

The National Report

8 April 2010 – Issue 225
Aged & Community Services Australia



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On Line Registration Now Open: ACSA National Community Care Conference 2010: Gold Coast 2-4 June

The Next Generation of Community Care will evolve through *Rethinking* and *Reshaping* our outlook; and *Rewarding* carers and older people with a new generation of care.

The 2010 ACSA National Community Care ‘Next Generation’ Conference is our 3rd national conference for community care, which is set to take centre stage as we embark on new and rewarding challenges to meet the needs of growing numbers of older Australians.

This will be the major opportunity to discuss community care this year.

The exciting program to inspire the reshaping of Community Care is a must for everyone involved in our industry. We already make a difference in people's lives – more than ever we have to make that difference count.

The Conference Dinner is included in the full registration price so there is no excuse not to star at this year's event.

Registration Brochure available now!

http://www.acqi.org.au/images/Conferences/ACSA_Community_Care_Brochure_LR.pdf

ACSA 2010 Aged Care Excellence Awards

Celebrate – Share – Recognise

Innovation – Excellence - Dedication

The ACSA Awards are your chance to celebrate the outstanding contribution of aged care staff and organisations by nominating an employee, volunteer or organisation. There is an Award category to suit.

Click on the relevant State link below for further information and nomination forms. All State winners progress to the National Awards.

NSW and ACT - These Awards are now closed for judging. Nominations have been received in greater numbers than ever before - so the race is on!

NOMINATIONS CLOSING SOON

SA and NT

Nominations close Friday 16 April 2010 www.agedcommunity.asn.au

Western Australia

Nominations close Wednesday 21 April 2010 www.acswa.org.au

Victoria

Nominations close Friday 23 April 2010 www.accv.com.au

Call for Papers - The ACSA Twenty 10 National Conference *Explore the Possibilities: Hobart Sunday 19-Wednesday 22* **September**

In 2009 we stood up for the future of aged and community care and made our voices heard in Government and the community.

This year it is time for us to design a bright and sustainable future for our industry. To make sure we explore all the possibilities we will draw on sources far and wide – finding lessons and innovation both outside our industry 'square' and from within our industry.

ACSA is seeking examples of innovation and excellence from industry participants. Do you have examples that you can share with us? Your story might be one of success, or one that you believe others should hear to help protect them from the pitfalls you found.

Presentations should be suitable for a concurrent audience (20 – 30 minutes including question time) and should elaborate on your innovation or advice on what others should avoid. It should encourage delegates including providers, academics, researchers, government officials and consumers to *Explore the possibilities* in an interactive, informative and practical session.

We are particularly interested in presentations that fall within one of the Conference sub-themes:

- Sustainability – New approaches to ensure a service survives or thrives in an unfair funding environment and the challenges this poses for an organisation.
- Information Technology – New or existing technology which can be used in aged and community care to improve older people’s quality of life, or the working environment for staff.
- Food – Fresh approaches for providing older people with nourishing and interesting meals; incorporating choice into a sustainable budget. What can the aged and community care industry teach the rest of the community about this issue?
- Travel – Coping with the desire of future clients to travel; how will models of care or technology facilitate travel?
- Marketing – Marketing to ensure sustainable organisations; examples of innovative strategies.
- Community – Tapping into the local community; building partnerships; the challenges of forging new relationships.
- Workforce – Innovative staffing models; new techniques to recruit, develop and retain staff; challenges for the future.

While we have provided some guidelines and suggestions we welcome papers that explore the possibilities inherent in the themes outlined above.

Our general advice is, if you have a project, story or experience that you think others might like to know about -submit!!

Closing date is 30 April. You will be advised if your paper has been accepted by 31 May
Go to http://www.cdesign.com.au/acsa2010/zone_presenters.html to find out the details.

Interest Hotting Up in Aged Care

The Government’s plans for a public hospital takeover, including the Leaders’ debate on 23 March, have brought aged care policies and funding back into the political and media arena. Victorian Premier Brumby- the most vociferous state skeptic of the federal hospital plans - has stated that aged care reform and funding must be an integral part of any discussions and agreement to be worked out on hospitals.

