

The National Report

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Aged & Community Services Australia



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Aged Care Indexation Subsidy Rate Below CPI

Minister Elliot has announced that from 1 July 2010 care subsidies will increase by an average of 1.7 per cent, increasing residential aged care subsidies and supplements by around \$120 million a year, and community and flexible care subsidies by about \$20 million a year.

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy has described the funding “boost” as a blow for aged care, saying that it was almost impossible to understand how the Government could take pride in the announcement when CPI alone was 2.9 per cent for the March quarter over 12 months.

The dollar amount of \$140 million sounds impressive but does not come close to addressing the costs of providing care and services for older Australians. The 1.7 per cent will do nothing to stop the erosion of community care hours or help to pay more competitive wages for valued staff. It means the competition for staff will only get worse in aged care. The hours of community care an older person receives will continue to fall without more funding.

With any recommendations from the Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care still 12 months away, it seems the door has been closed on any real change to the status quo. Far from a funding boost, 1.7 per cent is a funding blow.

Next Generation Community Care Conference Success

The third biennial ACSA Community Care Conference on the Gold Coast from 2-5 June was a great success. Around 750 delegates and exhibitors eschewed the (relatively) balmy 23 degree days- and ocean temperatures- to listen to a varied, solid, inspirational, entertaining and visionary list of speakers and presenters. Delegates were so keen that for the first time in a long while, most were still around at the end for the exhibitors' raffle draws!

Delegates received a solid briefing on ageing and community care statistics from, amongst others, Mike Woods from the Productivity Commission and Professor Len Gray from the University of Queensland. These assisted delegates in understanding the real politik and funding behind service policy, provision and sustainability.

The importance of evidence based research was highlighted time and time again by many including Professor Gill Lewin from Curtin University- and Silverchain- on the Community Care National Research Agenda (which she formally launched), and Professor Louisa Jorm from the *45and Up Study* on its latest results on the health of older people receiving HACC services (also reported below), as well as other innovative and productive academic and service linkings.

Consumer Directed Care was as always, a focus of attention and debate, and it received a boost from broadcaster Phillip Adams, as well as Patricia Reeve from COTA Victoria, who summed up the consumer preference - "I want a concierge, not a case manager."

There were many interesting conference innovations to keep even jaded conference goers on their toes: along with the now traditional massages and barista coffee bars, internet connectivity was available in the exhibition area; several concurrent sessions ran with a speed dating format where multiple presentations around different tables in the one room kept conversation flowing.

Delegates were able to offer immediate feedback to the Productivity Inquiry via a recorded DVD interview.

No conference is complete without a good conference dinner and the location and theme of 2010 was a huge success: held at *Movieworld*, complete with dancing with Shrek or Tweety Bird. The three free rides on offer may have frightened off conference compere, ABC radio personality and former Doug Anthony Allstar Richard Fidler, however community care workers are known for their courage and fearlessness.

If anything can top this conference, it will be the forthcoming National Conference in Hobart and certainly its organisers were busy spruiking the eating, drinking and natural wonders of Tasmania. Rest assured that all but the scary rides will be on offer in Hobart from 19- 22 September!

For those unable to make it to the Gold Coast, CD Rom recordings of all presenters and papers will be available shortly through a commercial provider, Evertechnology www.evertechnology.com.au, and some presentations will also be posted on the ACSA website.

Keep your eyes peeled for further announcements on this, but meanwhile check out and register for Hobart. www.agedcare.org.au.

Research to Assess IT Capacity in the Aged Care Sector- 2nd Week June Start

ACAA and ACSA are engaging with the aged care sector to develop its e-health capacity. The peak bodies need to better understand the capacity and readiness of aged care homes in Australia to adopt new IT solutions for resident management.

Campbell Research & Consulting has been commissioned to conduct a study including consultation with a variety of professionals in the aged care industry. The work is being conducted under the auspices of the Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council, with funding from the Australian Government. The study will inform ACIITC on strategies to enhance IT capacity in the Australian aged care sector.

Campbell Research is conducting a survey of aged care providers to assess the readiness of the sector to move towards new and innovative e-health solutions, including medication management. The phone survey will begin the second week of June.

New IT systems for aged care will ultimately be internet based and designed to improve the quality of care and reduce the risk of medication errors. They may include electronic medication management, provision of information at the point of care, electronic prescribing and internet-based communication between homes, GPs, pharmacists and hospitals. Effective IT systems are vital for the future of the aged care industry.

