

# *The National Report*

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**Aged & Community Services Australia**



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## Prime Minister Warns on Ageing Population

The Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has travelled around Australia in the last two weeks warning of the costs of an ageing population- speaking optimistically about our future but warning against complacency.

He has used the imminent release of the Third Intergenerational Report, *Australia to 2050: Future Challenges* to guide us in facing up to “the long-term challenges that lie ahead for our nation – including the:

- deep structural challenge of an ageing population and its implications for our future economy and society,
- enormous economic and environmental challenge of climate change, and
- challenge of building our future national and economic security in an increasingly competitive world – a world which does not owe us a living.

“Central to our long-term challenges is the ageing of our population. To understand its implications, we need to ask three basic questions:

1. First, how much are we ageing by?
2. Second, how will this impact on family living standards and the economy?
3. Third, what can we do about it?

“The truth is that the strong policy levers lie with policy measures to lift participation and productivity growth... the pipeline between implementing reforms and their positive impacts takes many years and goes beyond many election cycles. Building Australia's future must start now.” If this taste of the PM’s message has you begging for more you can visit his website for copies and variations of this message: <http://www.pm.gov.au/>

The focus and attention on an ageing population, along with the National Health & Hospitals Commission reform agenda, are a positive reinforcer that there are aged care issues that need to be addressed.

## At Last-the 2009-10 Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR)

The Minister for Ageing Justine Elliot, on 22 January announced details of the 2009-10 Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR). The ACAR will give aged care providers the opportunity to apply for:

- 12,218 (8,142 residential, and 4,076 community and flexible aged places) worth \$477.6 million a year ;
- Up to \$160 million in zero real interest loans; and
- More than \$41 million in capital grants to construct or upgrade residential aged care facilities.

This year’s ACAR will include the provision of additional community care places (with the increase focussed on EACH packages) and increased availability of residential aged care places by allocating more bed licences and supplementing this allocation with a capital assistance package made up of low interest loans and capital grants to support construction and investment, Minister Elliot said.

Advertisements seeking applications will appear in metropolitan and selected regional newspapers on Saturday 30 January 2010. Applications will close on 15 March 2010.

State or Territory	Residential	Community (CACP – Community Aged Care Package)	EACH (Extended Aged Care at Home)	EACH Dementia	Total
NSW	2,244	517	115	57	2,933
Victoria	1,490	428	338	210	2,466
Queensland	2,003	337	578	350	3,268
Western Australia	1,564	107	384	250	2,305
SA	237	135	17	10	399
Tasmania	245	28	10	10	293
ACT	286	10	88	58	442
NT	71	20	11	10	112

To assist aged care providers in the ACAR application process, a number of information sessions will be conducted in capital cities and regional centres over the coming weeks with the information provided at these sessions to be posted online on [www.health.gov.au/acar2009-10](http://www.health.gov.au/acar2009-10)

For further information, including the locations and times of the information sessions contact the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853 or the Department's office in the respective state or territory.

The last couple of years have seen the ACAR undersubscribed in residential care, giving a practical demonstration of the financial issues affecting the delivery of aged care. No doubt this ACAR will be watched with considerable interest by all stakeholders.

## Respite Funding

Minister Elliot has announced more than \$4 million in one-off funding grants for 269 community services across Australia that provide respite for carers.

## ACSA Concern at Henry Tax Review Recommendations

ACSA has expressed public concern at reports that Dr Ken Henry's tax review recommends an end to the charitable status of not for profit and faith based aged care providers.

In its Media Release ACSA said such a significant threat to an already struggling sector was unacceptable.

"ACSA understands the comprehensive 1,000 page report encompasses the entire tax system and that difficult decisions will need to be made to support dramatic increases in our ageing population. However, we cannot support removing this tax benefit for an industry that is in urgent need of more funding, and potentially replacing it with a series of grants".

ACSA President Klaus Zimmermann, said that with significant numbers of facilities already operating in deficit removing the tax benefit will ensure even more facilities are operating at a loss. Employees would also stand to lose up to \$100 a week. For our entire workforce across Australia, that amounts to \$20 million in lost wages every week. The industry is currently fighting to attract and retain staff including nurses and this move would only exacerbate the situation.

The Government reaps a considerable dividend from the taxation concessions it makes to charitable aged care services, for example in providing services in rural and low-income areas, and ACSA does not believe that replacing the tax concessions with grants would achieve equivalent results.

