

# *The National Report*

**11 February 2010 – Issue 221**  
**Aged & Community Services Australia**



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## At Last the 2010 Intergenerational Report

After much fanfare, including a Prime Ministerial tour around Australia warning of the challenges of a growing, ageing population which was described in the last *National Report* (Issue 220), the Treasurer, Wayne Swan, has released the *2010 Intergenerational Report Australia to 2050: Future Challenges (IGR)*.

The third IGR provides a comprehensive study of the challenges that Australia will face over the next 40 years, including an ageing population, escalating pressures on the health system, and the environmental and economic challenges of climate change.

Mr Swan said the report shows that population ageing and escalating pressures on our health system will put major pressures on the federal budget over the next 40 years. Population ageing will place greater demands on government services, while escalating health costs driven by better

technology and demand for higher quality health services over longer life spans will add to these pressures, he said.

Although prepared by Treasury, the forecasts and Government interpretations are open to analysis, critique and debate, which has been forthcoming from the media, industry groups and interested parties such as ACSA (see our response below).

Ross Gittins pointed out in the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* on 8 February, “The Intergenerational report is essentially a propaganda exercise and, like most exercises, relies heavily on exaggeration. When you examine the figures you see the budgetary cost of ageing is quite modest and quite manageable, but we do have a big question about how to finance the expected strong growth in the quality and quantity of health care.”

“If we’ve got a healthcare funding question, why not just say so? Why pretend it is all caused by ageing?”

National Seniors reminds us that “As previous IGR have pointed out, a large part of the increase in health spending is not caused by an ageing population but by the need to invest in new medicines and treatments.’

## ACSA Response

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy has commented that ageing population is old news, and that the forecast growth in the numbers of older Australians contained in the 3<sup>rd</sup> IGR should come as no surprise to the Government.

“The Report’s status gives credence to ACSA’s push for major reform, which is critical if we are to have any hope of meeting the diverse needs of a whole generation aged over 65.

Catering for the accommodation and care needs of older Australians must be a major feature of the Government’s broad agenda to manage the future of our country. This must be seen as a positive challenge to provide more flexible and integrated services to meet these needs and not as an onerous task.

The Aged Care sector is currently contending with serious funding issues, over regulation, and in some parts of Australia including many rural and remote communities, a major shortfall in services and accommodation.

We have the answers, we need a Government and a society willing to address these issues and have a real conversation about aged care, one which has a positive focus.

Comments today by the Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon and the Minister for Ageing Justine Elliot that the Government is committed to sustainable, high quality aged care are heartening. However, we still await news on how the Government is ‘building a modern aged care system that will help meet the challenges of our ageing population’.”

CEO of the Australian Industry Group Heather Ridout has warned that the next apology to Australians will be made to people in nursing homes if we fail to properly prepare for the future. We agree but would extend the comment to apply to all older people who need care.” Taking steps now will reduce the need for even harder decisions in the future.”

The Report can be accessed at: [http://www.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010/report/pdf/IGR\\_2010.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010/report/pdf/IGR_2010.pdf)

## Health Reform

Along with the IGR, and climate change, the Prime Minister has kept up the debate on health reform and the imminent Government response to the National Health and Hospitals Reform (NHHRC) Report.

ACSA has made it clear it wishes to see real reform in this area, aged care is definitely part of the challenge and any reform process. It views with concern however Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's claim to have left aged care in good shape under the Coalition government's rule. To ACSA it was more a decade of failure to confront fundamental issues - hopefully not to be repeated by the current government.

## 2010-11 Budget Submission

ACSA has made its 2010-11 Budget submission under the aegis of the Aged Care Industry Council (ACIC) - the peak council of Australia's aged care providers, made up of ACSA and the Aged Care Association Australia (ACAA) – to address the issues affecting the entire industry with a concerted and consistent approach.

The submission focuses on the immediate action required to progress the aged care reform agenda. It lists the issues that must be addressed to ensure a robust and sustainable aged care sector, able to effectively support older people and the Government's reform agenda. The five current major issues facing industry are, inadequate indexation, capital funding, community care and technology infrastructure, and difficulty in attracting and retaining staff.

As a result service providers are reducing the hours of care older people receive, and declining to apply for more aged care beds. This means that increasingly older people who need residential care are not, and will not be able to find a bed and once in the community will not be able to make up the short fall.

ACIC has made five recommendations for government to redress this situation: New indexation for care funding; a sustainable capital funding system; increased funding for community care; undertaking a scoping study and national pilot trial of Teaching Nursing Homes, and other innovative models, including those that support clinical leadership support and more effective provision of medical care; and finally development and deployment of an electronic medication management solution for aged care, initially targeted to residential care.

