

# *The National Report*

**23 October, 2009 – Issue 214**  
**Aged & Community Services Australia**



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## Image Project Launched in Tasmania

ACSA's major project to boost the image of aged care was given a Tasmanian launch on 13 October- the day the Rudd Cabinet met in Hobart.

Prime Minister Rudd was asked by the Tasmanian media about the video showing him ageing 35 years in 30 seconds. He replied that it was 'a bit scary' but went on to talk about the need for his government to address the needs of an ageing Australia as part of the National Health & Hospitals Reform process.

The campaign launch was covered in many Tasmanian media outlets and the television news coverage featured an interview with ACST CEO Darren Mathewson and two residents of a Hobart aged care service who praised the work of aged care professionals - and said that they should be paid more!

Nationally, the *Can't do it Without You* Facebook group now has over 600 members talking about the campaign and aged care generally. There is a kit available for people who would like to get involved in the social media aspects of the campaign. ACSA has copies of the kit on CD and these can be obtained by contacting Leanne Lovell at the ACSA office on [llovell@agedcare.org.au](mailto:llovell@agedcare.org.au) or they can be downloaded from the ACSA website following this link: <http://www.agedcare.org.au/ABOUT-US/Image/ImageCampaign.html>.

Don't forget to use the free employment template adverts if you are advertising for new staff. You can access the templates at <http://www.agedcare.org.au/ABOUT-US/Image/ImageCampaign.html>.

The magazine advertisements have now appeared in most of the major metropolitan newspaper weekend magazines and it will soon be in the November edition of the Australian Women's Weekly.

ACSA is developing stories for media which talk about an aged care professional and their relationship with the person for whom they care. We are hoping to get a range of stories to help us attract more media attention at national, state and local level. If you are aware of a special relationship or story that would be interesting for the general public please contact ACSA Media Manager Chris Hornsey at [chornsey@agedcare.org.au](mailto:chornsey@agedcare.org.au) or (03) 9686 3460.

We need to maintain the momentum of the campaign so log on and join Facebook or Twitter, read the member kit and find out other ways you can be involved and use the template recruitment ads. Remember *we cant do it without you.....*

For more details on the campaign and opportunities to participate in various ways including donating funds to support the continuation of our campaign, visit [www.Kevin87.com.au](http://www.Kevin87.com.au).

## **ACSA Welcomes Challenge to Misleading Data**

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy has welcomed the federal coalition's challenge to potentially misleading data on the finances of nursing homes.

He said Liberal senator Mathias Cormann's remarks to the Senate Estimates' hearing reinforced industry concerns about inadequate funding for the sector. The Opposition's junior health spokesman had questioned Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) figures suggesting that aged care providers could make a 10 per cent return on their investments, based on the best performing 25 per cent.

Senator Cormann called on the department to re-examine the data which he said was at odds with industry figures.

ACSA agrees that it is vital that any data used to formulate new funding arrangements for aged care was accurate and representative of all residential care.

The top quartile includes facilities with multiple beds in one room, as well as those where residents pay for extra services. On that basis these figures do not give a clear picture of residential aged care in Australia, or reflect the services elderly people want.

A 10 per cent return simply cannot be replicated across the whole residential care sector. Unsustainable costs were behind the shortfall of almost 2,000 bed licenses in the most recent round of allocations. And that means elderly Australians are the losers.

## Extension for DTC Funding Applications

Day Therapy Centres were recently contacted by DoHA and invited to apply for a continuation of their funding with an unreasonable due date of 5 November - approximately 11 working days. Along with the invitation to apply DoHA issued revised DTC Program Guidelines and a new Funding Agreement, neither of which had been foreshadowed to providers or ACSA.

ACSA raised a number of issues, including the unreasonable timelines and lack of notice, with the Department as soon as the issue became known, and has been able to negotiate an extension to the due date for the applications.

DoHA confirmed on 21 October that it had agreed to extend the due date for applications to Monday 16 November 2009. This decision has been based on feedback from the sector that more time is required to prepare and submit applications.