The Prime Minister's very public acknowledgement of the dramatic challenges of an ageing population (reported above) is a source of hope that the Government will do nothing to undermine aged care services now, or in the future. The Government's stated commitment to a 'Compact' with the non-Government sector also needs to be reconciled with these taxation issues.

ACSA applauds the Government's commitment to tax reform and welcomes other initiatives including incentives for older people to remain in the workforce, but not at the expense of aged care employees and older Australians.

Greens Senator Rachel Siewert came out supporting the wide spread industry concern about such a move. ACSA will continue to lobby for the maintenance of FBT for charitable services in the lead up to the release and implementation of the Henry Tax Review.

ACSA's full media release may be viewed at: [http://www.agedcare.org.au/AGED-CARE-NEWS/media-releases-pdfs/2010-tax\\_reforms\\_bad\\_news\\_for\\_aged%20care.pdf](http://www.agedcare.org.au/AGED-CARE-NEWS/media-releases-pdfs/2010-tax_reforms_bad_news_for_aged%20care.pdf)

## NRAS Tax Problem Update

In 2008 the Federal Government legislated to deem participation of charitable organizations in NRAS to be charitable for the purpose of the tax law. This enabled NFP organizations to participate in the NRAS establishment phase without jeopardizing their charitable endorsement under the tax laws.

Treasurer Swan has now advised ACSA that involvement of NFPs in future NRAS rounds is covered by a 2008 High Court decision. The decision held that where surpluses were directed towards its charitable purpose, commercial activities carried on by a charitable institution are charitable under the tax laws.

A copy of the Treasurer's letter explaining his reasoning in more detail is available on a *National Housing Report* update on the ACSA website <http://www.agedcare.org.au>

## Default Event Declaration

DoHA has issued Default Event Declarations under the *Aged Care (Bond Security) Act 2006* in respect to two Victorian aged care providers, Drysdale and Hirange activating the Accommodation Bond Guarantee Scheme.

The Department anticipates sending out a request for information under section 9-3A of the Aged Care Act 1997 to approved providers in the week beginning Monday 25th January 2010. The request for information will be in relation to accommodation bond and entry contribution balances held as at 4 January 2009. Approved providers will have 28 days to respond.

This 9-3A request for information is a separate reporting requirement from the Annual Compliance Statements, which are due at the end of October each year. The collection of bond data will inform the decision of any levy in respect of Drysdale or Hirange; however it does not necessarily result in a levy on approved providers. The decision on whether or not to impose a levy is made by the Minister for Ageing.

ACSA is currently discussing prudential arrangements with DHA as they move towards implementation of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report recommendations. ACSA is advocating for streamlined arrangements to minimise the administrative burden associated with prudential requirements.

## Australia Day Awards

Nine of the recipients of Australia Day Awards have been recognised for their work in aged care.

Former Tasmanian Premier, The Honourable Raymond Groom has been awarded an AO General Division, primarily for his services to the Parliament of Tasmania as Premier but also to the community through leadership roles within organisations supporting Indigenous, aged and welfare groups. He is the Chair of Southern Cross Care Tasmania.

At the OAM General Division level, Ms Diane Karmas (ACT), Miss Millicent Chalmers, Mrs Dorlyne Johnson and Mrs Constance Jones (NSW), Mr Martinus Jonkers, and Mrs Majorie Norris (Qld), Mr Harry Scroop (SA) have all been recognised.

Long time ACS NSW&ACT stalwart Mr Paul Cook of Inverell NSW was also awarded an OAM “for service to the aged care industry, and to health services management.”

Mr Joseph Hopkins of Glen Waverley, Vic received his OAM (and a photo story in the Herald Sun) for service to the community “through the provision of voluntary musical programs”, which include singing groups in local aged care facilities.

Culinary icon – Maggie Beer was named 2010 Senior Australian of the Year .Her ongoing success as a cook, fine food producer and popular TV personality is a testimony to the contribution senior Australians make to our society and our community.

## **ACSA 2010 Aged Care Excellence Awards**

The Excellence Awards recognise the most innovative and inspiring individuals and services in the aged care industry.

2010 sees the introduction of an integrated national approach to these prestigious Awards. State Award winners will automatically progress to the national awards in their particular category.

The National Awards will be presented at the ACSA National Conference on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Hobart.