ACSA has commented publicly on the link between the two, as a national organisation and also as part of the Campaign for Care of Older Australians (CCOA). In response to the debate, CCOA pointed out that aged care is about more than helping 2000 seniors leave hospital, as had been portrayed in the debate.

During the showdown the PM said one of the keys to unlocking hospital beds was to make sure there were sufficient aged care places.” What we've got a real problem with is to make sure we've got enough transitional care beds for that to happen," Mr Rudd said.

"While Mr Rudd said he wanted to take full responsibility for primary and aged care services, his most detailed reference (on Tuesday) concerned only transition care," CCOA commented.

The PM has responded to these comments, and criticisms that only 'part of the picture' has been filled in with the hospital announcement, by saying that 'of course' the question of the commonwealth takeover of aged care, is part of the overall reform. The commonwealth government will, Rudd promises, be the sole funder of the aged – and community aged-care sector.

Meanwhile Health Minister Roxon has sought to include aged care under the overall health reform umbrella. On 28 March she stated -that without reform in the financing and governance of the health system there will never be investment in innovative models of aged care to meet the needs of a new generation of older Australians, are the strongest indication to date of the Government's position,"

CCOA welcomed her support for aged care reform, as the strongest indication to date of the Government's position. "The Minister's acknowledgment that more needs to be done to support and assist older, frail members of our community, must be acted upon without delay."

Roxon's "recognition of concerns about complaints in the aged care sector and significant staffing issues, also point to the urgent need for an overhaul of aged care. Access and choice for older Australians and sustainability in the aged care sector has to happen as soon as possible."

CCOA said the impending Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care would provide an appropriate forum to comprehensively address the extensive flaws in the system – including the complaints procedure, difficulties attracting and retaining qualified staff, inadequate access to capital and lack of funding.

"We are ready to work with the Government and again call for the terms of reference for the Productivity Commission inquiry to be announced, to enable planning for the long term future of aged care".

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy has been interviewed on the issues surrounding such a takeover, for example on 31 March on the ABC radio program *PM*. He stated that having a sole aged care funder will be a big step on the way to solving some of the problems of cost and blame shifting.

He also stressed that more money (if not the 'buckets' demanded by Premiers for hospitals) would be needed, along with new forms of funding such as social insurance and revisiting the bonds issue.

Timing

Along with the Productivity Commission's Inquiry, the next Federal Budget must also provide some immediate relief for the sector struggling to survive and provide the best possible care and services for older Australians.

More should certainly be known by 19 May, the date for the COAG finalisation of the change in financial and policy responsibilities.

The debate has continued post Easter, with the *Financial Review* running a lengthy editorial, *Aged care a missing link*, on 6 April. And the word out of Canberra is that 'more health reform announcements' are to be expected in a 'few days'.

ACSA General Meeting

ACSA held its General Meeting in Melbourne on 7 April. This important gathering comprised ACSA Board and member representatives, along with ACSA staff in attendance, a guest speaker Shadow Minister for Ageing, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells), and meeting with ACSA National Partners.

The meeting heard reports from ACSA representatives on six Government Committees, nine industry groupings (national and international) and three intra industry groups.

Among the most recent meetings were the Government's Ageing Consultative Committee which met on 17 March. Minister Elliot spoke to the group and said that the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aged Care's terms of reference would be announced shortly.

The ACFI Reference Group members also reported on their latest meeting on 4 March at which industry concerns were raised, at the invitation of the department Quarterly statistics have now been posted at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-acfi-30june.htm>

ACSA Policy Manager Pat Sparrow reported on progress by the Community Care Quality Reporting Liaison Group, which has seen standards developed by the pilot being reduced down to three! The outstanding issues are around implementation, which is now planned for later this year, and ACSA has raised these with Minister Elliot.

Financial Reports for Residential Aged Care Providers

The Department of Health and Ageing has published General Purpose Financial Reports (GPFR) for residential aged care providers who receive subsidies under the Aged Care Act 1997.

They show Ageing and Aged Care Statistics , and Financial Reports for Residential Aged Care Providers.

According to the analysis undertaken by Grant Thornton for the Department, aged care profits have fallen from an average of \$3,773 per bed per annum in 2004 to just \$603 per bed per annum in 2008. The results are consistent with the returns presented in the Grant Thornton aged care survey 2008 which reported segment profits of \$828 and \$699 for 2007 and 2008 respectively. 2008.

