

The National Report

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Aged & Community Services Australia



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Gillard Pledge on Aged Care

“Aged Care will be a second-term priority for a re-elected Labor Government”. This promise was made to the NSW Nurses Association Conference as this issue of National Report ‘went to print’. Details may be covered in the next National Report.

The Grand Plan for the Federal Election

The Campaign for Care of Older Australians (CCOA), which comprises peak bodies and national service providers of residential and community based aged care services, including ACSA, said the announcement of the federal election campaign was an opportunity for all parties to make a public commitment to the reform of aged care.

The Grand Plan, a new vision for the care of older Australians, was launched by CCOA on June 30 to celebrate older people who have made our country great, and seek bipartisan support for more choice and access to aged care services within a properly funded and regulated system.

The key thing we need to see at this election is a commitment from all parties to support the fundamental reform of our residential and community aged care system, CCOA said.

More than a million older Australians who have been our carers, mentors, heroes and friends depend on aged care services every day. Together with the next generation of older people who will also be voting in this election, they need to be reassured that aged care is a government priority which will be acted on.

The Grand Plan proposes immediate and longer term strategies to reform how, when and where aged care services are delivered to meet current and future demand.

While we have welcomed the Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care and supported earlier recommendations from other significant reviews, we need to be confident that the elected government will introduce real reforms.

We call on all parties to commit more resources for aged care so that older people receiving care now do not miss out while waiting for longer term reform.

The needs of older Australians cannot and should not be overlooked in this campaign which the Prime Minister has declared to be about moving forward.

As we move forward we will enter an era where older people are forecast to represent a quarter of our population.

We call on all candidates, all parties, to commit to reforming aged care as a matter of urgency for the older people who don't have the luxury of time, for the older people who will come after them, our families, our friends, all Australians."

Over 3,000 Messages of Support

Over 3,000 messages have already been sent to MPs, Ministers and Shadows in support of The Grand Plan. You, your friends, your family, your workmates and your neighbours can join in by visiting the website below. The website tells you to send a postcard to a grand person in your life- and an email will be sent automatically to their local MP. You can also send a message to the party leaders, health and ageing spokespersons.

On The Grand Plan website you can also upload a brief story and a photo about a grand person in your life. Have a look at the ones already posted on the The Grand Fan Page.

http://www.thegrandplan.com.au/grand_detail.php

Aged Care Anger Builds Over Lack of Action on Subsidies

ACSA is calling on all political parties to commit to an immediate increase in aged care subsidies.

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy said residential and community care providers in the not-for-profit and faith-based sector are at a loss to understand why the Government has ignored their pleas for a lift in the subsidy.

Our open letter to then Prime Minister Rudd in June stressed that older people were being let down by the lack of funding, he said.

We explained that this year's increase of 1.7 per cent was not enough to cover basic costs, evidenced by the 2.9 per cent rise in the cost of living among other indicators.

Mr Mundy said the Minister for Ageing Justine Elliot responded on the Prime Minister's behalf, and outlined the Government's investment in aged care and its program of reforms. However she failed to acknowledge the impact the very real current funding shortfall is having on older people right now.

The Government must bridge the gap by restoring an additional 1.75 per cent for residential care, extended to community care, to ensure services and support for older people can be maintained, he said.

This interim measure will help sustain services and therefore older people, until significant reforms can be undertaken following the Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care. This issue along with improved choice and better access as part of a properly funded and regulated system will feature strongly in our conversations with MPs in the federal election. Aged care providers will continue to lobby local members and candidates to seek action on this issue.

Election Action by Other Organisations

National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA)

The Leaders know the importance of rural and remote health

The NRHA says that in Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott, the Election campaign has two people with close and long-term understanding of the importance of rural health and health policy. The NRHA has published its Election Charter calling on Leaders to commit to 10 key fields of action to overcome the inequities faced by the people of rural and remote Australia.

The NRHA's Election Charter offers the Parties an affordable, coherent way forward to improve health and community vitality for people in rural and remote areas. Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, will provide the public and the media with weekly updates on commitments in these 10 areas.