The full submission may be accessed on the ACSA website: [www.agedcare.org.au](http://www.agedcare.org.au).

## Productive Ageing Package

Along with the IGR the Rudd Government launched a new \$43.3 million Productive Ageing Package to provide training and support for older Australians who want to stay in the workforce. The new Productive Ageing Package builds on other measures to support older Australians, including the 2009 introduction of a new Work Bonus allowing age pensioners to retain more of their income under the pension means-test.

Through the Productive Ageing Package, the Australian Government is committing \$18.8 million to help mature age workers stay in employment and to support skills transfer.

This includes:

- 2000 training packages for employers to allow eligible mature age workers to retrain as supervisors or trainers of young apprentices or as workplace assessors;
- 50 funding grants for Golden Gurus organisations to connect mature age people who are retired, semi-retired or not working full-time with employers of trade apprentices; and
- face-to-face job support and training for 2000 eligible mature-age workers with a health condition or injury which impacts on their ability to do their job.

The Government is also committing \$23.5 million to help mature age workers transition to new employment through Job Services Australia, including assistance through the Employment Pathway Fund for training relevant to the job seeker's needs.

The Government is establishing a Consultative Forum on Mature Age Participation to advise on further measures to help mature age workers who want to remain in the workforce.

The forum will include seniors groups, employment service providers, education and training providers, trade unions and health and ageing experts and will meet for the first time later this month. Chairman of National Seniors Australia, Mr Everald Compton AM, will be the inaugural Chairman.

The Consultative Forum will provide advice to the Government until at least July 2012. The other measures commence on July 1 and continue until 2014. More information is available at: [www.keeptaustraliaworking.gov.au](http://www.keeptaustraliaworking.gov.au).

## Migration Changes

The Minister for Immigration, Senator Chris Evans, has just announced major changes to Australia's Skilled Migration Program. More details including those relating to exactly which occupations and industries will be targeted under the changes, will not be announced until April.

However the *Australian Financial Review* reported on 9 February that Skills Australia (SA), the government's chief advisory body on workforce development, has included nursing in its list of 'specialised occupations' to be included in a skills formation program to be undertaken by the government. SA's recommendations will be a major factor in the composition of the migration changes which could impact on aged care.

## Accommodation Bond Interest Rate

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has set the maximum accommodation bond interest rate for residents entering residential care between 1 January and 31 March 2010. The new rate is 7.95 per cent.

Current and previous maximum permissible interest rates are available at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/ageing-finance-gic.htm>.

The revised Schedule of Fees and Charges effective from 1 January 2010 are available at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/ageing-finance-resfees.htm>.

## Directory of Services for Older People 2010

The Minister for Ageing , Justine Elliot, has launched the 2010 edition of *The 'Directory of Services for Older People 2010* , a free guide for older people on legal rights, accessing aged care, finance and health.

This year the directory has been printed with spiral binding so it can be laid flat when being read, larger type to make it easier to read and tabs to make finding the relevant section even easier.

Copies of the directory, including versions in Braille, and CD audio versions are available by contacting the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853, Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222 or through Centrelink offices. An electronic version of the guide can be obtained at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-agdos-2010.htm>

## Dementia Funding

Minister Elliot has announced \$21.7 million in funding for Dementia Collaborative Research Centres and Dementia Study Training Centres across Australia.

The \$21.7 million, three and a half year commitment will provide funding to five Dementia Training Study Centres and three Collaborative Research Centres.

The three Collaborative Research Centres to receive funding are the:

- Australian National University - \$3.9 million for early diagnosis and prevention;
- University of New South Wales - \$5.1 million for assessment and better care outcomes; and
- Queensland University of Technology - \$4.1million for research focussing on carers and consumers.

The Dementia Training Study Centres provide tertiary dementia career pathways and training for health professionals. These five training centres, located across Australia are:

- University of Wollongong - \$2.2 million;
- La Trobe University - \$2 million;
- Alzheimer's Australia (South Australia) - \$1.7 million;
- Curtin University of Technology - \$1.2 million; and
- Queensland University of Technology - \$1.3 million.

## New State Government Ads to Fill Carer Vacancies

New NSW government advertisements will air on TV starting in February, seeking to fill 38,000 job vacancies expected in the NSW aged and disability care sectors over the next five years. The ads are designed, in part, to encourage those who may never have considered working in the care sector before.

## New Aboriginal Health Workers Peak National Body

The Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, has launched a peak national body for Australia's 1600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers.

Mr Snowden said the Association will help build workforce capacity by bringing together Indigenous health workers and providing them with a strong professional voice. It will look at national registration and accreditation strategies for the next two years, and help establish upskilling and training support to ensure there is consistency nationally.