But to get to the national awards you first have to nominate for an award in your state. The States have different dates for nominating for the Awards. If you are a Queenslanders you must nominate by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February! The Queensland Aged Care Excellence Awards will be presented at the ACQI State Conference on the 18<sup>th</sup> March.

In most other states, nominations close in April. The *National Report* will provide regular updates on when you need to nominate and the outcomes of the State Awards but for all the details – nomination criteria and dates – for the Awards please visit [www.agedcare.org.au](http://www.agedcare.org.au)

And remember you have to be in it to win it.

## **IAHSA Calls for Aged Care Assistance in Haiti**

The older people of Haiti are still need of help and will be for the foreseeable future. If you haven't given already, please consider donating to *HelpAge International (HAI)*.

IAHSA and HAI are global collaborative partners dedicated to helping elders in the developing world. HAI is the only relief and development organization focused on the needs of older persons in developing countries and has had a presence in Haiti for eight years. They work with local partners to support local people and use local resources to build long term capacity and reduce dependency.

To find out more and make a donation go to <http://www.helpage.org/Home>

## New Building Energy Efficiency Changes to 2010 Building Code

Changes will be made to the 2010 Building Code of Australia to increase the energy efficiency of new buildings, fulfilling a COAG commitment. Implementation of the new commercial building standards will commence in May 2010, and the States and Territories have undertaken to implement the new residential standards no later than May 2011.

The new energy efficiency standards are part of a suite of proposals under the National Strategy on Energy Efficiency. Minimum requirements for residential buildings will rise from five stars to six stars. Concessions will be available to residential buildings in warmer climates that incorporate a covered outdoor living area.

Confirming the changes on 22 January Innovation Minister Senator Kim Carr and Acting Environment Minister Senator Penny Wong said the new requirements will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“The Rudd Government will continue to consult closely with industry and review the effectiveness of the new measures,” Senator Carr said.

Senator Wong said a newly formed Built Environment Sustainability Roundtable, announced by Minister Garrett last year, will ensure that the industry is consulted on present and future building energy efficiency measures.

“*Whole of house or whole of building* methodologies and alternative solutions such as incorporating on-site renewable energy technologies will be explored by the roundtable as a means of creating greater flexibility in meeting the requirements,” Senator Wong said.

*More information about the new energy efficiency standards is at [www.abcb.gov.au](http://www.abcb.gov.au)*

## Continence Aids Assistance Scheme Changes

The Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS) will become the Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS) from 1 July 2010, and will be then managed by Medicare Australia.

The major change (for you and your clients) is that funds will be paid directly into client’s bank accounts for them to manage and individuals will need to source continence products through direct to door providers like Intouch, which has managed the CAAS program for 17 years.

Its experience in managing the scheme has highlighted to Intouch that there is a massive need in the community for support managing their continence needs.

Intouch is the commercial arm of the Spinal Injuries Association, and it is already planning and working towards a smooth transition for current CAAS customers to the new CAPS. Intouch will continue to work to meet your clients’ personal needs, and your needs as health professionals, with its diverse product range, service and prices.

Intouch has been reappointed by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs as a dual national supplier of continence aids for the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP).

Intouch CAAS Helpline is 1300 366 455 or [www.intouchdirect.com.au](http://www.intouchdirect.com.au) or [www.bladderbowel.gov.au](http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au)

# Community Services and Health Industries Skills Council (CSHISC) News

## **Development of Oral Health Competencies for the Community Services and Health Workforce.**

Validation and consultation sessions will be conducted in each state and territory in March 2010 for the release of draft 1 *Oral Health competencies for the Community Services and Health Workforce*. If you require further information, please contact the Project Coordinator Bronwyn Walker or visit the project webpage at: <https://www.cshisc.com.au>

## **Competency Framework Development for Community Services Workers & Volunteers Working with LLN Needs**

With the Community Services and Health Industries providing services to increasing numbers of the community with Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) needs the ISC has been funded by DEEWR to develop Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)-specific competency unit(s), skill set(s) and/or qualification(s) for community service workers and volunteers who have clients with LLN needs. The scoping phase of the project has commenced with the engagement of the Industry Reference Group (IRG) and a contracted independent research team.