Should you or your organisation be contacted by Campbell Research we urge you to participate in the study. This is your opportunity to give your opinion about building IT capacity in the aged care industry.

Appointments

Helen Conlin Corporate Relations Manager for ACSA

Helen Conlin, the newest member of the ACSA National Office team, has started as our new Corporate Relationships Manager (replacing Annette Glenister-Walker who has left to attend to family responsibilities). Helen has a strong background in marketing and communications across a number of industries and in both the public and private sectors.

Helen has a degree in communications, public relations and economics from Deakin University. She works three days a week and can be contacted by email hconlin@agedcare.org.au or by calling the ACSA office on 03 9686 3460.

Sue Macri AM Associate Commissioner to Productivity Commission Aged Care Inquiry

Sue Macri will assist the Commission in its inquiry to develop options for further structural reform of the aged care system. She has more than a decade of experience as a Director of Nursing/ CEO in the private hospital system, and has represented the aged care industry at both a state and national level on Ministerial working parties, committees and reviews including the Macri Panel on Nursing Home Documentation and Accountability Report, the National Review of Nursing Education and the National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce. For further information on the inquiry go to www.pc.gov.au

Who Will Fund Wage Boost in Aged Care, Minister?

Before this funding announcement The *Campaign for Care of Older Australians* (CCOA), of which ACSA is a member, had expressed surprise at a news report quoting the Minister Elliot's call for aged care workers to be better paid.

"Where does the Minister suggest aged care providers find the money for a wage boost?" CCOA asked. "Minister Elliot's comment beggars belief when she controls the funding and regulatory formula."

"We are delighted the Minister agrees more should be spent on aged care. We would now like her to commit to reforms that will make it possible.

"The aged sector is facing a critical short fall in funding, the majority of which is regulated and allocated by the Federal Government as part of an out of date system.

"We have called for an immediate injection of funds to meet the real costs associated with providing quality care, services and accommodation for older Australians.

"An average of 70 per cent of providers' incomes is spent on salaries sanctioned by awards and enterprise agreements, leaving very little to cover other critical costs including accommodation.

"There was no relief provided in the Federal Budget and the Productivity Commission inquiry, which will address wages, staffing and funding, is still 12 months away from completion.

"An increase in subsidies is necessary now to ensure there are sustainable services to meet growing numbers of older people, along with an undertaking from all parties to real reform in aged care during the next term of government."

Greg Mundy commented that the funding announcement added fuel to the flames of insufficient funding, plus government support for wage increases for staff. He added that the 4.8 per cent wage increase announced last week would not help matters at all.

Palliative Care Funding

Minister for Health Nicola Roxon and Minister Elliot, marked National Palliative Care Week 2010 by announcing \$14.3 million to fund nine projects for improved palliative care services, research, training and information, including:

- \$2.2 million to the Queensland University of Technology for continued education and training for the palliative care workforce; 1.3 million for Flinders University to continue the rollout of 'CareSearch' – a website that provides information to consumers and clinicians;
- \$6.6 million to the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) for the ongoing rollout of a quality improvement program; and
- \$866,000 to Palliative Care Australia for the National Standards Assessment Program.

Training Aged Care Workers

Minister Elliot has announced state funding allocations for the \$19 Million allocated to train 4,000 aged care workers nationally. Training places will be allocated to all states and territories as follows:

State/territory	Training places
New South Wales	1,403
Victoria	732
Queensland	884
South Australia	374
Western Australia	449
Tasmania	110
Australian Capital Territory	60
Northern Territory	32
TOTAL	4045

Details

Building Careers in Aged Care

This initiative provides additional training opportunities for aged care workers wishing to up skill to an Enrolled Nurse or a Registered Nurse and will provide 600 fully funded Enrolled Nursing Places and 300 Undergraduate scholarships over four years at a cost of \$21 million. These additional training places and scholarships will be delivered as part of the broader workforce programs.

Education and Training Incentive Payments for Aged Care Workers

The Aged Care Education and Training Incentive initiative will encourage aged care workers to complete appropriate aged care related qualifications. From 1 July 2010, existing aged care workers commencing study in approved Vocational and Education Training Certificates, Enrolled Nurses or Undergraduate Nursing will receive incentive payments on commencement and completion of their study. There will be two \$500 incentive payments for approved Certificate study, \$1,000 and \$1,500 for Enrolled Nurse study and \$2,000 and \$3,000 for the Bachelor of Nursing. Second payments are contingent on continued employment in aged care. Up to 50,000 workers are expected to access these incentive payments. This measure will cost \$59.9 million over four years.