This Invitation to Apply has been offered to existing DTC service providers in order that continued funding may be offered until 30 June 2011. Service providers who have concerns or who have difficulty submitting the application by the due date are encouraged to contact DoHA to discuss their problems.

ACSA has suggested to DoHA that it issue the revised guidelines as a draft with a consultation period and then a transition period to enable providers to prepare for any changes. ACSA will provide written advice to DoHA on the issues and concerns providers have expressed about the guidelines and the funding agreement. If you have any comments please forward them either to your state association or to Pat Sparrow on [psparrow@agedcare.org.au](mailto:psparrow@agedcare.org.au)

## Veterans' Needs Shape Review of Advocacy Services

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin has provided an update on the review of Government-funded veteran advocacy and welfare services. On 21 October, he said an ageing population of veterans and war widows, and an increasing number of younger ex-service members and their families meant that support delivery may need adjusting. "Ex-service organisations (ESO) are supporting an ageing veteran community with complex welfare needs, relying on a similarly ageing volunteer force to do so," he said.

DVA's Review will examine the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) program, Training and Information Program (TIP) and Veteran and Community Grants Program - looking broadly at the interdependencies and interactions between the three programs.

"Over the past few weeks, my Department has conducted focus groups with key stakeholders, and invited ESO leaders and BEST grant applicants from across Australia to make submissions to the Review process," Mr Griffin said.

Individual members of the veteran community can contribute their views through online submissions or by writing directly to the Review Team. For more information about the Review, including the Terms of Reference and to make a submission, visit <http://www.dva.gov.au/grants>.

## National Recognition for Carers across Australia

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin has announced the development of a National Carer Recognition Framework.

The framework will recognise, in legislation, the role and contribution of carers, and will encourage community understanding and recognition through national acknowledgement of the commitment and dedication of carers.

It will also set down national goals – to give carers the opportunity to enjoy good health and wellbeing, and to fully participate in community life.

The development of the Framework follows the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Housing, Community and Youth on the *Better Support for Carers* inquiry, calling for increased community awareness and recognition of carers.

The Framework will include a National Carers' Strategy, establishing principles and objectives to guide policy development and service delivery for carers.

The development of the carer legislation will be informed by a review of existing state and territory carer recognition legislation and policy, and will be introduced into Parliament in 2010.

Macklin also announced more than \$430,000 this year to Carers Australia for Carer Recognition Grants, for Carers Australia to work with carer organisations across the country to provide activities to recognise and support carers.

## ACFI Data

DoHA has released an ACFI Quarterly Report - June 2009. The data provides a breakdown of the percentage of ACFI classifications by State, the percentage of ACFI appraised residents by saved rate and previous RCS category and the percentage of ACFI appraisals by question/rating.

Broader trends under the new ACFI which have been discussed by DoHA in industry meetings include:

- Confirmation that a key objective under ACFI was to better match funding with resident needs.
- Confirmation that the ACFI has in fact shifted funding from lower levels of care to higher levels of care;
- Residential care funding has increased 2.9 % higher overall under ACFI, but this figure included the 'grand parenting impact';
- The impact of grand parenting is now 'on its way out'. At present 81 % of all facilities have had an overall increase in their funding since the introduction of ACFI, but when ACFI is fully implemented, this will reduce to 70 % of all facilities – other things being equal.
- Under the former RCS system, 59.8 % of residents were classified as high care but under ACFI this has increased to 68.1 %. This is likely to change when a revised definition of low care takes effect in 2010.
- Under ACFI, 16% of residents received an interim low classification compared to 8 % under the RCS. This means that there are now 16 % of residents who are funded at a lower capped rate rather than receiving the funding which matches their care needs.

The Government, in this year's federal budget, committed to addressing this unintended consequence and the Department advised this is likely to take effect from January 2010. This is expected to make the ACFI model far closer to the former RCS system in this respect.

