

The National Report

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Aged & Community Services Australia



BUMPER ELECTION ISSUE

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Election Report

With one week to go, the Coalition and the Greens have released their aged care policies, along with health and seniors announcements of interest to, and impact on, the sector. The Gillard Government has not yet released its vision for aged care, let alone a detailed policy. However the Prime Minister has promised aged care will be a priority in the next term of a Labor Government.

In the meantime ACSA directly, and through its leadership role in the Campaign for Care of Older Australians (CCOA), has been active in co-ordinating grass roots members' activities, and organising the Grand Debate, which was held in Melbourne on 11 August. The Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, the Coalition spokeswoman, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, and Greens spokeswoman Rachel Siewert all participated, along with Father Bob Maguire who, along with John Safran, are the poster boys of The Grand Plan campaign.

All parties used the Productivity Commission report as the reason not to make new funding announcements or other policy promises, although both the Coalition and Greens promised to index the CAP funding. Senator Fierravanti-Wells described the proposed four year Industry Agreement as a 'game changer', Senator Siewert showed a good appreciation of current problems and future issues, while Minister Elliot stood on the Government's funding and policy record and referenced broader agendas such as health reform and broadband..

Reports of election announcements and promises, the ACSA responses and those of other interested parties, other campaign activities, and what can still be done before election day, are outlined below.

The Grand Debate - and How You Can See and Hear It

- Highlights of the debate will be available to view at www.thegrandplan.com.au from Friday 13 August, along with an online survey where you can rate the promises of each party.
- The debate was moderated by Peter Mares from ABC Radio National program *The National Interest*, which recorded the debate and will run it on Friday 13 August at 6pm (repeated Sunday 15 August at midday, and available to download from www.abc.net.au). It will also provide an online forum opportunity for further participation.
- The Aged Care Channel will also broadcast an edited package of the debate at 10.45am on Monday 16 August. CCOA representatives including Nick Mersiades, will be in the studio to discuss the debate.

Aged Care at What Cost?

Following the debate, CCOA said that a week out from the federal election, Australia was only marginally closer to resolving the immediate and longer term pressures confronting the aged care industry and older people.

CCOA Chair Greg Mundy said CCOA's aged care debate was positive, with the Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and Senator Rachel Siewert each acknowledging our ageing population would present new hurdles.

"Their joint commitment to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into aged care was welcome but the major parties' policies do not go far enough and won't meet the needs of an ageing population.

"There is no sign that the ALP is prepared to introduce interim measures to address current shortfalls in funding and services. The Coalition's promise to increase care subsidies goes only

someway towards reducing the dearth of funding and neither major party has offered a full solution to the issue of capital investment.

“Funding is an issue we can’t ignore, no matter how unpalatable it might be for governments and the public.

“With an ageing population we can no longer afford to put off the hard questions if we are serious about their future well-being and comfort.

“We are all ageing which means we have a collective responsibility to ensure we have a system that works; a system that offers more choice, improved access and sustainability; a system we want for our families and ourselves.”

Politicians Receive 26,000 Letters Calling for Aged Care Reforms

Australians concerned about aged care services have sent 26,000 emails to politicians, including the Prime Minister, via CCOA’s website www.thegrandplan.com.au

Almost 7,000 visitors to the website have also used the link to send post cards to the older people who have played a grand role in their lives. CCOA Chair (and ACSA CEO) Greg Mundy said the group’s new vision for caring for older Australians, The Grand Plan, had struck a chord with voters.

“We all have relatives and friends who depend on aged care services and an ageing population who will have nowhere to turn if we don’t act to reform the system,” he said in a media release.

There is still time for visitors to the CCOA website to view CCOA’s new vision for caring for older Australians, send a post card to an older person who has played a grand role in their lives and automatically send a letter to their local MP.

CCOA will release a final analysis of member and public concerns about the aged and community care policies, promises and funding of all parties before 21 August.

Policies, Programs and Promises

Labor Promises

➤ Aged Care

Aged care will be a second term priority for a re-elected Labor Government, Julia Gillard told the NSW Nurses Association annual conference Labor would tackle the challenge of an ageing population. Minister Elliot repeated this assurance in her remarks at the Grand Debate.

Ms Gillard said her Government, if re-elected, would offer more aged care places, better access to health services and improved consumer protections for older Australians.

"With an ageing population, we will need to substantially build Australia's aged care capacity in the years ahead," she said.

