

Media Release

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For immediate release



AGED CARE INDUSTRY WELCOMES INTERIM BUDGET

The aged care industry's leading peak body tonight described the budget as disappointing claiming it failed to meet the challenge of Australia's ageing population.

"The aged and community care sector will be largely disappointed with tonight's budget," commented Greg Mundy CEO of Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA).

"There are some welcome but modest measures which recognise the additional costs of providing community care services in rural and remote areas and the costs of training community care workers."

"Aside from this there was little for the aged care sector to celebrate. Many of the measures represent the continuation of existing programs which would otherwise have lapsed. It *is* a plus that these programs have not been terminated," Mr Mundy conceded.

"This budget does nothing to address the funding levels for aged and community care services. "The failure to do this will lead to even more rationing of care in the face of ever increasing demand."

"While rising food and fuel costs, for example, affect the aged and community care sector just as much as everyone else, without an increase in the funding for these services, less will be able to be provided."

"We note with approval that the Department of Veterans' Affairs has seen fit to raise the prices it pays for community nursing services by 5.7%. At least this sort of increase is needed across the board in aged and community care to maintain service levels in other programs."

"Many of the measures in this year's budget are focussed internally on the various government agencies that regulate different aspects of aged care. Additional regulation should not be at the cost of service delivery."

"This budget really puts a lot of decisions about the future of aged care on hold. We look forward to these being addressed before the Federal Election due in 2007," Mr Mundy said.

ACSA represents over 1,200 church, charitable and community-based organisations providing housing, supported accommodation and community care services to around half a million older Australians.

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For Further Information

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