For more information, visit <https://www.cshisc.com.au>

## **Palliative Care News**

### **Identification of Resources to Support Palliative Care for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities**

DoHA is seeking tenders from capable and experienced individuals or organisations to map and critically assess resources which support palliative and end of life care for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The purpose of this project is to improve access to culturally appropriate end of life care through reviewing and mapping the currently available resources which support palliative and end of life care for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The tender closes at 2pm on 12 February 2010.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/0560910>

### **Essential Practices in Palliative Care - Opportunity to Participate**

Under the framework of the “essential” concept, the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC) is working in the identification and development of a list of essential practices in palliative care. The Association is looking for physicians, nurses, health clinicians, and health aides from all over the world to participate in a Delphi process. If you:

- are older than 18 years of age
- are either a physician, nurse, nurse aide, health clinician involved in palliative care delivery, either daily or occasionally
- have access to the internet

- understand medical terms in English
- are interested in participating in this study;

Please send an email to IAHPC [admin@iahpc.com](mailto:admin@iahpc.com) before 31 January 2010. In the email, please state your full name profession, place of work and location.

## e-Health News

### E-health Legislation

Patient care will be improved and inefficiency in the health system will be cut by new e-health legislation soon to be introduced by the Rudd Government.

The first step in creating an e-health system will come into effect in the middle of the year when unique healthcare identifiers are assigned to all health consumers as well as to health professionals and the organisations that provide health care in Australia.

The unique healthcare identifiers will be available on a secure system, operated by Medicare Australia. . The draft legislation is available for comment at [www.health.gov.au/ehealth/consultation](http://www.health.gov.au/ehealth/consultation)

## IT Project Canned

Nine months after a tender aimed at resolving key management arrangements for new national electronic prescribing systems closed for consideration, DoHA has advised bidders by letter that the project has been canned, according to a report in *The Australian*.

Department officials say the call for a consultancy to develop an e-prescribing and dispensing "benefits realisation and implementation plan" has been overtaken by recent events.

"The National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) recommendations, released in June 2009, have materially affected the Department's anticipated work plan in the e-prescribing and dispensing arena," the letter says.

The NHHRC report signalled a loosening of bureaucratic reins, backing the National E-Health Strategy developed by Deloitte which advocates a "middle-out approach" for health IT projects. It also held out hope for a bigger role for local IT developers.

The Aged Care Industry's project on electronic medication management has factored in the NH&HRC's thinking.

## Conference News

**Call for Papers: 4th Annual Information Technology in Aged Care Conference 26 -27 July 2010 Melbourne Closes 5 February**

The ITAC 2010 organising committee invites the submission of presentations for the 4th annual Information Technology in Aged Care Conference to be held 26 and 27 July 2010 at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.

The ITAC 2010 Organising Committee is seeking presentations relating to the conference themes from both industry and academic aged care experts. Presentations should be for a 30 minute session, including 5 minutes for questions.

Authors are requested to provide an abstract of their presentation by 5 February 2010. Abstracts will be reviewed by the Organising Committee and presenters will be notified of their acceptance by 26 February 2010.

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. The theme incorporates the following information streams:

1. National Health Reform
2. Cloud Computing
3. Planning and Using the Hardware Mix
4. eTherapy and Fun Technology
5. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery
6. Social Media/Social Networking/Language of the Future
7. National Broadband Network
8. Gerontechnology
9. Infrastructure - The Future of Software Delivery
10. Home Care/Hospital in the Home/Doctor in the Home

If you are an aged care service provider or systems vendor we are seeking presentations from you that will educate the ITAC 2010 delegates on the key issues within these information streams.

To lodge an abstract visit <http://www.itac2010.com.au>

### **National Affordable Housing Exchange**

In 2010 the Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA) is proudly hosting the inaugural National Affordable Housing Exchange. The event will be held on 18-19 February at Australian Technology Park in Sydney. The Exchange is aimed at bringing together a wide range of people involved in all areas of the financing, development, and management of affordable housing programs, including delegates from the public, private, and community sectors.

Rather than the usual ‘talking heads’ format, the Exchange will provide participants with a more detailed, meaningful, and rich engagement, both with each other as well as with industry experts. To that end, the Exchange will not be focused primarily around plenary sessions.

Registrations are now open at [www.chfa.com.au/exchange](http://www.chfa.com.au/exchange). You’ll also find information on how to be part of the [exhibition](#) and [program](#) information.