Election Charter at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/election2010>

Australian Nursing Federation (ANF)

The ANF says health needed to be top priority for voters when they go to the polls on August 21.

“Health will always be a big priority for voters. Australians want a system that works so that if they or a loved one needs care that care is available,” Federal Secretary Ms Lee Thomas said.

“This includes timely access for elective surgery and emergency department patients, a robust preventive health system and care for all people when they need it, unhindered by their demographics.”

"The Because We Care campaign has been calling for urgent change to improve the aged care sector and this will remain an important issue for the ANF during the election campaign

Australian Medical Association (AMA)

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said that health policy must be the top priority for all parties in the Federal election.

Dr Pesce said there had been a strong expectation from the Australian people that the health reform process of the last couple of years would deliver better hospitals, better health services in the community, and better access to doctors.

“The AMA has supported the push for health reform, but now is the time for detailed policy and evidence of reform at the coalface of health – the hospitals and medical practices and community health services across the country,” Dr Pesce said.

“People want more than promises – they want action. Much more is needed in aged care, mental health and Indigenous health.

“The Coalition now has the chance to roll out strong policies across the health spectrum to make this election a health election – good health policy wins votes and good health policy changes votes.

“The AMA has been engaged in the health reform process and has supported policies that benefit patients and has been openly critical of poor policy.

“We will remain engaged with good health policy from both sides.

Catholic Health Australia (CHA)

The Government’s health reform plan has failed the poor, according to CHA, and their health needs must be prioritised, says CHA.

Other election priorities identified by CHA include a health and aged care workforce plan to meet future care needs, and improving palliative care and mental health.

Full election platform is at www.cha.org.au

Schedule of Resident Fees and Charges

The latest schedule of these fees to apply from 1 July has been published and is available on the departmental website at:

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

Previous Schedules of Fees and Charges can be found on the Ageing web website at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-archive-feesinfo-0109.htm>

Universal Housing Design Standards

Older Australians will be among one of the largest groups to benefit from the introduction of universal housing design standards announced on 13 July.

The *Older Persons Affordable Housing Alliance* – ACSA and the Council on the Ageing (COTA) said the agreement between housing, government and community sectors was welcome news as Australia prepares for unprecedented numbers of older people.

Greg Mundy and COTA Chief Executive Ian Yates said the Alliance has been a strong advocate for universal housing designs and COTA has been involved in the development of the standards.

“The Government is to be commended for its collaborative approach on this issue and acting to bring about these important changes,” they said. “The new guidelines will pave the way for housing which will enable older people to stay at home for as long as possible in a safe and accessible environment.

“It makes sense for us to build houses which facilitate easy living at all stages of our lives. Investing in our future for a minimal cost can only enhance our living standards. “We urge all governments, developers, designers and builders to adopt the guidelines as part of a wider concept of lifetime neighbourhoods.”

The Alliance’s paper *A Fair Share for Older People – the Need for a National Older Persons Housing Strategy* outlined other areas which still need to be addressed including the maintenance and enhancement of existing housing stock to allow people to age in their own homes and communities; and an increase in the supply of affordable and appropriate housing for older people. The paper is available at www.agedcare.org.au

New Peak Body to Support Indigenous Allied Health Workforce

The Australian Government is funding Indigenous Allied Health Australia Incorporated (AHA).

It will cover indigenous allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians, occupational therapists and optometrists, and students in these professions from around the country, giving them support and representation at a national level, to assist in skills development, policy planning and education. www.indigenoualliedhealth.com.au

ITAC Conference: 25-27 July: Melbourne: Sofitel Melbourne on Collins

The theme of the Information Technology in Aged Care (ITAC) 2010 conference, *Smart Aged Care -the E-Health Revolution*, emphasises the importance of information technology in establishing a sustainable, quality focused aged care environment. Themes include:

- National Health Reform
- Cloud Computing
- Planning and Using the Hardware Mix
- eTherapy and Fun Technology
- Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery
- Social Media/Social Networking/Language of the Future
- National Broadband Network
- Gerontechnology
- Infrastructure - The Future of Software Delivery
- Home Care/Hospital in the Home/Doctor in the Home

There's still time to register and attend. For more information and registration, visit:
<http://www.itac2010.com.au/>.