A copy of the report is available at <http://health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/ageing-acfi-30june.htm>

## Veterans and ACAR

Veterans are a special needs group, as defined in the *Aged Care Act 1997*, and as such aged care providers must state how they will cater for veterans' needs when applying for aged care places. To help with this process, DVA has prepared a comprehensive website. There are links to veteran demographics and statistical information by state and territory, facts sheets, and explanatory notes on veteran culture and health.

This website [www.dva.gov.au/service\\_providers/aged\\_care\\_issues/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.dva.gov.au/service_providers/aged_care_issues/Pages/index.aspx) may provide valuable assistance for aged care providers in developing veteran specific programs and in understanding the special needs of veterans.

## Fair Work Australia Act and Salary Sacrifice

The National Aged Care Industry Council, of which ACSA is a member, has written to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Julia Gillard regarding the impact of the Government's Fair Work reforms on the capacity of employers and employees to take advantage of salary sacrificing.

Despite industry representations to Fair Work Australia, the current widespread practice of salary sacrificing has not been recognised in the Modern Awards relating to Nursing, Aged Care or Home Care (the latter currently released in draft form) and, it is understood with other Modern Awards which relate to the charitable sector. ACSA understand that the real source of this problem may lie in the underpinning legislation and therefore apply quite broadly albeit, it is hoped, inadvertently.

ACSA plans to meet with Minister Gillard's office next week- hopefully to resolve this issue.

## New National OHS Laws Open for Comment

Mr Tom Phillips AM, Safe Work Australia Council Chair, has announced the commencement of the public comment period on the new model occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation.

The development of national OHS laws has been driven by Safe Work Australia, in partnership with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. Feedback from businesses, unions and workers will inform the development of the national OHS laws, which will lead to enhanced safety protections for workers and greater certainty for employers. The suite of documents available for public comment includes a model Act, administrative Regulations and consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS). The RIS will allow individuals and organisations to comment on the potential costs and benefits of the proposed Regulations.

As part of the public comment process, Access Economics is surveying businesses across a range of sizes, industries and regions in an effort to obtain primary data on compliance costs and safety benefits. The public comment period will be open for six weeks and will close on Monday 9 November. For further information or to submit comments go to: [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

## Repatriation Commission and Veterans' CACP and EACH Co-Payments

A new legislative instrument – ‘Veterans’ Entitlements (Treatment Principles – Community Care at Home approved under the Aged Care Act 1997 for Former Prisoners of War and Victoria Cross Recipients) Instrument 2009’ will enable the Repatriation Commission to pay the care recipient co-payment for eligible service personnel who are receiving a CACP, EACH or EACH-D package. The principles have been amended to enable the Repatriation Commission to accept financial responsibility for amounts (co-payments) payable by former prisoners of war and veterans awarded the Victoria Cross under a community care at home package. Community care at home packages are defined to include services such as community care and flexible care (therefore EACH and EACH Dementia packages as the relevant flexible care packages)

The Instrument is retrospective and is taken to have commenced on 21 August 2009. Paragraph 10.12.1 provides that the provider of a Community Aged Care Package or an Extended Aged Care at Home Package should bill Medicare Australia rather than the former prisoner of war or VC veteran. However, if the former prisoner of war or VC veteran is billed, then the Commission may still accept financial responsibility for the amount. To obtain the legislation instrument and explanatory notes visit:

[www.legislation.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/LegislativeInstrument1.nsf/all/whatsnew/805B6A8694019609CA25764700162BDD?](http://www.legislation.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/LegislativeInstrument1.nsf/all/whatsnew/805B6A8694019609CA25764700162BDD?)

## Dementia Community Support Grants.

Funding of \$1.5 million has been made available under the Dementia Initiative for a third round of Dementia Community Support Grants. Organisations are invited to apply for funding for projects that will:

- raise awareness about dementia in the community
- support people with dementia, and their families and carers
- encourage innovation and improve services for people with dementia, and their families and carers.