Ms Gillard told the nurses her government would ensure there were professional and fulfilling and rewarding careers in aged care.

She has also released a package designed to fight age discrimination, support mature-age workers and provide stronger protection against unfair reverse mortgages. The promises come on top of a previous pledge to let pensioners earn up to \$6500 a year from part-time work without benefits being cut.

➤ **Consumer Directed Care Community Aged Care and Respite Care Packages**

Older Australians and their carers will have a greater say in the care they receive with the allocation of consumer directed care community aged care and respite care packages by the Gillard Labor Government, in an announcement made on 23 July by Minister Elliot.

The first 700 packages have been allocated to service providers, and will be made up of:

- 500 consumer directed care places aligned with existing community aged care packages providing low, high and dementia care.
- 200 consumer directed care packages funded through 16 Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres.

A further 500 community aged care packages will be made available in 2011-12.

Consumer directed aged care and respite care packages have been allocated in all States and Territories as follows:

State/Territory	Packages allocated
New South Wales	194
Queensland	150
Victoria	98
Tasmania	29
South Australia	88
Western Australia	93
Australian Capital Territory	22
Northern Territory	26
TOTAL	700

Funding for these packages has been provided for in the 2010-2011 Federal Budget.

➤ **Non Profit Sector Reforms**

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will drive a major reform agenda for Australia's non-profit sector to deliver smarter regulation, reduce red tape and improve transparency and accountability of the sector. Its new promises include:

- A new Office for the Non-Profit Sector supported by a new Non-Profit Sector Reform Council made up of representatives from across the sector. The Office will be located within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for an initial period of three years;

- A scoping study for a national ‘one-stop-shop’ regulator for the non-profit sector to remove the complex regulatory arrangements currently in place and streamline reporting arrangements;
- Greater harmony and simplification between the Federal and State and Territory Governments on non-profit sector issues, including regulation;
- Reducing red-tape for government funded non-profit organisations by significantly streamlined tendering and contracting processes for government funded non-profit organisations, including a new, common form contract or ‘master agreement’ for use between the Australian Government and non-profit organisations. This will include the possibility of expanding Standard Business Reporting to include reporting requirements by non-profit organisations;
- Supporting social innovation and improving access to capital. The \$20 million Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund will provide matching grants to innovative social enterprise projects and the \$7.5 million Community Development Financial Investment Fund Pilot will test the potential of the community finance model to build the capacity of disadvantaged Australians who have difficulty accessing mainstream financial services and products;
- First ever Social Innovation Cooperative Research Centre to target research on areas of major social challenge; and
- Taxation Concession reforms.
- It is unclear the extent to which these reforms will apply to non-profit organisations providing aged care services though the ALP’s announcement contained no exceptions.

Coalition Promises

➤ \$1 Billion Investment in Aged Care

Opposition leader Tony Abbott has offered a suite of incentives for more aged care beds, a four year (‘game-changer’) agreement with the aged care industry plus, as an extra twist, new funding for community organisations that offer pet visiting services to aged care facilities.

A coalition government would spend \$90 Million on incentive payments to aged care providers so that an extra 3000 high care residential beds can be opened. A further \$245 Million over four years would be set aside for running costs.

However in order to help fund his program, he will slash a number of existing programs including transition care, zero real interest loans, expanding GPs access to aged care, and the national health sub acute program. And of course abolishing the role of Ambassador for Ageing, currently held by Noeline Brown.

Full policy document can be downloaded at: <http://www.liberal.org.au/Policies.aspx>

➤ Seniors’ Support

A Coalition government will pursue a range of measures to support employment, secure retirement incomes, help with cost of living pressures and ensure better representation of senior Australians.

Major initiatives include a Seniors Employment Incentive Payment, indexation of the eligibility income thresholds for the Commonwealth Senior Health Card (CSHC), retaining the existing income rules for the Commonwealth Senior Health Card and abolition of the Superannuation Guarantee age limit from 1 July 2013.

Greens

The Greens' Aged Care for the Future policy outlines their plan to meet the immediate needs of Australia's aged care sector and set out a comprehensive long-term reform agenda. The policy also calls for:

- Increased funding and realistic indexation for aged care.
- Increased funding and integration of community care.
- Better wages and conditions for all aged care staff.
- Greater support for informal and family care and for care volunteers.
- Investment in dementia research.
- A single national funder for all aged care services.
- A consumer-directed funding model.
- An Independent National Aged Care Authority.