The financial data have been extracted from the providers' GPFRs for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years. While the GPFRs are required to be prepared to accounting standards and formally audited, the quality and comprehensiveness of the financial information they contain varies from provider to provider.

The Department warns that the data should be used with caution as it is evident that there is considerable variation in the interpretation of accounting standards. For instance, there is variation in the way capital grants and one-off payments are treated.

The Department's interpretation of the accounting data provided in the GPFRs has not been verified with the accountants of aged care providers.

The data can be downloaded in excel or word format at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-resid-care-fin-data.htm>

Nursing Home Inaction: Three Reviews and Nothing Done

“The Rudd Government has undertaken three major reviews of aged care, but, to date, not one thing has been done in response to any of them” said Charmaine Crowe, Combined Pensioners and Superannuants (CPSA) Policy Coordinator, on 30 March.

It called on the Minister Roxon and Minister Elliot to release the accreditation and Complaints Investigation Scheme reports and act accordingly. CPSA also calls on the Australian Government to ensure aged care subsidies cover the cost of care.”

www.cpsa.org.au

Pressure for Election Promise on National Disability Insurance Scheme

Australians with disability and their supporters are asking people to take a pledge to vote in state and federal elections only for parties that promise to introduce a national disability insurance scheme. The responses will be compiled and candidates, particularly in marginal seats, will be told of the number of pledges in their electorate.

They have launched an "australiansmadashell" website to promote the issue and run the campaign, reported Mike Steketee in The Australian on 27 March.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities Bill Shorten has no doubts about the political potency of the issue. "I have a 100 per cent conviction that this is far more important than Canberra insiders, including in the press gallery, have treated it up to now," he told Steketee.

As for the new campaign, "I am very supportive of moving disability from the important to the urgent column." www.australiansmadashell.com.au

ANF Campaign "Because We Care"

Victorians are being asked to keep the pressure on the Federal Government to fix aged care by emailing Federal Finance Minister and Member for the Victorian electorate of Melbourne, Lindsay Tanner to make 2010-11 Budget – the Aged Care Budget – by addressing understaffing, low wages and stretched resources in nursing homes and hostels. The email campaign coincides with the national Australian Nursing Federation’s Because We Care television and radio commercial which asks Australians to lobby their local Federal Member for more aged care funding.

www.becausewecare.org.au

National Seniors Election Survey

Research commissioned by National Seniors shows that one in five voters aged over 50 could change their vote over the issue of health.

The survey shows that 20 per cent- or 60,000 of both Labor and Coalition voters were prepared to switch their vote to another party because of health policy.

Commenting on the results of the survey chief executive, Michael O’Neill said, “We have given a cautious welcome to the government’s hospital reforms but need more details of changes to other

related parts of the health system including aged care, the Pharmaceutical Benefits scheme and the Medicare Benefits schedule,” he said.

Australian Population Data

Australia's population reached 22,066,000 as at 30 September 2009, according to figures just released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This is an increase of 451,900 people over the previous year, keeping the growth rate high at 2.1%.

More details are available in Australian Demographic Statistics, September Quarter 2009 (cat. no. 3101.0), available for free download from www.abs.gov.au.

Delivering Personalised Care for Diabetics

The Rudd Government will invest \$436 million to transform the way Australians with long term illness are treated, beginning with improving health outcomes for nearly one million Australians living with diabetes – too many of whom end up being treated in hospitals.

For the first time, the Rudd Government will offer Australians with diabetes the option of signing up with a GP practice of their choice. This practice will become responsible for managing their care, including by developing a personalised care plan; help organise access to the additional services they need, such as care from a dietician or physiotherapist, as set out in their personalised care plan; be paid, in part, on the basis of their performance in keeping their patients healthy and out of hospital.

100 Not-for-profits sign up to the National Compact

Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector, Senator Stephens, has announced that the number of National Compact partners has now reached 100 as at 30 March, 12 days after the Compact launch.

The National Compact is a partnership agreement between the Third Sector and the Australian Government that is aimed at improving the way the two work together, for the benefit of all Australians. More information is available at the National Compact website www.nationalcompact.gov.au.