Payments will commence in January 2011 and will be made retrospectively to workers commencing approved study on or after 1 July 2010.

Nurse Practitioners – Models of Practice Projects

This will provide seed funding to test and evaluate different models of practice for nurse practitioners in aged care. It will support the sector to encourage growth of this workforce pool to improve access to high quality primary care for residents in the longer term. It is proposed to fund up to 25 projects and the results will be promulgated across the sector in 2013-14. This measure will cost \$19 million over four years.

There is a fourth measure that provides funding to define and document a national scope of practice and competency framework for more than 100,000 personal care workers and assistants in nursing who provide direct care to older and vulnerable Australians in aged care homes, the community and hospitals. It will be administered by Health Workforce Division.

Other Changes

In addition to this new money, the Government is shifting the focus of the existing workforce programs (\$211 million over four years) to provide greater flexibility and increased focus on clinical care. This will include the provision of seed funding for Teaching Nursing Homes, improved clinical training and placements through better clinical supervision, incentives for providers that have structured graduate programs and retraining scholarships. Funds from the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce (aged care) measure have also been redirected to support these new initiatives

National Rental Affordability Scheme Round Four Calls for Applications

Minister for Housing, Tanya Plibersek has announced that round four applications for the National Rental Affordability Scheme round will open on June 14.

This round will encourage applications from investors wanting to build at least 20 new affordable rental homes for low and moderate income households, with priority given to applications to build 100 or more homes. Applications for round four will be assessed as they are received. The round will close on December 14, 2010.

Not for Profits to Benefit from Corporate Law Changes

The administration of not for profit organisations will be easier and more efficient with the introduction of the Corporations Amendment (Corporate Reporting Reform) Bill 2010 by the Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law, Chris Bowen MP.

The key measures include:

- Significantly reducing the regulatory burden on companies limited by guarantee, which typically have a not for profit purpose, by introducing a three-tiered differential reporting framework;
- Streamlining parent-entity reporting;
- Providing greater flexibility for companies to pay dividends, by replacing the profits test with a solvency-type test; and
- Allowing companies to more easily change their year-end date to minimise the burden on companies and their auditors during peak reporting periods.
- The reforms will also implement refinements to the regulatory framework, including:
 - Improving disclosure of non-financial information in the directors' report;
 - Refining the statement of compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards contained in the directors' declaration; and
 - Clarifying the circumstances in which a company can cancel its share capital.

45 and Up Research Findings on Health of HACC Clients

Professor Louisa Jorm, Research Director at the Sax Institute, says data from Australia's largest cohort, the *45 and Up Study*, has identified that many older Australians who are relying on home and community care services in order to remain in their homes and independent have chronic, but often preventable, health conditions including diabetes, heart disease and depression as well as high rates of both underweight and overweight, and low levels of physical activity.

“This is a large, hidden group of Australians who have chronic diseases and a huge reliance on public services so understanding how they are using these services is crucial to understanding healthy ageing,” said Professor Jorm, who presented the data to the ACSA Community Care Conference.

She said the findings provide enormous potential for implementing programs that target lifestyle risk factors through the home and community care sector. The full report is at www.45andup.org.au

Researching Community Care with Older People

This 8 page booklet covers the rationale and work of the National Community Care Research Agenda project, a joint activity of ACSA, the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) and the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well. It provides advice on how to:

- find a researcher to collaborate with,
- involve older people in research activities,
- fund research,
- get approval for research, and
- get involved in student research .

It was formally launched at the Community Care Conference and is available by emailing llovell@agedcare.org.au at ACSA.

Agency Accreditation

The residential aged care sector has achieved a really good record in the fourth accreditation round, according to Mark Brandon, CEO of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency. He was speaking at an aged care conference in NSW.

In December 2009, 94 per cent of the nation’s aged care facilities were compliant with all 44 of the agency’s expected outcomes, up from 92 per cent in December 2006. Non-compliant homes now tend to have fewer problems than they did in the past, with the number of areas that are found to be non-compliant is much lower. The vast majority of homes manage to fix the problem within the timetable for improvement.

The most common risks for residential providers include changes in ownership, changes in systems and processes, the loss of key staff, building projects and changes in resident mix, with expected outcome 1.8: information systems being the major problem.