Responses to Aged Care Policies as Announced

➤ Labor Hasn't Announced Aged Care Policy - ACSA

Greg Mundy called for policies showing fairness and decency for Australians – including older Australians. Commenting on Prime Minister Gillard's statement that she joined the Labor Party because she believed in fairness and decency for Australians, including older Australians, he said that older Australians who depend on aged care services might beg to differ. "We are now well into the second week of the election campaign and the government has not announced its policy for aged care," he said.

"Ms Gillard stressed that she questioned the government's ability to deliver pension increases. Some 60 per cent of aged care providers are questioning if they can continue to deliver services in the face of inadequate funding, most of which comes from the federal government.

"The financial and regulatory system governing aged care services has locked providers in a time warp when it comes to funding and the ability to deliver a range of services older people want and need".

➤ Coalition Aged Care Policy a Boost for Older Australians - CCOA

CCOA welcomed the Coalition's aged care policy as a positive initiative to maintain services and develop urgently needed residential facilities, and noted the Coalition's commitment to restore the 1.75 per cent care subsidy (CAP) for residential care as essential to sustain services pending the Productivity Commission report .

It also welcomed the \$335 million incentive for providers to convert bed licences to operational places and the idea of a four year industry agreement to focus on cutting red tape

and addressing staff shortages as part of a plan to provide an effective and efficient system of care and support older people need now and into the future.

➤ **Greens Aged Care Policy Offers Action and Vision - CCOA**

CCOA welcomed the Greens aged care policy as a strategic approach to caring for older Australians now and in the future.

“Senator Siewert has outlined reforms which recognize the need for both immediate action to address current pressures and longer term reform to improve consumer choice and the sustainability of aged care services,” CCOA said.

“The proposed reforms start to come to grips with an over regulated and under-funded system which is selling older Australians short.

“The Greens commitment to independent benchmarking of the real cost of care and the development of a system based on care entitlement funding for a range of services not limited by availability, is particularly welcome and we urge a similar undertaking from all parties.”

Other Comments on Election Promises

➤ **Concern About e-health – AMA and Consumer Association**

“Without e-health, we cannot make the best use of existing health care services and avoid errors, duplication and waste,” said Dr Andrew Pesce, President of the Australian Medical Association (AMA).

Dr Pesce said open-ended commitments to “doing something on e-health one day” were no longer good enough. We need to have e-health up and running in a significant way within the term of the next government,” he said.

Consumers Health Forum executive director Carol Bennett said e-health could not be considered optional - it was fundamental to any modern health system.

➤ **Not for Profit Reforms - National Roundtable**

The National Roundtable of Nonprofit Organisations (which includes ACSA) has welcomed the ALP’s new policy on the Not-for-Profit (NFP) sector because it addresses some of the issues which are holding back the NFP sector from achieving its enormous potential for the Australian community.

Aged Care Building Deferrals to Put More Pressure on Hospitals & Families

Half of Australia’s aged care providers are deferring building works in the wake of government indecision surrounding capital financing, according to a survey by Aged Care Industry Council (ACIC), of which ACSA is a member.

Of the deferrals 41.7 per cent were new works and 58 per cent renovations and extensions, with more than half being deferred indefinitely.

Greg Mundy said: “We can't afford to stand still in aged care. The whole process of building, including financing and planning approval, takes time. Continual delays will exacerbate what is already a looming problem in some areas where there are long waiting lists for residential care.

“Governments plan and budget for all other infrastructure needs but they have failed to provide workable capital raising policies in aged care.”

Thirty-one per cent of respondents blamed the inability to service borrowings as a reason for deferring building works and 21.8 per cent cited the cost of finance.

This election campaign is an opportunity for all parties to demonstrate their commitment to our ageing population and signal how they intend to address the very real problem of capital investment in aged care.

Dementia Drives Aged Care Crisis

An estimated 279,000 older Australians will be without a residential care place or community care package by 2050, according to a new report from Access Economics, released by Alzheimer's Australia.

Alzheimer's Australia CEO, Glenn Rees, said the report, *Caring Places*, projects that current Government policy would result in a dramatic undersupply of residential and community aged care places unless the planning of aged care takes into account the increasing numbers of those over 85 years and the growth in the number of people with dementia.

Mr Rees called on both major parties to commit to fundamental reform of the aged care system and to a comprehensive response to the dementia epidemic in the 2011 Budget.

