

5. Making South Australia Fairer for Older People (cont'd)

vision

J. Palliative care

ACS Vision for people with diverse needs

Sufficient resourcing for aged care providers to facilitate older people spending the last days of their life in their aged care home rather than being transferred to hospital.

Background

A key challenge in addressing palliative care needs is identifying the end-of-life population. In Australia, 130,000 people die each year. It is estimated that 100,000 of those are “expected” and require access to better planning and coordination. Increasing service demand is occurring through the size of the population requiring end-of-life care (increasing in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the population), the duration of life lived with high care needs and the number of people requiring complex care.²¹

Recommendation 31:

That the State Government provide individualised short-term funding to residential aged care facilities to support an older person in the last days of life, to avoid the person being transferred to hospital.

Rationale

Residential aged care facilities are one of the best palliative care providers. However, a person in the last days of their life may require intensive support, well beyond that which can normally be provided in a residential aged care facility. Such people should not have to access the hospital system just to obtain the support they need at the end of their life.



²¹ *End of Life Care is everyone's affair – tackling the challenge of 'end of life'.*
Palliative Care Australia 2008

6. Conclusion

ACS would welcome the opportunity to work with the SA State Government to enhance a whole-of-Government approach to meeting the future needs of the ageing population in SA.

As the “Baby Boomer” generation ages, it is expected that they will demand more say in defining the types of services they require. There will be an increasing expectation for the Government and sector to fully explore and deliver individualised funding approaches that have acceptable structures and quality outcomes.

Professor Graham Hugo²² challenges the assumption that “Baby Boomers” will need less support into the future. He explains that high rates of obesity and high rates of survival, combined with family members less likely to live close by, increases the likelihood that the ageing Baby Boomer generation will need more local support.

Partnerships also need to recognise the need to engage clients in a process where affordability and capacity to pay are openly debated and resolved.

There is a danger that aged care will be lost in the “health service” perspective (hospitals, medical and dental services, mental health services) and in the more general “community services” perspective (childcare, disability) if it is not specifically and consistently given a high priority by the Government.

ACS urges the SA Government to consider the recommendations highlighted in this document and to afford a high priority to including aged care as a targeted objective in the next iteration of the SA Strategic Plan. South Australia has a chance to lead the nation given its proven history of social reform matched with the skills and experience of nationally-acknowledged leaders in the aged care sector. The overall financial “investment” identified in this document is miniscule in comparison with other budget “line items”. But the measures will make a difference to the quality of life for so many older South Australians.



²² *Plenary presentation to the Australian Association of Gerontology Conference, Professor Graham Hugo, Director of the National Centre for Social Applications of GIS, University of Adelaide, 2007*

7. Aged and Community Services SA & NT

vision

Aged & Community Services SA & NT Inc (ACS) is the major peak aged and community care sector association in South Australia and the Northern Territory. It represents the majority of community care, residential care and retirement housing organisations that provide aged care services to an estimated 100,000 older South Australians and Northern Territorians, their carers and their families. ACS has more than 130 members that provide over 600 separate services.

ACS is an affiliate of Aged and Community Services Australia, along with similar organisations in each state and territory. Membership of ACS is primarily composed of church, charitable, not for profit, community, State and Local Government aged and community care service providers.

