’s Corner’ and we’re encouraging you to reflect well ahead about what it is you think everyone should know. Got a great idea to share? What is it that you think the aged care sector does really well? What areas should we know more about?

If you have something to get off your chest, register for the conference now and make sure you attend the booking desk on arrival to put your name down for the Speaker’s Corner. We’ll see you there! To register go to: <http://www.acsa2009.com.au/>

- **Special Offer for Rural, Remote (including Indigenous) Services**

One free registration, dinner ticket, airfare and accommodation could be yours as a sponsored delegate, with the support of Southern Cross Care NSW and ACT.

Just tell ACSA why you deserve it - why you want to attend the Conference and what you will do with the knowledge and networks you gain from attending.

The winner will also have the opportunity to write about their service and its challenges in the Summer 09 edition of *Agendas*.

The full details are attached to the end of this report.

Aussie Heads up IAHSA

Glenn Bunney, former ACSA National President, has been appointed the next Chair of IAHSA, and will take up his appointment on 1 January 2010. He will bring expertise, innovation and an outspoken and enquiring Australian (Queensland) mind to the position.

Review of the Accreditation System

ACSA has presented its submission to this review, calling for real changes to the current system for accreditation to be meaningful for consumers, industry and Government.

It suggests that a review of the standards themselves, including the development of quality of life indicators, would have been sensible prior to reviewing the accreditation system. ACSA urges that the review of the standards proceed as soon as possible and that its results are combined with the findings of this review and used to design an effective and meaningful quality improvement accreditation system.

This submission responds to the Departmental discussion paper as well as raising a range of other issues that must be addressed, including accreditation timelines, non compliance and the accreditation period, internal agency processes and the cost of accreditation.

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

Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme Review

The Australian Government is seeking public input on its review of the operation of the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme.

The Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme (CIS) was introduced in May 2007 and allows people with a concern about the service or quality of care being provided to elderly Australians receiving Commonwealth funded aged care services to have their concerns investigated.

This is an opportunity for members of the public, consumers, staff and industry representatives to have their say on the operation of the CIS. The review is considering aspects of the CIS including:

- The processes, practices and the timeliness of responses to complaints; communication between the CIS and stakeholders including residents and their families, staff and aged care providers; training provided to investigators; investigators' access to clinical and investigative expertise; framework used for the escalation of complaints; information collection and consideration; and the relationship between the CIS, the Aged Care Commissioner, the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd, and other relevant bodies.
- Public submissions close on Friday 28 August 2009. ACSA will be making a submission to the review.

A Consultation Paper is available on the Department of Health and Ageing website at <http://www.health.gov.au/oacqc>

Award Modernisation Update

Stage 4 of the Award Modernisation process, which deals with Home (Community) Care is underway. ACSA lodged a draft award and submission with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 24 July which can be downloaded from the following link. Submissions from other stakeholders are also available on this site.

<http://www.airc.gov.au/awardmod/fullbench/industries/awardmodindustry.cfm?award=social>

New Education and Training Package for Aged Care Workers

Minister Elliot recently (23/7) announced a \$43.8 million education and training package designed to up-skill more than 8,000 aged and community care staff.

The programs in the \$43.8 million education and training package are:

- **Community Aged Care Workforce Development** - which will equip more than 3,000 personal care workers with the skills and knowledge for home-based care of frail aged people with complex care needs; and
- **Better Skills for Better Care** - which will support more than 5,000 personal care workers in aged care homes in gaining certificate-level qualifications - such as enrolled nursing.

These training initiatives build on other programs introduced to attract and retain skilled aged care workers such as the Support for Aged Care Training, which targets smaller less viable homes in rural and remote areas, and undergraduate and post-graduate nursing scholarships and the Bringing Nurses Back program which provides incentives.

For more details about either package contact the Aged Care Info line: 1800 500 853

Free Flu Vaccine Coverage - Next Year

The Rudd Government has moved to nearly double its seasonal flu protection by extending its free vaccine program for vulnerable groups - from next year.

The Government will spend \$44 million over four years to cover an additional 2.2 million Australians – including all pregnant women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 to 50 years and people medically at risk aged six months to 64 years (such as those suffering chronic diseases including diabetes, cystic fibrosis or cardiac disease).

Household Income and Expenditure Survey

During 2009-10 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is conducting its Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). The HIES, conducted every six years, is a very important survey supporting a wide range of uses by government and the community.

One critical use made of the HIES is to update the commodity weights used in compiling the Consumer Price Index. The survey is also critical to compiling the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index, used for indexing age and other pensions.

More information on the ABS website www.abs.gov.au.

On Line Forum for National Compact

The draft principles of the National Compact between the third sector and the government have been finalised and will be available for public consultation, including via an on- line forum, from 3 August.

More information can be found at www.socialinclusion.gov.au/compact

National e-Health System

National consultations are set to begin on the legislative framework to underpin the governance, privacy and agreed uses for national healthcare identifier numbers essential to a secure national e-Health system.