“Some elements of reform are being put into place by the Gillard Labor Government including the implementation of a National Aged Care Program, the funding of consumer directed care packages on a limited scale and the commitment to one stop shops for information and assessment,” Mr Rees said.

“But this is not enough. The undersupply of aged care places and the under-funding of community care will mean greater carer stress and older Australians being forced out of their homes early and into a nursing home.”

Lynne Pezzullo, a Director of Access Economics said “One aspect for Government is to provide more choice in funding options for aged care in much the same way as healthcare is provided through Medicare together with the private sector. Another aspect is to revise the current planning of aged care services to increase services in line with the growth of the older population and the prevalence of dementia.

“Based on the growth in the prevalence of dementia, community care packages and residential care places would need to grow by 25% (over 220,000 places) by 2050 as compared to present policy.”

More details at: www.alzheimers.org.au

Explore the Possibilities – ACSA twenty10 National Conference Hobart

Registrations are now open for the ACSA Twenty10 Conference. Take advantage of the discounted registration available where four or more people from the one organisation attend.

For more information or for a copy of the registration brochure visit www.agedcare.org.au or phone the conference secretariat on (03) 6231 2999.

Important Offer to Rural and Remote Delegates

Southern Cross Care (NSW and ACT) is sponsoring one twenty10 Conference package of registration, Gala Dinner ticket, airfare and accommodation to a rural and remote, including indigenous, service provider, who can best explain why they wish to attend and the knowledge and benefits they hope to gain.

Entries must be received by Wednesday 21 August and the winner will be notified by Friday 23 August.

See the flyer at the back of this National Report with full details.

Do You Have What it Takes?

The Best of Aged Care Cook-off at the ACSA twenty10 Conference

Aged Care Master Chefs nominating for the challenge will need to have the gastronomic skills to showcase their ability to prepare a sumptuous meal for the aged care market. They won't have to give up their day job or endure weeks of gruelling scrutiny but they will have to produce a winning meal using the same main ingredient with a mystery box of extras.

Leading Tasmanian chef and Food Coordinator of Taste of Huon and Taste Festival, Paul Cullen will host the event. A panel of judges, including acclaimed cook Maggie Beer, will vote on the best meal.

If you think you have what it takes, send your details including:

- a brief explanation of why you should be selected
- details of your experience cooking for older people
- your employer's approval and their willingness to be publicised before the event.

The Best of Aged Care Cook-off, sponsored by Clear Solar, will go live between 12.30pm and 2pm on Monday September 20 at the Conference.

To be considered as one of the contenders, please email your details to karina@cdesign.com.au or call 03 6231 2999 by COB 27 August 2010.

Fair Work Australia & Modern Awards – ACSA’s New Web Based Resource

ACSA now has a new web based resource to assist operators implementing the new modern awards. It comprises three detailed information documents on the National Employment Standards, Modern Awards and Enterprise Agreements.

The information is more detailed than the existing Fact Sheets on the site and has lots of links providing additional information.

Click on the link below to go to the ACSA Fair Work Australia web page:

<http://www.agedcare.org.au/AGED-CARE-NEWS/Workforce.html>

National Survey of Providers of Independent Living Units for Older People with Relatively Low Incomes and Low Assets

Swinburne Institute for Social Research is undertaking a national survey of providers of Independent Living Units (ILUs) for older people, on behalf of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

The aim of the survey is to:

- establish a national database of providers;
- understand the future needs of the sector; and
- inform future policy thinking by the Australian Government in relation to the housing needs and housing options of older Australians, particularly those on low-incomes with relatively low-assets.

The national survey is being undertaken jointly with ACSA and the Council on the Ageing (COTA), with input from the Australian Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA).

The researchers are interested in those not-for-profit organisations which are managing even one ILU that meets with the following criteria:

- The unit is occupied by an older person.
- The resident either rents the unit and/or has made a capital contribution of less than \$129,000.
- Capital funding for construction of the dwelling has come from sources other than a State Housing Authority. For example, self-funded by your organisation, donations, local government, direct Commonwealth funding.

The survey will seek basic information about your organisation, number of ILUs (as defined above) and their location by local government area.

Each state will be asked to nominate one ILU provider for the pilot. Other surveys will be distributed during September.

Please feel free to contact Sean McNelis on 03 9214 8887 or email SMcNelis@swin.edu.au

Brain Injury Awareness Week Begins 16 August

Falls – not motor vehicle accidents, not assaults – are now the leading cause of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Australia, accounting for more than two in every five hospital admissions. It is due to the ageing of our population, according to Nick Rushworth, Executive Officer of Brain Injury Australia.