Explore the Possibilities ACSATwenty10 National Conference: 19-22 September, Hobart

David Hunt is an American storyteller who will assist and inspire you to follow the conference request: delegates will be asked to:

Imagine - a future where aged and community care draws on innovation and ideas from leaders in other fields;

Explore - how we might apply new ideas, technologies and practice to our industry; and

Create - a new and bright future for our clients, residents, families, staff and organisations.

David is dedicated to citizen empowerment and community development and is also the founder of the Community Building Storytelling Project. He will give a keynote address on *Building the power to bring about social change*, and lead a workshop on *the role and power of storytelling in building and maintaining community*.

Registration is now available online – this is your opportunity to participate in discussion and debate about the future of aged care in Australia.

www.agedcare.org.au

Sydney CAREX 2010 - "Australia's Premier Health & Aged Care Expo" for CEOs, Managers, Health/Other Professionals - August 11 & 12. Attendance is **FREE**

Sydney CAREX 2010 represents a unique opportunity for information, education, networking, review & investing. With its mix of product & service based exhibitors (91 sites), educational program and other activities, **Sydney CAREX 2010** is an event not to be missed.

For all information regarding **Sydney CAREX 2010** go to the CAREX section of www.totalagedservices.com.au or phone 03 9571 5606

Grants and Scholarships

Aged Care Nursing Scholarships

Applications have opened for up to 395 undergraduate aged care nursing scholarships worth up to \$30,000 each as part of the Gillard Government's commitment to boost training for aged care workers.

The scholarships build on the \$154 million the Government has invested to train more than 25,700 aged care workers. Applications for the scholarships close on September 10 2010.

More information on the scholarships is available from the Royal College of Nursing Australia on **1800 116 696** or at <http://www.rcna.org.au/scholarships/agedcarenursingschols>

Rural Health Continuing Education Stream Two Grants

Applications for grants under Rural Health Continuing Education Stream Two are now open. The closing date is 20 August 2010.

The Rural Health Continuing Education (RHCE) program, funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Ageing, supports qualified health professionals living and working in rural and remote Australia to undertake continuing professional development activities.

RHCE Stream Two is to provide grants for continuing professional development (CPD), multi-disciplinary training or Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) and orientation activities that meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, allied health professionals, general practitioners and nurses and midwives living and practicing in rural and remote areas of Australia.

RHCE Stream Two is administered by the National Rural Health Alliance, with funding of approximately \$2.5 million available in grants until June 30, 2013.

Further details, including guidelines, priorities and the application forms, are available on the RHCE website: <http://rhce.ruralhealth.org.au/>

National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program Funding Round Five (5)

The Department of Health and Ageing is calling for applications for funding under the National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program (NRRHIP).

The Australian Government has allocated \$46 million over four years (2008-09 to 2011-12) to improve opportunities for partnerships and multidisciplinary approaches to the delivery of health services in rural and remote communities through better access to funding for infrastructure and medical equipment. **Closing date: 2:00 pm on 30 September 2010**
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/grant3470910>

Survey on Current Building Plans

The Aged Care Industry Council (ACIC) of which ACSA is a member, has developed a brief survey for members to report on their current building plans. The more providers that participate, the better.

You can participate by going to the link <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5ZZG625>
Responses are due by Friday 30 July.

Grant Thornton: Retirement Living Survey

Grant Thornton has launched its Retirement Living Survey, which aims to compile the data and facts our industry needs to benchmark for growth. The survey aims to profile retirement villages across Australia, the services they offer and the changes that have taken place in the retirement village industry over the past 5 decades. The survey will also assess the impact of the Government's proposed aged care reforms on retirement village operators and future alignment of the two sectors.

Survey participants will receive reports that provide national and state based data on village configuration, contract and fee arrangements, and resident service.

The survey closes on Saturday, 7 August. To participate in the Survey, go to <http://www.grantthornton.com.au/Industry-specialisation/AgedCareSurvey2010.asp>.