AMA: More Support Needed for Doctors Working in Aged Care

The AMA has called for more Government support for doctors to provide medical care to frail, elderly residents in aged care facilities.

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said that he is not surprised by the alarming reports of poor care being delivered in some residential aged care facilities and that our senior citizens deserve better. These reports come at the same time as the results of a survey by Catholic Health Australia, which revealed that residents had poor access to medical care.

Dr Pesce said that the Government must ensure more doctors are encouraged and supported to provide medical care to older people living in residential aged care. The AMA has already provided the Government with its proposals for access to medical care for residents in aged care. www.ama.com.au

Workers with mental illness: a practical guide for managers

The Australian Human Rights Commission has published this guide that aims to help managers better understand mental illness, develop strategies that assist workers with a mental illness and ensure that their workplaces are healthy and productive.

This publication can be found in electronic format on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website at:

www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/publications/workers_mental_illness_guide.html

Chronic Disease Study

Australia's primary care system is not providing optimal care for people with chronic conditions, according to a new study in the current edition of the *Australian Health Review*.

"Chronic disease represents a significant long-term challenge for the Australian healthcare system in terms of the number of people affected (or at risk) and the morbidity, mortality and health system expenditure associated with these diseases," study leader Professor Hal Swerissen, Dean of Health Sciences, LaTrobe University, said.

"Problems identified with the current system include seemingly arbitrary caps on services and the potential for overlap between some programs. Overall, the system appears to be designed to manage costs rather than chronic disease and is unlikely to result in the best health outcomes for" patients.

"This could be addressed with a better MBS design, particularly around allied health access and a more sophisticated approach to service caps is needed that provides 'service packages' in line with assessed patient need, rather than the current one-size-fits-all approach.

Younger People with Disability in Residential Aged Care Program Report

This report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows that in 2008–09, a total of 817 people received services funded by the Younger People with Disability in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) program.

The Report on the 2008-09 Minimum Data Set shows a 41% increase in the number of people receiving YPIRAC program assistance in 2007–08. Three-quarters of service users were under 50 years of age, the initial priority group for the program.

Over the first three years of the program, over 90 people moved out of residential aged care to more age-appropriate supported disability accommodation. In the same period, more than 300 people were provided with enhanced services within a residential aged care setting and almost 150 were diverted from inappropriate admission to residential aged care.

About one-third of service users were to remain in residential aged care, but with additional support services.

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, both welcomed the report.

Under the new health and hospitals reform agenda, the Australian Government will take over full responsibility for aged care. Supporting people with disability under the age of 65, including those in residential aged care, will be funded under the National Disability Agreement.

“For the first time, this will deliver clear incentives for the disability service system to provide more appropriate accommodation options for younger people with disability,” Ms Macklin said.

www.aihw.gov.au

Nursing and Midwifery Empowerment Project

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) and Health Super have announced a partnership to conduct a study into how patient care in hospitals and aged care services can be improved by providing Nurse Unit Managers with better support and training.

The *Catholic Health Australia Nursing and Midwifery Empowerment Project* will explore a range of support options such as new work processes, workplace education and training, and senior staff mentoring.

The study will be released in September. For more information go to: www.cha.org.au

Asthma among Older People in Australia

This AIHW report highlights key national data relating to asthma in older Australians: Acute respiratory infection in asthma sufferers appeared to increase between 1998 and 2006. This occurred despite relatively stable infection rates in the general population. The report is at www.aihw.gov.au

Asthma Management Handbook

The National Asthma Council Australia is preparing to develop the 7th edition of the *Asthma Management Handbook*.

It is seeking input from GPs, pharmacists, practice nurses and asthma educators to help guide the format and content of the new edition. To participate go to www.nationalasthma.org.au

Primary Carers of People with Arthritis and Osteoporosis

As Australia's population ages, the number of people with arthritis and osteoporosis is projected to rise and the ageing of the primary carers is likely to become a major issue, according to this new AIHW report.

In 2003, about 50,000 Australians received help from primary carers because of a severe or profound disability caused by arthritis or osteoporosis. Over 40 per cent of these carers were 65 years or older and 70 per cent had physical problems of their own. www.aihw.gov.au

Conferences

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Forum 4 – 5 August 2010, Adelaide, South Australia

The Department of Health and Ageing together with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Home and Community Care (HACC) Reference Group is holding this forum to provide an environment where collaboration, strategic thinking, communication and linkages across the Indigenous aged care sector can occur.