“People are living longer. They are being urged to be more active into older ages. This places them at greater risk of a TBI from a fall. And improvements in trauma care mean they are more likely to survive but with a greater level of disability.”

By 2050 the total healthcare costs due to falls in older Australians are expected to almost triple - to \$1.3 billion per year – requiring an additional 900,000 hospital bed days and over 3,000 extra nursing home places. Yet TBI, like other injuries from falls, is preventable. Moderate exercise to improve strength and balance, regular reviews of medication and eye checks, improving lighting and reducing hazards around the home have all been demonstrated to reduce the incidence of falls.

Further information can be found at: www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au

IT in Aged Care (ITAC) Award Winners

The industry’s IT leaders were recognised at the ITAC awards dinner in Melbourne during the ITAC Conference, which is held in partnership with ACSA.

Award Winners:

Best technology implementation for more than 650 clients:

Baptistcare WA for its iCare roll out.

Best technology roll out for 150-650:

UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide for its implementation of Leecare’s *leecareplus*.

Best implementation under 150 places:

Alphington Aged Care Melbourne for its adoption of ionmycare.

Best infrastructure implementation:

Cranbrook Care’s Lansdowne Gardens facility in Sydney.

The ICT company of the year award:

Simavita, the developer of the SIMsystem which has revolutionised continence assessments in residential aged care.

More details can be found at: <http://www.itac2010.com.au/awards.htm>

Stronger Focus Needed to Optimise Technology for Aged Care

A new report from the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) says Australia needs an increased focus on developing and applying smart technology for healthy longevity.

This increased focus is essential to realise the potential of smart technology to ensure a healthy, safe, secure and fulfilling future for the increasing aged population in Australia and the maintenance of a healthy, harmonious and prosperous society.

The 100 page report came from an Australian Research Council funded study ATSE conducted in 2009. The study reviewed the state of aged care technology in Australia and Europe and used the expertise of Academy Fellows and invited experts to provide an informed view of the future situation of technology for ageing-in-place (continuing to live at home) in Australia.

Download the report at: <http://www.atse.org.au/resource-centre/func-startdown/220>

Silver Chain Winner of the Australian Business Award for Marketing Excellence

Silver Chain in Western Australia has won the 2010 Australian Business Award for Marketing Excellence, over 1849 separate entries from 962 organisations.

“The Marketing Excellence Awards acknowledge organisations which have achieved outstanding levels in marketing strategy and execution and we are thrilled to receive this Award,” said Mr Nick Harvey, Silver Chain Manager, Marketing and Communications.

“It is fantastic to be nationally recognised for our organisational marketing activities which serve to support our commitment to the provision of quality health and community care services in the Western Australian community.

Silver Chains website is: www.silverchain.org.au

Funding through the Aged Care Education and Training Incentive (ACETI) Program

The Australian Government in the 2010 Budget has allocated funding to assist those interested in starting or developing a career in Aged Care.

The Aged Care Education and Training Incentive (ACETI) program will provide incentive payments to eligible aged care workers who undertake specified education and training programs including Certificate III and Certificate IV qualifications.

VET students are eligible for \$1,000 paid in two \$500 instalments - one on enrolment and one on completion. Some students are eligible for even more!

Further details can be found at:

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

***Excellence and Innovation 3rd Biennial Palliative Care Nurses Australia
Conference, 27 -28 August 2010, Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre***

Around 400 clinicians, educators and researchers in palliative care nursing and in the broader health care disciplines around Australia. If you would like more information on the PCNA 2010 Conference.

Further details can be found at: www.pcna2010.org.au

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Email: info@agedcare.org.au www.agedccare.org.au**



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If you are a rural and remote, including indigenous, service provider and would like the opportunity to attend the upcoming National Conference as a sponsored delegate then apply now!

The sponsorship is available for your airfare, accommodation, attendance at the conference and a ticket to the Gala Dinner.

How to apply.....

To attend as a sponsored delegate simply email the ACSA office by no later than Wednesday 21 August and explain in 200 words or less why you would like to attend the Conference and what you will do with the knowledge and networks you gain from attending.

ACSA will advise the successful applicant by Friday 23 August so travel arrangements can be made in time.



If you have any questions please contact Lesley Dredge at the ACSA office on 03 9686 3460. E-mail applications to ldredge@agedcare.org.au.