Contact: Beverley Atkins at the Exchange Secretariat on 02 6162 0345 or [chfa@in-sync.com.au](mailto:chfa@in-sync.com.au) if you have any questions or issues you’d like to discuss regarding the Exchange.

## **Research News**

### **Brain Fitness Project**

Just two hours of brain exercises a week can markedly improve a person’s mental capacity and help fight age-related memory loss according to a recent study by Alzheimer’s Australia WA. The “[Brain Fitness Pilot Project](#)” involved people aged in their 60s, 70s and 80s from retirement

villages and seniors fitness centres, taking part in a structured brain fitness program two hours per week over an eight-week period.

The program consisted of a series of computer-based hearing exercises aimed at sharpening a person's ability to take in speech so that the brain can hear and remember more details. While a majority of participants reported an improvement in their train of thought and could remember names and shopping lists better, another 70 percent found an improvement in their hearing and their ability to follow and remember conversations. More details at [www.alzheimers.asn.au/](http://www.alzheimers.asn.au/)

### **Nintendo Wii Balance Board Could Help Reduce Falls**

The Nintendo Wii Balance Board could be a far cheaper alternative than professional diagnostic tests for clinicians to prevent falls in the elderly and those with neurological conditions such as stroke and Parkinson's disease, a new study led by Dr Ross Clark of the Department of Physiotherapy at the University of Melbourne and published online in December in the international journal *Gait and Posture*, has reported.

The unique study compared the balance data derived from the Nintendo Wii Balance Board with the data collected from a laboratory grade force plate, a metal based system which typically costs more than \$20,000.

"We found that the Nintendo Wii Balance Board collects data comparable to the force plate, but has the added benefit of being a low-cost, simple to use, wireless and portable device for assessing balance," Dr Clark says.

"Using the balance tests as a diagnostic tool could also help in the early and more accurate detection of neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease. This would lead to enhanced quality of life in our world's aging population."

### **Artificial Pancreas to Revolutionise Diabetes Care**

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) has formed a partnership with two international companies to produce an automated diabetes management system to eliminate the need for insulin injections and dramatically reduces the risk of life threatening health complications.

The objectives of the partnership, a major industry initiative within the JDRF Artificial Pancreas Project, are to not only produce the automated system but to conduct extensive clinical trials for safety and efficacy and submit the product to the regulatory authorities for approval and subsidy.

"If successful, the development of this first-generation system would begin the process of automating how people with diabetes manage their blood sugar," said Mike Wilson Chief Executive Officer of JDRF Australia.

People with insulin-dependant diabetes rely on a daily balancing act of calculating the right amount of insulin and blood glucose they need to survive. These calculations are not simple – too little blood sugar and they risk slipping into a hypoglycaemic coma; too much and they face lifelong health complications such as blindness, heart and kidney failure, and premature death.

The Artificial pancreas project was established by JDRF in 2005. You can find out more at the website: [www.jdrf.org/artificialpancreas](http://www.jdrf.org/artificialpancreas).

## **AHURI Reports**

### *Service Integrated Housing for Australians in Later Life*

The aim of the study is to analyse the diversity and types of service integrated housing that have been developed in Australia, and to consider the policy and research implications. It includes examination of the implications of international experience with service integrated housing for Australia.

### *Improving Housing Responses to Indigenous Patterns of Mobility - Positioning Paper*

This Positioning Paper provides an overview of research on the relationship between housing services and Indigenous patterns of mobility, identifies the policy context within which this takes place, and examines current housing service responses to this. It addresses issues central to the planning and delivery of housing to Indigenous populations. Although the focus of the study is on remote and regional Australia, its findings also have implications for social housing in urban areas.

Both reports can be accessed at [www.ahuri.edu.au](http://www.ahuri.edu.au)

## **Community Care Research to Practice Briefings**

The Benevolent Society of NSW has produced these two Research to Practice briefings on issues in community aged care (a third will be released in March) *Caring for Older Australians: Care workers and care practices that support and enable good care*

<http://www.bensoc.org.au/uploads/documents/research-to-practice-briefing-1-caring-for-older-australians-nov2008.pdf>

## **Promoting Social Networks for Older People in Community Aged Care**

<http://www.bensoc.org.au/uploads/documents/research-to-practice-briefing2-OLDER%20PEOPLES%20SOCIAL%20NETWORKS-feb2009.pdf>

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