The Forum will provide a platform to stimulate discussions on professional workforce development and building employer capacity to help support a sustainable Indigenous Aged Care sector.

Abstracts that addresses one or more of the Forum themes are being called for.

Abstracts will be accepted until 5.00PM EST 18 June 2010.

Abstracts should focus on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care sector and will be grouped according to one or more of the following themes:

Innovation in service delivery; How to improve services; Building partnerships; Workforce, training, recruitment and retention; Models of service delivery; Developing a nationally consistent aged care system; and Continuity of care. More details are available at

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-aged-care-forum.htm>

Productivity Commission Not Always Right?

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) has rejected the conclusions of the Productivity Commission in its Supplement to the Report into Public and Private Hospitals, and expressed outrage at the Commission's use of death rates to compare efficiency across the public and private sectors. The AHHA said that the report itself acknowledges that the methods it used are 'experimental'.

"The Productivity Commission (PC) Report is an extremely poor piece of research and analysis. It reveals a total lack of understanding among the Commissioners of the differences between the public and private hospital sectors and will do nothing to promote efforts to improve patient safety throughout Australian hospitals," Ms Prue Power, Executive Director, said.

"Public and private hospitals perform different functions and treat very different patient groups. Therefore, comparisons of their mortality rates cannot be used to assess their relative efficiency.

"The PC Report also ignores the fact that almost all health and medical care in rural and remote settings is provided by the public sector. Rural and remote communities are generally older and in poorer health than their urban counterparts. Therefore, they will have higher mortality rates when receiving hospital treatment."

Implications of Japan's Ageing Population

GE Healthcare Japan has released a white paper titled "From Silver to Gold: The Implications of Japan's Ageing Population" on May 31. Developed independently by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)¹, the report takes an in-depth look into the major issues and possibilities represented by the rapidly ageing population and examines the key issues in establishing a new model for growth in an ageing society.

The report is available at <http://newsroom.gehealthcare.com/uploads/assets/silver-to-gold.pdf>

The Australasian Journal on Ageing Associate Editor

Expressions of interest are invited for the role of Associate Editor of the Australasian Journal on Ageing (AJA). Expertise in geriatric medicine with a focus on health services research would be desirable. The appointment will commence from September 2010.

The Australasian Journal on Ageing (AJA) is a multi-disciplinary peer reviewed journal and the region's premier journal on ageing. The journal provides current evidence on priority issues in ageing related to Australia and New Zealand, and increasingly in the international sphere. The AJA publishes original work

in any area of gerontology and geriatric medicine, drawing out relevance for policy and practice to inform readers from a wide range of disciplines and professions. The AJA Editorial Team is an expert team purposely selected to cover the wide range of disciplines relevant to the journal, and appointed to promote the profile of the journal.

The AJA is currently published quarterly under a contractual arrangement between the Australasian Journal on Ageing Inc (the Association) and Wiley-Blackwell (the Publisher). The Journal was listed in the Thomson Scientific ISI Database in 2006, in MEDLINE in 2008 and the first Impact Factor for 2008 was announced in June 2009 as 0.319.

The AJA Editorial team includes the Editor-in-Chief, three general Associate Editors and one Book Review Associate Editor. The Editorial team is also supported by an Editorial Board. Each Associate Editor is expected to take editorial responsibility for approximately one quarter of all manuscripts submitted to AJA, to attend one face-to-face meeting annually, and a teleconference every three months.

Editors are expected to submit at least one manuscript for review to the AJA each calendar year, and to review manuscripts for the journal where relevant.

The Associate Editor should have a strong profile in ageing research or practice, and a commitment to quality and ethical publishing. A history of both reviewing and submitting manuscripts to the AJA would be an additional advantage, and the endorsement for an Expression of Interest from a member of the current editorial team will be viewed highly.

Editorial team members are invited to serve initially for a three year term. They may be invited to serve another three year term at the expiry of their first term. A maximum of two terms (six years) will be served in succession by any editorial team member.

Additional information can be obtained from the Association by telephoning Nicola Thurston on 08 8224 5510 or by email nthurston@seniorsvoice.org.au.

Applications should include a statement addressing the selection criteria with a covering letter and curriculum vitae, and be sent to: nthurston@seniorsvoice.org.au. The closing date for Expressions of Interest is July 30, 2010.

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