Applications for grants of up to \$50,000 will be considered for projects with a maximum duration of 12 months. Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposal will meet an identified need, as well as their capacity to undertake the project. Targeted groups and program objectives have been identified. Applications must be lodged by ‘2pm (AEDT) Thursday, 3 December 2009.

[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/grantITA1300910](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/grantITA1300910)

## ACSA Resource Guide for Recruiting Overseas Workers

ACSA has developed a new *Resource Guide for Recruiting Overseas Workers* to assist members who may be thinking of recruiting workers from overseas. It is intended to give an overview of some of the main issues to consider, along with some of the advantages and disadvantages of overseas recruitment. There are also many internet links to sites providing useful information to help members through the process and prospective visa holders in making their decision on whether to come to Australia.

The guide should be read in conjunction with the ACSA policy on *Overseas Workers* which is also available on the ACSA website.

It is on the ACSA website at [www.agedcare.org.au](http://www.agedcare.org.au) in the “members only” section.

## Fair Work Australia Legislation - Information Fact Sheets

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has funded ACSA to develop 14 Fact Sheets with important information on some of the key issues around the new Fair Work Australia legislation. Four of the Fact Sheets with the most relevance to employees, have been translated into eight other languages and one into a plain English version. Check the ACSA website or your State Association website for copies of the downloadable Fact Sheets.

All states except Victoria are still running information sessions on the new legislation. Check your State Association websites for dates and times.

## 4,600 Extra Training Places for Aged Care Workers

Up to 4,600 new training places over four years in aged and community care will be created under a \$19 million training plan – as part of the Rudd Government’s response to the challenges of Australia’s ageing population, Minister Elliot has announced. A total of 2,200 community training places and up to 2,400 residential aged care training places will be made available through the Community Aged Care Workforce Development and the Better Skills for Better Care programs, respectively. The training would be nationally recognised and include places in:

- Certificate III and IV in Home and Community Care;
- Certificate III and IV in Aged Care;
- Certificate IV in Leisure and Health;
- Certificate IV in Frontline Management; and
- Diploma of Community Services Coordination

This joint round will allow the vocational and educational training sector to better coordinate and plan its training delivery and will provide more certainty to providers and staff. Further information at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/grantITA0950910>

## Third Round of National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

The Australian Government is encouraging large scale investment in affordable housing under the third round of NRAS announced on 12 October by the Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek. Round three is different to previous rounds because applications are being sought from institutional investors wanting to finance residential building in parcels of at least 1,000 NRAS incentives. These incentives can be spread across multiple locations and offers an excellent opportunity for institutional investors.

NRAS enhances potential returns generated by residential property investments. The Scheme provides annual income-tax-free incentives to developers of \$8,672 per home, indexed to the rental component of the CPI for a 10 year period. The level of interest from the corporate sector was extremely encouraging in round two it is expected that the sector will continue to take advantage of this investment opportunity.

The return on residential property – according to independent research by Ernst and Young – has proven a better investment than other options, such as office, industrial or retail property over the 10 years to December 2008.

The third round of Scheme will have a rolling approval process to ensure proposals received early can be processed as soon as possible.

More information about the application process at <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au>, follow the links to housing.

## Osteoporosis - It Affects Men Too

New resources aimed at increasing awareness and diagnoses of osteoporosis in Australian men were launched by Minister Elliot on 20 October to mark World Osteoporosis Day. Aimed at providing information for both members of the public and GPs, the brochures provide information on osteoporosis in men, including the common risk factors and how the disease can affect them.

*Better Arthritis and Osteoporosis Care* initiative to improve care and management of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, focussing on osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis. The *Men and Osteoporosis* resources are available from Osteoporosis Australia (national office) and its state offices, by calling 1800 242 141 or visiting [www.osteoporosis.org.au](http://www.osteoporosis.org.au).

## 20,000 Reasons to Be ITConnected

Federal Minister for Human Services, Chris Bowen MP, has said that more than 20,000 low income households across Australia now own their own personal computer thanks to Centrelink and not-for-profit organisation WorkVentures.

