

Media Release

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New age vision needed for age old concerns

Australia's older residents deserve a vision for a safe and secure future, according to Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA).

ACSA, the peak body representing more than 1,100 church, charitable and community based organisations providing accommodation and care services to over 700,000 older people, people with disabilities and their carers, has called on the Federal Government to adopt a visionary approach to aged care.

Acting CEO Pat Sparrow acknowledged the Government's record levels of funding for aged and community care allocated under established formulas and the introduction of more marginal initiatives including zero interest loans.

However, she said the time has come for a fundamental change in how Australia addresses the current and future needs of the growing numbers of ageing residents.

"The Government has taken a visionary approach in other important areas including housing, homelessness and the environment," Ms Sparrow said.

"Aged care is equally important and just as deserving of a progressive and innovative approach."

"For too long aged care has tended to attract attention and interest only when there is a claim of inadequate or unacceptable care in nursing homes, resulting in an increasingly punitive approach to management of aged care facilities."

"For the record, aged care providers care for more than 1 million people every year, generally without incident."

Ms Sparrow said the time has come for a collaborative and pioneering approach to aged care.

"Of course there is no single answer. But like health care and education, aged care for Australians is multi-faceted and must be tackled on a range of fronts to meet the needs of our older residents."

"We need to properly evaluate how aged care is funded. The system is struggling with funding falling behind the real cost of service provision and inadequate capital to build needed aged care beds. Proper remuneration for nursing staff and carers is essential to halt their departure in increasing numbers. Community care and varied housing options for older residents must be more widely available with greater choice and flexibility."

"As a community we cannot afford to take comfort in statistics which paper over the real facts."

"Australia needs a real vision for the provision of appropriate aged care and a workforce strategy for the dedicated aged care professionals."

"Age old concerns should be replaced by concerns for the aged."

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