Correction: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Training Package to Assist Aged Care Workers

National Report Issue No 234 reported that a training package that will assist aged care providers dealing with GLBT people had been released. The package involves a partnership with ACON, Australia's largest community-based GLBT health and HIV organisation, and Aged and Community Services Association NSW & ACT.

This report was premature. ACON and ACS have just been funded to develop this package. National Report will advise when it is actually available for release, which will not be for some time.

Workshops, Training

Veteran Best Practice - Working Well with Older Veterans, War Widows and DVA

The Department of Veterans Affairs invites residential and community aged care service providers and other relevant health care providers to attend a free seminar from 9am to 12.30pm at regional locations in Victoria and, South Australia as well as Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and Launceston.

The seminars start on 16 August and finish on 1 December, with most being held in September and October.

The seminar will provide information to assist attendees in providing appropriate aged care to veterans and war widow(er)s, and outline a range of services available through DVA that service providers can access.

The program will include information on pharmaceutical entitlements, falls prevention scheme, rehabilitation appliances program, commemoration and grants, to name a few. Bookings are required no later than two weeks prior to the seminar by email.

Please email agedseminar@dva.gov.au for more information or to book. Seminar information will be sent to the *originating* email address one week prior to the event. More details at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-mailfax-2010-0607.htm>

Coordinating Respite for Carers (in the Community Services Sector)

The Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC) is holding four free Industry Consultation Forums in NSW, VIC, QLD and WA as well as an online survey to receive national industry feedback on the development of Draft 1 additions to the Community Services Training Package (CHC08).

This is not a training session or professional development activity. It is an opportunity for Community Services Stakeholders to provide detailed feedback on the proposed draft additions to the CHC08 Training Package based on their experience with the work functions of an intake and respite coordination role.

The CS&H ISC is looking for registrations of attendance from the following:

- Government / Private Employers (including Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres)
- Peak Bodies / Associations
- Unions

Information regarding the Industry Consultation Forums is now available at:

https://www.cshisc.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=502&Itemid=162

Free Broadband for Seniors Computer Kiosk

The Government's Broadband for Seniors program can provide kits including a two computers, broadband connection, tables and chairs and training material, to successful applicants. These can include residential aged care services and retirement villages.

For details on selection criteria and application forms go to: www.nec.com.au/BFS or call 1300 795 897.

MyHospitals Website

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is undertaking development work on a new *MyHospitals* website that will report hospital performance across a range of indicators including waiting times for emergency departments and elective surgery.

The MyHospitals website, which was announced by the Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon, will provide the public with better access consistent and comparable information about the services and activities provided in hospitals across Australia including their own local hospital.' 'While many hospitals have a range of information on their own websites, the advantage of the MyHospitals site is that it uses information that is nationally consistent and available from the one website.

In 2008-09, there were 8.1 million patients admitted to Australian hospitals with 60% being seen in public hospitals. Australia has 756 public and 561 private hospitals.

The new website is expected to be ready for use in August and will include information on hospitals drawn from existing data collections held by the AIHW. The AIHW also publishes the comprehensive report *Australian Hospital Statistics*.

Room 335 - Television Program

19 year old Andrew Jenks spent a month at an assisted living facility in Florida, USA in room 335. He was joined by two friends who did the filming/sound, and the program was recently shown on the ABC.

Their intention was to shed a light on the future that awaits us all: to look into the individual lens of our older selves, in order to see the laughter, fear and insight that elder Americans hold; all the while, witnessing the development of a youngster with an entire life to look forward to.

It is a compelling, powerful, sensitive and moving program not least because of its honesty - real stories, real people, real life and ... death. All the stories everyone should hear and understand. You can still see the program via the link below:

[http://www.abc.net.au/iview/?series=2952376#/search/Andrew Jenks](http://www.abc.net.au/iview/?series=2952376#/search/Andrew%20Jenks)

Australasian Journal on Ageing Volume 29 Issue 2 June 2010

The latest issue of AJA, which is published for ACSA and other organisations as a peer reviewed journal, is now available to subscribers in hard copy and online.

This issue contains a number of articles relating to research in residential and community aged care including:

- Use of psychotropic medicine in Tasmanian residential aged care facilities
- Transfers from residential aged care facilities to Emergency Departments
- Leadership and management in the aged care sector
- Physical activity in older Australians
- Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine Position Statement on Indigenous Ageing in Australia

Subscription forms for the Journal are available on the ACSA website: www.agedcare.org.au.