The joint partnership provides low income Australian households with quality, internet-ready, refurbished PCs delivered at an affordable price of \$290 anywhere in Australia.

For more information on WorkVentures' Connect IT low-cost PC offer phone WorkVentures on **1800 11 22 05**, visit [www.workventures.com.au/connectit](http://www.workventures.com.au/connectit) or pick up an information brochure/order form at Centrelink offices.

## Resource for Volunteers Working in Aged Care

Mary Morris and Gunilla Denton Cook have co authored a series of reading activity books called Read a Bit! Talk a Bit! for workers and volunteers in aged care.

These books start an interesting factual story covering a topic most people are familiar with. The articles are printed in a large font, 50 pt, and designed so most people can share the reading aloud process.

Following the article there are approximately 15 to 20 questions designed to encourage reminiscence and discussion for all involved. Having the questions clearly printed allows the person who facilitates the activity to encourage meaningful and personalised reminiscences without needing to extensively research the topic. I have found volunteers, carers and even bus drivers can share the experience with a client.

Because of the diverse subjects of the Read a Bit! Talk a Bit! Books, the memories of past successes and experiences are discussed and talked about in the groups with these books. Thanks to the wide range of subjects in the books and the straightforward explanations, they easily promote meaningful and lasting discussion within any group

If you aren't already familiar with the Read a Bit! Books you can have a closer look at them on the books' website. [www.readabittalkabit.com](http://www.readabittalkabit.com) You can also find them on Alzheimer's Australia's bookshop's website.

## Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector Productivity Commission Draft Report

There is a need for wide-ranging reforms and a reduction in compliance costs faced by the not for-profit sector, according to a large draft research report released on 14 October by the Productivity Commission.

Presiding Commissioner, Robert Fitzgerald, said the proposed reforms would bring together the multiplicity of governance, taxation, and fundraising regulatory requirements to create a much stronger foundation for this expanding sector.

It is available for download from: <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/not-for-profit>

## Pathways Through Aged Care Not Always Simple

The *Pathways through aged care services: a first look* report released on 21 October by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) examines older people's use of seven government-funded aged care programs, from initial program assessment to death.

The report looked at data from a group of 77,000 people who had an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessment in 2003–04 and who had not previously used services which required assessment for access. It found that people vary considerably in what care programs they use and when, following assessment.

Over half of the group had, however, previously used services provided through the HACC or Veterans' Home Care programs, neither of which require an ACAT assessment. The report found that within two years of assessment, over 10% of people had accessed a Community Aged Care Package (CACP), and just over 40% had been admitted to permanent residential care at least once. Almost 25% of people had not accessed any aged care programs within two years of their initial assessment.

For some people, the ACAT assessments seemed to be a way of getting information about community care programs that did not require an assessment for access. The report also shows the use of care programs increases over time, with the move to residential care being particularly noticeable. Some people use several care programs at a time to meet their care needs. Nearly 8% of those who were still alive six months after assessment were receiving a CACP, and nearly 30% of these were also using services from other programs. ACSA, CEO, Greg Mundy was on a reference group for this project. [www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10781](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10781)

## Community Care Packages Report

Commonwealth funded high care packages increased significantly in 2007-08 according to the Aged Care Packages in the community 2007-08- a statistical overview, published by the AIHW.

At 30 June 2008 over 42,000 people were receiving help from an aged care package, and nearly 62,000 people had received help at some time during 2007-08. Authored by AIHW. 'Compared to the CACP, which had over 40,000 operational packages, the EACH and EACH Dementia programs were still small at around 4,000 and 2,000 operational packages respectively, Ms Brien said.

'But both EACH programs have had significant increases. Over 900 new EACH packages were made available (an increase of 29%), and over 700 new EACH Dementia packages (an increase of 57%).

'Availability of high-care packages is still more limited in remote and very remote areas, however, the first five packages for very remote areas began operating in 2007-08,' she said.

There were 23 community care packages for every 1,000 people aged 70 and over, with 14% being for people with high-care needs.