The Association will provide advocacy, mentoring and support for indigenous health workers and will provide information through a new website at [www.natsihwa.org.au](http://www.natsihwa.org.au).

## ABS CPI December Quarter 2009

The ABS Consumer Price Index rose 0.5% in the December quarter 2009, compared with a rise of 1.0% in the September quarter 2009. The most significant price rises this quarter were for fruit (+15.9%), domestic holiday travel and accommodation (+6.6%), house purchase (+1.0%), rent (+1.0%) and beer (+2.1%). The most significant offsetting price falls were automotive fuel (-2.8%), audio visual and computing equipment (-7.1%) and pharmaceuticals (-5.3%).

The ABS Consumer Price Index rose 2.1% through the year to December quarter 2009, compared to an annual rise of 1.3% to September quarter 2009.

## Australasian Journal on Ageing

Australasian Journal on Ageing (AJA) December 2009, vol 29, issue 4, has now been published and sent to subscribers. AJA is the peer reviewed journal co-published by ACSA and the Australian Association of Gerontology, Council on the Ageing (COTA), and the Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine. Main articles of interest include:

- Assessment of frailty in older people in acute care-development of reported Edmonton frail scale.
- How Australian adults use the internet.
- Orthopaedic –geriatric models of care.
- Transitions from hospital to aged care.
- Innovations in aged care - delirium unit.
- Advance care planning in residential aged care setting.
- Do physical activity levels influence the cardiovascular related physiological characteristics of post menopausal women?
- Tai chai for treating rheumatoid arthritis.

Subscription details for ACSA members are on the website under publications:

[www.agedcare.org.au](http://www.agedcare.org.au)

## Telstra Technology Grants

Community groups can now apply for grants worth up to \$50,000 to help seniors make the most of modern-day communications technology such as mobile phones and computers.

Grant amounts range up to \$5000 for local community organisations and up to \$50,000 for state and territory organisations. Eligible community organisations can apply for Telstra Connected Seniors grants at [www.telstraseniors.com.au](http://www.telstraseniors.com.au) until 5pm AEST on 5 March.

## Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2010

The 15<sup>th</sup> Report on Government Services 2010, along with an associated report by the Steering Committee of senior officials from Australian, State and Territory governments for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) was released on 29 January.

The Steering Committee chair Gary Banks, who is also Chairman of the Productivity Commission, observed that the Report promotes open and informed debate about the performance of government services across the country. Governments spent over \$136 billion on the services covered in this year's Report, equivalent to around 13 per cent of Australia's national income.

## Call for Gay and Lesbian Seniors to be Designated as Special Needs Group

Gerontologist Dr Jo Harrison has called for gay and lesbian seniors to be designated as an official special needs group along with indigenous seniors, culturally and linguistically diverse seniors, seniors in rural and remote areas, and seniors with dementia and the new recently announced category of Forgotten Australians who had been abused in orphanages between 1930 and 1970. In a report in the *Star Observer*, she said the Commonwealth then needed to provide the sorts of sensitivity awareness training, changes to paperwork, notification of staff that has to go with that. They need to get advocates on the ground who can provide: advocacy, who can train staff, and who can begin to write the education modules.

Harrison said the response from departmental officials is that current standards covering residents' rights to their own cultural customs, lifestyle, privacy and dignity should also cover gay and lesbian seniors.

However, she said in the absence of federal anti-discrimination laws or specific guidelines covering gay and lesbian seniors this was unlikely to happen.

<http://www.starobserver.com.au/news/2010/01/26/policy-vacuum-on-gay-seniors/20677>

## Calendar of Cultural and Religious Dates 2010

This Calendar, compiled by the Department of Immigration, aims to raise awareness of key cultural and religious events, festivals and national days.

<http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/calendar-australia/>

## Aged care act is "illogical"

A Queensland lawyer says the Aged Care Act needs to be changed to remove an "illogical" phrase which prevents providers from appealing certain decisions made by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

Late last year the Federal Court found that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) cannot scrutinise decisions about the length of accreditation when the agency has conducted an internal review and upheld its original decision.

However the AAT can hear an appeal about the length of accreditation when the agency has varied the original decision.

A report in *Australian Ageing Agenda* quoted Tim Longwill, a partner with McCullough Robertson, saying that the court's decision was consistent with the letter of the law, however he believed that the legislation has some anomalies.

"The decision acknowledged that the act is probably illogical but it couldn't go beyond the plain words of the legislation because of the way it was expressed," he said.

"This means that if the agency decided to change the period of accreditation from one year to 364 days, the provider would have a right to appeal – but if it maintained its decision, it would not. That makes no sense."

Mr Longwill said that anecdotally, the agency decides not to change a significant number of decisions, effectively blocking any avenues for independent review.