Better Management of Osteoporosis Guidelines

Minister Elliot has launched new clinical guidelines for the management of osteoporosis based on the best available evidence. The guideline is the fourth in a series developed by the RACGP to assist GPs with short-term care, long-term care planning and management and the coordination of multidisciplinary care needs for musculoskeletal conditions. Copies of the guideline are available for download at www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/musculoskeletalconditions

Access All Areas Report

The Government on 15 March 2010 formally accepted all of the 19 recommendations (including two in principle and two in part) of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs report on the draft Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards.

The Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards will achieve more consistent, systemic and widespread improvements in non-discriminatory access for people with disability to publicly accessible buildings.

The Premises Standards will commence operation on 1 May 2011, in line with the adoption of the Building Code of Australia in each State and Territory. This will allow States and Territories time to adopt the Premises Standards within their building law frameworks.

Malnutrition in Aged Care - Jobs for Dietitians

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) has called on the Government to tackle ‘shocking’ rates of malnutrition in Australia’s aged care facilities, where according to DAA, around one in two residents is malnourished.

In its submission to the Government’s Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) review, DAA called for routine nutrition screening, and better support for nursing and other care staff to feed and weigh residents and monitor their food intake.

DAA’s President Julie Dundon said: malnourished aged care residents were at higher risk of falls and fractures, infections like bed ulcers, and medical complications. Unintentional weight loss needed to be picked up early and steps put in place to improve the nutritional status of these residents.

‘Pharmacists are already funded to regularly review the medicines taken by residents. We’re suggesting a similar model, where money could be set aside for Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) to coordinate routine nutrition screening and carry out nutrition assessments.’

www.daa.asn.au

Cause of Deaths in Australia

The proportion of Australian deaths by heart disease has decreased over the last ten years, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Despite this decline, however, heart disease remained the biggest killer in Australia, responsible for 16% of all deaths in 2008.

Over the same period, deaths due to Dementia and Alzheimer's disease more than doubled. The continued increase in deaths from Dementia and Alzheimer's disease has seen this cause of death overtake Trachea and lung cancers as the third leading cause of death in Australia.

Trachea and lung cancers were responsible for most deaths caused by cancer, and was the fourth leading cause of death overall.

Further information is available in Causes of Death, Australia, 2008

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/cat/3303.0>

Aged Care Workforce Remuneration

The aged care workforce – comprised of 98% women workers - is one of the most unfairly remunerated in Australia., Australian Nursing Federation federal secretary (and soon to be ACTU President), Ged Kearney, has said:

“Nurses, assistants in nursing (AINs) and personal care workers (PCWs), who care for vulnerable elderly residents in nursing homes suffer pay discrimination because it is a largely female dominated industry. Ms Kearney said research released from NATSEM, showed women workers were paid 17 per cent less than men. www.anf.org.au

National Pain Summit

More than 130 organisations represented at the National Pain Summit held on 11 March to back the world’s first National Pain Strategy and called on the Federal and state governments to implement its recommendations.

The National Pain Strategy is the result of collaboration between leading authorities in pain medicine, other healthcare professionals, industry, funders and consumer groups. For further information, go to www.painsummit.org.au.

Professional Services Review

Professional Services Review, Australia's health professions watchdog, has found that many doctors continue to inappropriately use Medicare items, incorrectly charging Medicare and patients for procedures such as long and prolonged consultation items, optometric attendance items, team care arrangements and over use of diagnostic imaging or pathology.

In its fifth Report to the Professions 2008-09, PSR said it had investigated 136 GPs, medical specialists, medical practitioners and optometrists after referrals from Medicare Australia. These investigations resulted in sanctions applied to some practitioners which included full or partial disqualification from Medicare for up to three years, and repayment of Medicare benefits totalling around \$1.7 million.

http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/192_06_150310/war10481_fm.html

Veteran Home Care Policy on Emergency Situations

Veteran Home Care’s (VHC) has provided policy advice on one-off emergency situations where a VHC Service Provider’s care worker attends a scheduled visit and finds that a veteran, war widow/widower, or a member of the household requires medical attention or is deceased.

The VHC Service Provider will be able to claim for the time taken if their care worker attends a scheduled visit and finds that the person requires medical attention or is deceased. This is considered to be a one-off situation and the time taken that can be claimed for in this situation includes calling and waiting for the ambulance or police.