Greg Mundy was interviewed by a number of radio stations and by AAP for a story which ran in the Sydney Daily Telegraph- and elsewhere- about the relatively lower availability of community care packages- especially EACH's- in rural Australia. He identified this inequity as a problem which must be addressed [www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10750](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10750).

## Medical and Nursing Workforce Reports

The medical practitioner workforce is ageing, according to the Medical labour force 2007 report released by AIHW.

The report also showed that the number of employed medical practitioners in Australia increased by almost 20% from 56,207 in 2003 to 67,208 in 2007. The vast majority of these practitioners (over 90%) mainly worked in direct patient care, and of these, close to 40% were primary care practitioners, mostly GPs.

The report, found that women continued to gain ground in the workforce with females making up 34% of employed medical practitioners in 2007 compared to 32% in 2003.

A second report released by the AIHW-Nursing and midwifery labour force 2007-showed the number of nurses increased by over 11% between 2003 and 2007, and that it was also an ageing workforce. From 2003 to 2007 the proportion of nurses aged 50 years and over increased from 28% to 33%.

The average weekly hours worked by nurses, unlike for medical practitioners, rose over the 2003-2007 period. Nurses worked 33.3 hours in 2007 compared to 32.5 hours in 2003. The proportion of nurses working part-time (less than 35 hours per week) fell from 50% to 48%.

The number of full time equivalent nurses per 100,000 people increased from 1,017 in 2003 to 1,095 in 2007, this was an 8% increase. Both at [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

## New Palliative Care Resources

CareSearch has introduced new resources for health professionals working in palliative care, which include:

- [Speaking Out](#): Multi media snippets of health professionals involved in palliative care (social workers, volunteers, aged care nurses, rural nurse)
- [GP PubMed Topic Search](#) and [Prognosis PubMed Topic Search](#): One click and palliative care relevant literature on these topics is available
- [Getting the most out of CareSearch](#): Skill based modules to help search for and find the best evidence using CareSearch resources
- Various CareSearch newsletters including the [first anniversary newsletter](#), [@CareSearch October](#) and [CNIN September](#)
- [Acronyms and Abbreviations](#): Acronyms and abbreviations can be confusing. Find out what these initials mean.

All the above resources can be found on the website at [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au)

## New E- resource Site for Community Services and Health Industries for Young Australians.

Youth Matters joins the suite of '...That Matters' e-resources, such as the website 'Careers that Matter', 'Work That Matters' e-newsletter and YouTube Channel. As a career resource for the community services and health (CS&H) industries, the Community Active Careers website has input not only from the Australian Government, the CS&H Industry Skills Council and all CS&H state advisory bodies, but also from employing organisations within the community services and health industries.

For more information on the Community Services and Health industries, visit [www.communityactivecareers.com.au](http://www.communityactivecareers.com.au)

## Forthcoming Conferences

### ARATA 2010

*The tip of the iceberg* is the theme of the Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association (ARATA) National Conference, from 10 -13 August 2010 in Hobart, Tasmania

The ARATA National Conference will look beyond the prescription of equipment to look more deeply at the issues of funding, training and support for users and their support personnel, and helping consumers to have the endurance to persevere with their > equipment, despite the obstacles. Like the Antarctic explorers, there will be a focus on research and discovery - showcasing new products and ensuring ease in the use of equipment by capitalising on universal design and mainstream products. <http://www.arata.org.au>

## **ITAC 2010**

The ITAC 2010 organising committee invites you to participate in the 4th Annual Information Technology in Aged Care Conference on 26 and 27 July 2010 in Melbourne. The theme of the conference, Smart Aged Care – the eHealth Revolution, emphasises the importance of information technology in establishing a sustainable, quality focused aged care environment.

The conference will bring together local and international experts across the fields of community care, medication management, assistive technologies and offsite information systems delivery. These critical aged care topics will be discussed from a practical perspective, highlighting the information we need to know now to better manage and design aged care service delivery.

We look forward to your participation at ITAC 2010. [www.hisa.org.au](http://www.hisa.org.au)

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