"There is no independent body that can say the agency got that decision wrong," he said.

"We argued that the wording in the Act did not convey the true intention of the legislation but the court did not accept that. Therefore I think the legislation needs to be changed." Mr Longwill said there may be other methods for appealing these decisions but they were more costly and time consuming.

## ACSA 2010 Aged Care Excellence Awards

These Awards recognise the most innovative and inspiring individuals and services in the aged care industry. To be a finalist in the national awards you first have to nominate for an award in your state.

### Queensland

Award nominations EXTENDED close Friday 19 February, visit [www.acqi.org.au](http://www.acqi.org.au)

### NSW and ACT

Calling for nominations, visit [www.agedservices.asn.au](http://www.agedservices.asn.au)

Nominations close 1 April with the Award presentation at the ACS State Conference on Thursday 29 April, Darling Harbour.

There are six Award Categories - Employee, Volunteer, Trainee, Organisation, Media, Industry Supporter – so don't just stop at one nomination!

## Conference News

**19th Annual Tri-State Conference 28 February – 2 March 2010  
Mount Gambier, South Australia**

### Speakers Include:

- The Hon Justine Elliot MP, Minister for Ageing
- Ita Buttrose, prominent businesswoman, journalist, author and most notably, former Editor of *The Australia Woman's Weekly*.
- Peter Condliffe, Barrister, Specialist Mediator and Author of *Conflict Management: A Practical Guide*; and

- Mark Brandon, CEO, Aged Care Accreditation and Standards Agency.
- Greg Mundy, Martin Laverty & Rod Young talking about the aged care industry's campaign to lift the profile of aged care issues.

To take advantage of the Early Bird discount and register online visit:

[www.accv.com.au/Tri-StateConference.aspx](http://www.accv.com.au/Tri-StateConference.aspx)

**Information Technology in Aged Care 2010 Conference – ITAC 2010  
26 – 27 July 2010, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins**

This conference is a joint initiative by ACSA, ACAA and HISA.

The ITAC 2010 theme of *Smart Aged Care - the E-Health Revolution* emphasises the importance of information technology in establishing a sustainable, quality focused aged care environment.

For further information or to register go to <http://www.itac2010.com.au>

**Language Services in Aged Care: Who What Where and How: Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing: Friday 26 February 9.30am – 3.00pm,  
The University of Melbourne – Hawthorn Campus 442 Auburn Road Hawthorn Victoria**

Professional language services are key to effective communications with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This seminar is designed to assist aged care professionals to develop their competence in the use of interpreting and translation services. Target audience: service managers, case managers, care coordinators, quality officers and policy officers. Registration and further details at [www.culturaldiversity.com.au](http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au)

**International Federation On Ageing (IFA) 2010 10th Global Conference:  
3 – 6 May 2010 Melbourne.**

Climate change and ageing will be a major feature of the conference which will address Healthy Ageing, Social Inclusion, Climate Change, Resourcing Change, and Human Rights  
Early Bird Deadline has now been extended to 18 February 2010.  
For more information visit: <http://www.ifa2010.org/>.

**European Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (EAHSA): Towards Sustainable Elderly Care. 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference May 27–28, 2010 in Stockholm.**

The content of the program reflects the substantial level of knowledge possessed by researchers and practitioners across Europe, as well as the importance that government agencies attach to issues relating to the elderly. For further information and registration see [www.micasa.se/eahsa](http://www.micasa.se/eahsa).

## Requests to Participate in Reviews/ Research

### National Palliative Care Strategy Review

Minister Elliot announced in April 2009 a review of the National Palliative Care Strategy. Communio, the consultants undertaking the review of the National Palliative Care Strategy, have now posted the Phase 1 report to the project website [npcsu.communio.org/](http://npcsu.communio.org/).

Phase 2 of the Review will comprise an extensive consultation process as the consultants revise and update the strategy. Interested parties and stakeholders are invited to register on the website to be involved in the consultation process which will occur in all capital cities during March 2010.

A comprehensive survey is also being undertaken as part of this phase. To participate go to the link on their website [npcsu.communiogroup.com/](http://npcsu.communiogroup.com/)

### Research on Transition from Frail to End of Life Status in Aged Care

Ruth Hohn, a research student at the Brisbane campus of Australian Catholic University, is looking for aged care RNs, ENs and care staff who might respond to her 20 minute online survey on identifying the signs that death is imminent for an elderly person.

If she gets sufficient responses she is hoping in the future to be able to put together a guideline for aged care staff to help them to decide when the person has transitioned from frail to end-stage status. If you are interested, access to the survey is: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/VD2F9MR](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VD2F9MR)

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