Healthcare Identifiers are unique numbers that will be given to all healthcare providers, healthcare centres and healthcare consumers.

The Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI) service will be managed initially by Medicare Australia - a trusted and secure provider of dedicated health related services. This will be separate to its funding and claims functions. The IHI will not replace a patient's Medicare number, which is used for claiming government healthcare benefits.

The discussion paper can be accessed online at www.health.gov.au/eHealth/consultation from 13 July.

DVA Community Nursing Request for Tenders

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has released a request for tenders for the provision of community nursing services to meet the clinical and/or personal care needs of eligible members of the veteran community Australia-wide.

DVA sets the fee for the provision of these services. The contract is anticipated to commence on 1 March 2010 and end on 30 June 2013, with an option to extend for periods of up to a total of three years.

The tender closes on 28 July at 2pm ACT local time. For more information, please contact Terry Ahearn: communitynursing.tenderenquiry@dva.gov.au

2009 National Continence Conference Scholarships

The Australian Government, under the National Continence Management Strategy, has provided funding for scholarships to support health professionals to attend the 18th National Conference on Incontinence, Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, 4 – 7 November 2009.

These scholarships will support existing and new clinical practitioners and researchers, including aged care nurses, and community/district nurses, seeking to develop their professional capacity to continence promotion and care. Each scholarship will take the form of payment or reimbursement of the applicant's costs for travel, accommodation and conference registration.

Applications close 7th August 2009

It is anticipated that successful applicants will be announced by 9 September 2008. For applicant information, forms, updates and further information on the 18th National Conference, please go to www.continence.org.au.

Young People and Nursing Homes Pilot

A 15-month pilot, the first of its kind, has shown that funding for equipment and home modifications is the key to keeping young people with chronic diseases out of age care facilities with 100% of the pilot participants remaining in their own homes.

The pilot was run by MS Australia in conjunction with Calvary Health Care Bethlehem and funded by the Victorian Government.

Providing Culturally Appropriate and Inclusive Aged Care Manual

The Australian Multicultural Foundation in partnership with UnitingCare Ageing NSW has recently developed a manual titled *Providing Culturally Appropriate and Inclusive Aged Care*. The manual provides increased understanding through information, practical activities and case study analysis.

An information brochure and purchase form can be downloaded at:

<http://amf.net.au/training/providing-culturally-appropriate-and-inclusive-aged-care-manual>.

Small Business Tax Calendar Updated for Charities and NFPs

A free electronic calendar *Your Small Business Tax Calendar* is designed for small businesses, including sole traders, with a turnover of less than \$2 million, as well as charities and not-for-profit organisations.

It is now available on the Tax Office website. The calendar records all the due dates needed for the financial year, such as when to lodge business activity statements and when to pay employees' superannuation. Small businesses and organisations can also:

- record notes and reminders, such as appointments or payment due dates
- update the calendar at any time if their business structure or reporting obligations change, and
- print a one-page yearly planner for tax and superannuation obligations and due dates.

Organisations with more than one business or which have a number of clients can set up a unique tax and superannuation calendar for each of them, and tax agents can encourage clients to use the calendar to record upcoming appointments.

To download a free copy of the tax calendar, visit the Tax Office website at www.ato.gov.au/TaxCalendar. The calendar is also available on CD by calling 13 72 26.

Counting the Homeless Report

Rates of homelessness vary widely across Australia, not only between states and territories but within them, according to national research commissioned by all jurisdictions and published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The eight new state and territory *Counting the Homeless* reports provide a state and territory breakdown and analysis of national data published by the ABS last September in the *Counting the Homeless 2006* national report. They include discussion of characteristics of people experiencing homelessness and provide extensive analyses of their circumstances, drawn from experience of people working with the homeless.

The research found that the number of people aged over 55 who were homeless increased by 30 per cent.

Effects of an Ageing Population and Changing Health Policies on General Practitioners

A new AIHW and University of Sydney report examines changes in the clinical activities of GPs and management of disease over the last decade in the context of policy changes, changes in the GP workforce and the ageing population.

The report *General practice in Australia health priorities and policies 1998 to 2008*, focuses on the management of conditions declared as national health priority areas. According to the report, GPs are spending an increasing proportion of their time with older patients and are managing more chronic diseases.

There are now more requests for services such as check-ups, and requests for prescriptions, and GPs are doing more checking and managing of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and depression.

Areas where there have been policy changes but no measurable change in GP behaviour in the last 10 years include management of arthritis and most other musculoskeletal conditions, and management of heart disease and stroke.

The report is at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10721>

Innovation in Affordable Housing in Australia Report

AHURI has published the peer reviewed *Innovation in affordable housing in Australia: Bringing policy and practice for not-for-profit housing organisations together*.