National Palliative Care Performance Indicators

National palliative care performance indicators: results of the 2008 performance indicator data collection presents the findings of the fourth national collection of performance indicator data from Australia's palliative care sector.

The information collected provides information on the extent to which palliative care agencies have met the four national performance indicators that were developed based on the goals and objectives of the National Palliative Care Strategy.

The report also presents information on changes to performance (as measured by these performance indicators) that have occurred between the 2008 survey and previous surveys.

Download at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10770>

Australia Second in 'Best Place to Die' Survey

Britain leads the world in the quality of care it provides for the dying, leaving many developed nations lagging a long way behind, according to a study by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) released on 7 July Wednesday.

State support for end-of-life care and an effective network of hospices put Britain top of the list of 40 countries, despite not having the best healthcare system overall, and Australia ranked second on the global list followed by New Zealand and Ireland, with Germany, the US and Canada also featuring in the top 10.

Researchers looked at factors including public awareness, availability of training and access to pain killers and doctor-patient transparency to compile the "quality of death" index. The study recommended more training for potential home carers, adding that palliative care need not mean institutional care and that many patients choose to die at home.

The report cited data showing that more than 100 million patients and their family care-givers need palliative support annually, but fewer than 8 per cent of them actually receive it. "Governments and providers are in a race against time," said the study, warning that spread of ageing was rapidly outpacing efforts to provide much-needed care.

Vital Health Research for a Vital Australia

Research Australia has unveiled *Vital Research for a Vital Australia*, a package of measures focused on vital Australian health and medical research.

It calls for a commitment to a 4% increase in funding for the National Health and Medical Research Council (in real terms) from 2011 (\$500m), a \$100 m package to support clinical research as part of the health reform package, a new Innovation and Technologies Fund to aid commercialization of Australian discoveries, and a national consultation to develop a Ten Year Strategic Health and Australia. The policy is available at: <http://researchaustralia.org/RA.aspx>

Join in Anti-Poverty Week: 17-23 October 2010

Anti-Poverty Week in 2010 starts on Sunday 17 October and ends on Saturday 23 October and includes the UN's International Anti-Poverty Day on Sunday 17 October.

The Week focuses on poverty around the world, especially in the poorest countries but also in wealthier countries such as Australia. Its main aims are to:

- strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia;
- encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

Interest has been growing steadily in Australia in recent years and activities such as public lectures, workshops, conferences, debates, concerts, displays, sports days, media briefings and other events have been organised.

Last year, at least 1,000 organisations around Australia participated in more than 400 activities during the Week, with a total participation of more than 10,000 people.

Organisers are seeking participation and support for the week, and details are available at www.antipovertyweek.org.au. The website also includes basic fact sheets, promotional material and links to sources of information and ideas about ways of reducing poverty and hardship.

Canberra Centres for Aged Face Tax on Beds

Canberra's aged-care operators would be hit with a tax of up to \$20,000 a bed by the ACT Government if the recommendations of a Treasury-ordered report are adopted.

A report in the Canberra Times on 14 July said The Government is to consider recommendations that it charges \$40,000 to allow each retirement village unit to be built, \$20,000 for a new nursing home bed, and \$10,000 each for new child-care places.

Macroeconomics Consultants hired by the Government have advised that operators in the over-stretched aged care, nursing home and child care sectors face the charges when they expand their facilities, a move that operators say would halt building activity in the aged-care sector.

Minister Joy Burch and Treasurer Katy Gallagher have both said that exemptions can be made to any new charging regime to avoid pain to the very old and the very young in the community. The study, by Australian National University academic Professor Des Nicholls and Macroeconomics director Dr Stephen Anthony, was commissioned last year by ACT Treasury as part of its controversial overhaul of change of use charges scheme in the territory.

Aged & Community Services Australia
Level 1, 36 Albert Road, South Melbourne Vic 3205
Ph: 03 9686 3460
Email: info@agedcare.org.au www.agedccare.org.au