Young People Diverted from Residential Aged Care

The Minister for Community Services, Jenny Macklin, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, today released the Mid Term Evaluation of the Younger People with Disability in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) program which aims to reduce the number of people under the age of 65 living in aged care accommodation March 31, 2010.

Over 190 young people with disability were moved out of, or were diverted from entering residential aged care facilities between June 2006 and December 2008, according to a report released today. Between December 2008 and June 2009, the number rose to 302.

The evaluation found the program was having a positive impact on a large number of younger people living in, or at risk of admission to, residential aged care and that it was on track to reduce the total numbers of young people in nursing homes by up to 689 people by 2011.

To ensure the program meets the different needs of clients and their families, the Australian Government is providing \$500,000 over two years to June 2011 to the Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance.

The Alliance will consult young people and their families, as well as State and Territory Governments, the health sector and other stakeholders to develop policy options and service pathways for this group. It will report back to the Government on the future direction and possible improvements to the program. A copy of the report can be found at www.fahcsia.gov.au/disability

Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has developed *Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Hospitals, Residential Aged Care Facilities and Community Care*.

The guidelines are designed to inform clinical practice and assist hospitals, residential aged care facilities and community care providers develop and implement practices that reduce the falls experienced by those receiving care and the harm sustained from falls.

The guidelines are in three documents, each one separately addressing a care setting: hospital, residential aged and community. Each guideline has a smaller version called a guidebook which is designed for front line health professionals and residents.

Currently the guidelines and support materials are only available in soft copy at <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/internet/safety/publishing.nsf/Content/FallsGuidelines-AustRACF>

More Conference News

Don't forget that the ACSA website has details of all state association conferences, either directly or via a link from the state association site.

ACS SA&NT is inviting those interested to check out *Managing today from tomorrow RVA and ACS' 9th annual conference on 21 May*.

<http://www.agedcommunity.asn.au/calendar/eCalendar-Event.php?ID=107>

Housing Alternatives in Aged Care: 12 May, Melbourne Town Hall. 1.30pm - 4.30pm

A forum brought to you by ACSA in association with Department of Human Services, Common Equity Housing Ltd, Community Housing Federation of Victoria, and the Victoria Local Governance Association.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore housing options to fill the gap for people seeking affordable housing in their own community.

Canadian leaders and veterans in co-operative housing will share their knowledge and experience on accessible living for people caught between the existing options.

Housing co-ops can offer many of the benefits of home ownership without the expense and the mounting debt. Explore how independent communities with shared interests can work to create an environment where everyone has ownership.

Speakers:

- Stuart Thomas, founding owner of Terra Housing Consultants, Vancouver
- Merrilee Robson, founder of Trafalgar Housing Co-operative, Vancouver
- Local co-op leaders
- ACSA
- Victorian Housing Minister the Hon Richard Wynne

Please RSVP to andrea.sharam@chfv.org.au or ring 03 96546077

Aged Care Industry IT Awards: Nominations Close 3 May

The ITAC Awards honour the hard work, dedication and vision by your industry colleagues in the application of information and communications technology in aged care. Nominations are currently being accepted in the following three categories: Hall of Fame, Implementation and Innovation.

To nominate a senior leader for the 'Hall of Fame' Award; an aged and community care provider for their ICT implementation; or, an ICT company for the Innovation Award, go to www.itac2010.com.au/awards.htm for key information, judging criteria and online submission details.

Nominations close 3 May 2010. The 2010 ITAC Award finalists will be notified on 28 May 2010. All nominees will be honoured at the ITAC Awards dinner, to be held on 27 July at the Regent Plaza Ballroom in Melbourne - a night not to be missed!

Hall of Fame

The 'Hall of Fame' Award is open to senior leadership within the aged care and health industry who have contributed both to the success of their own organisations through the introduction of technology, aligned to business strategy, and have advanced the use of technology across the industry.

Implementation

The 'Implementation' Award is open to aged and community care providers and their implementation partners that have effectively used ICT to improve business outcomes in the Australian aged and community care environment. There are 4 awards in this category.

Innovation

The 'ICT Company of the Year' Award is open to ICT companies that have designed outstanding and innovative products/services that will enhance the Australian aged and community care ICT marketplace. More details from www.itac2010.com.au.

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