This study investigates the policy environment and accomplishments of emerging not-for-profit housing developers in Australia. The core purpose is to understand the current operating environment of these agencies and to identify directions for policy that could enable these or similar organisations to make larger scale contributions to the provision of affordable housing in Australia.

The report of the research builds on and updates a previous AHURI funded study of the engagement of not-for-profit organisations in developing affordable housing, which was completed in 2004.

Since then there has been significant developments in the funding, policy, regulatory and delivery frameworks for affordable housing in Australia, commencing with changes led mainly by state and territory jurisdictions followed by a suite of national initiatives since 2008. As this study was being finalised, the market and policy contexts impacting on affordable housing providers were shifting rapidly, under the influence of both global financial and economic conditions and local changes in policy guided by the Council of Australian Governments.

Within Australia's highly diversified not-for-profit housing system, the focus of this study is on those housing providers that are, or are considering, undertaking more financing and development of their own housing.

UK Changes Residential Care Policy

Plans to scrap the two-tier system of long-term care for the elderly, which gives no help to thousands of middle-class families, have been reported in the UK media.

Ministers are proposing the creation of a universal system giving all families the same “basic entitlement” to help, with the same legal protection, right to an assessment of needs and help in navigating the complex fees of care homes, The Times has reported.

Under the present means-tested system, anyone with a home or savings of £23,500 or more is classed as a “self-funder” and shut out from receiving help with finding a suitable care home, or even having their needs assessed by social services.

In a recent legal change, self-funders were even excluded from protection under the Human Rights Act. The Act was extended to protect elderly people from “unfair administrative process” if their fees were being paid by their local authority. That means self-funders can be evicted without an appeal and at short notice if there is an unresolved complaint or dispute with their care home. Self-funders comprise 40 per cent of the 440,000 care-home residents in Britain, a proportion that has grown as property prices have risen. The two-tier system means that many thousands of relatives have to assess care-home standards and fees themselves.

Ministers say that, under a new system, no one will be turned away when they seek help and a “tangible” offer of help will be made to everyone, regardless of their wealth. The plans will also include radical ideas on how to pay for care.

The prospect of a universal system has been welcomed by charities. Michelle Mitchell, charity director for Age Concern and Help the Aged, said: “Older people and their relatives are usually offered little, if any, help and support to find the best care available, and are also likely to face problems should they want to make a complaint.

The proposals, to be published in a Green Paper, will include an “age insurance” scheme. Under the present means-tested system, thousands of pensioners each year have to sell their homes or use their savings to fund long-term care, which the Government will say is unfair and unsustainable, given the rapidly ageing population.

Those who want to protect their homes or savings would pay into a scheme that would then foot the bill for all members who required long-term residential care. A range of payment options will be set out. One option is for a prearranged sum of about £12,000 to be deducted from a member’s estate after death. Another is for payments to be made during a person’s working life. The average stay in a home is two years, with an average bill of £25,000 a year.

Age Care Informatics Symposium: Canberra, 19 August.

The Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA) will be holding a symposium on aged care informatics in Canberra on 19 August. The event’s theme is *Developing and realising a vision for aged care informatics for Australia and the region.*

It will cover a range of areas including the implementation of health information systems, older people and social networks and exercising the ageing body and mind.

Among the speakers addressing the symposium are Dr Lakshmi Narasimhan from East Carolina University and Dr George Margelis from Intel Australia’s Digital Health Group.

Details at: <http://www.hisa.org.au/AgedCare>

4th International Conference on Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia:

Arts Ageing and Creativity: Unlocking the Potential:

22-23 October 2009, Adelaide Convention Centre, SA

Expect the unexpected. This conference offers everything from Clown Doctors and Japanese Theatre to a thought-provoking art exhibition and a kaleidoscope of experts in the creative fields. It's an opportunity to connect with like-minded people, all committed to the search for new ideas and approaches that enrich the lives of our seniors.

One of the major conference themes is *Working towards Best Practices in Arts and Ageing*. This will focus on best practice creative approaches in implementing the arts undertaken by practitioners such as recreation, art, music, drama and occupational therapists.

To view the registration brochure or register online please go to:

<http://www.alloccasionsgroup.com/cecd-2009-conference-registration>

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www.agedcare.org.au



www.agedcare.org.au

ONE FREE

- REGISTRATION
- DINNER TICKET
- AIRFARE
- ACCOMMODATION

could be yours.....

If you are a rural and remote, including indigenous, service provider and would like the opportunity to attend the upcoming National Conference as a sponsored delegate then apply now!

The sponsorship is available for your airfare, accommodation, attendance at the conference and a ticket to the Gala Dinner.



This offer is proudly sponsored by Southern Cross Care NSW & ACT

How to apply.....

To attend as a sponsored delegate simply email the ACSA office by no later than Wednesday 21 August and explain in 200 words or less why you would like to attend the Conference and what you will do with the knowledge and networks you gain from attending.

ACSA will advise the successful applicant by Friday 23 August so travel arrangements can be made in time.

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