



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF  
**GERONTOLOGY**  
**NSW NOTES**



**SUMMER**

**JANUARY 2006**

**EXECUTIVE**

*President*

Felicity Barr

*Vice President*

Lorraine Lovitt

*Secretary*

Catherine Wallace

*Treasurer*

Chris Shanley

**COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS**

Dr Ruth Bright  
Dr Helen Creasey  
Dr John Cullen  
Taylor Dong  
Emer/Prof Sol Encel  
Prof Hal Kendig  
Jill Pretty  
Helen Pook  
A/Prof Susan Quine  
Paul Sadler  
Yvonne Santalucia  
Dr Andrew Scane  
Barbara Squires

\*\*\*\*\*

*Executive Officer*

Janet Gilchrist  
CERA

C25, Building 18,  
Concord Hospital  
Hospital Road.

CONCORD 2139

Phone: 02 9767 7158

Fax: 02 9767 5419

Email:

janetg@med.usyd.edu.au

Welcome to 2006. I hope it will prove an interesting and satisfying year for all our members, and that we can all make some contribution to increasing our store of knowledge about the experience of ageing. It will be an exciting year for AAG NSW, with the National Conference to be hosted here in November 2006 at the Wesley Centre in the heart of the city. We do hope you will participate in this conference, for which the chosen theme is "Diversity in Ageing". A Call for Papers, including oral presentations, posters and symposia will be included with the January edition of *AAG National*. In the meantime, please check with the conference website [www.aag.asn.au/conference2006.htm](http://www.aag.asn.au/conference2006.htm) for more details or contact the official conference organisers, East Coast Conferences at [aag@eastcoastconferences.com.au](mailto:aag@eastcoastconferences.com.au) or 1300 368783.

In this edition of *NSW Notes*, you will find papers from the very successful seminar on mature age employment which was convened last September by Prof Sol Encel and reports on the visit by the 2005 RM Gibson Fellow Prof Jon Pynoos from the Andrus Gerontology Center, University of Southern California. You will also find an invitation to attend our 2006 Rural Conference at the Tamworth Regional Entertainment Centre, the home of country music on 23-24 March 2006. Our Hunter Chapter is convening this conference, under the leadership of Prof Julie Byles and Dr Lynne Parkinson from the Centre for Gender, Health and Ageing at the University of Newcastle. They have put together an outstanding program under the theme "*Positive Ageing – something to sing about!*" and I am sure everyone who attends will be richly rewarded.

*Felicity Barr*

**President**

**AAG (NSW Division)**

**COMING AAG EVENTS IN NSW**

**RURAL CONFERENCE**

**23-24 MARCH, 2006**

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**2-24 NOVEMBER 2006**

### Chairman's Introduction

When I was a lad—just a few months ago—there was a popular British thriller writer called Peter Cheyney. His heroes regularly got into trouble with alluring women of mystery, so it is not surprising that one of his books was called *Dangerous Curves*. I hadn't thought about Peter Cheyney for many years, but then I started reading the recent report by the Productivity Commission entitled *Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia*. This report is not exactly a thriller in the Peter Cheyney vein, but it is full of dangerous curves—not the kind which got Cheyney's heroes into strife, but graphs which tell us how the population is ageing, the labour force participation rate is falling, and the cost of aged care will go through the roof.

This report joins a long line of similar official reports, roughly one every year since 1992, and the message is much the same in each of them. This is not to mention unofficial reports, which have proliferated even faster, and I must plead guilty to contributing to some of them. I shall quote from the Productivity Commission report, since it is the latest and most up to date. It also contains more curves than its predecessors. Here are some of the examples:

- By the year 2045, one-quarter of Australians will be aged 65 years or more, approximately double the present proportion;
- Within this age group, the so-called 'oldest old' will increase even faster;
- As more people move into older age groups, the labour force participation rate will drop from 63% at present to 56% by 2045 and hours worked per head will drop by 10%;
- The growth of GDP per head will slump sharply, down to 1.25% within 20 years;
- Government expenditure on health, aged care and pensions will grow faster than GDP. The cost of health care will be the ma-

· jor factor, rising by 4.5 percentage points of GDP by 2045;

- Unless appropriate action is taken, there will be a 'fiscal gap'—in other words, the gap between tax revenue and expenditure—of 6.4 percentage points by 2045.

Having presented us with these gloomy predictions, the report then drives the message home with its most spectacular curve, which uses the familiar graph of population distribution in the shape of a pyramid. In 1925, population distribution was indeed shaped like a pyramid. By the year 2000, it had developed a number of bulges corresponding to the demographic history of the past 80 years, and by 2045, it is likely to take the shape of a coffin, which curves out and then in near the top. Indeed, this section of the report is entitled 'From Pyramid to Coffin'.

Well, there's a turn-off. I stopped reading at this point, and it required an effort to restore scholarly objectivity. Like all such reports, it has multiple authors, and they don't always speak with one voice. Presumably, there was a joker on the staff who couldn't resist the coffin analogy. But the report concludes, soothingly, that 'population ageing can only be conceived as a crisis if we let it become one', and furthermore, that timely action would avoid a need for costly or 'big bang' interventions later on.

The title of this forum is, of course, a bit of a giggle, but it was inspired by the actual statements made in the past few years by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer, who are naturally concerned about the relatively low labour force participation rate of men and women aged between 55 and 64. This is currently 53%, slightly less than 60% for men and slightly more than 40% for women. By comparison, the participation rate for this age group is 63% in New Zealand and 63% also in the United States. Not only that, but the age of exit from the work force actually fell by an average figure of 4 years between 1960 to 1995.

You may recall that Mr Howard has referred several times to what he calls the 'cult of early retirement'. On one occasion, he spoke of the need to retain so-called 'gold collar workers' in the labour force. In case you are wondering where that phrase came from, I understand that it was coined by the fast-food firm of McDonalds, who have a policy of employing older workers. This policy has a typical McDonalds' name attached to it -the 'McMasters Program'. Paradoxically, most people think of McDonalds' restaurants as staffed by very young casuals. The company discovered that they could attract older customers by employing older staff with better social skills. The program does not operate in Australia, but McDonalds has recognised the value of retaining older employees in administrative positions.

The retention of older employees in the labour force has become a major theme in statements of government policy to address the ageing of the population. In March 2002, Mr Kevin Andrews, who was then the Minister for Ageing, published a document entitled the 'National Ageing Strategy'. This policy statement reflects the range of issues identified in a number of reports by the OECD, including the reform of pensions and taxation systems to remove financial incentives to early retirement and financial disincentives to later retirement.. The report also follows the OECD's concern with the employability of older workers and the need for training and retraining.

Since 1990, governments have introduced a number of measures which reflect this major theme. National occupational superannuation, introduced in 1992, was one step. A further step was to raise the pension age for women from 60 to 65, which will become fully operative this year. As a result, participation rates for women aged 60 to 65 have risen significantly. The Pension Bonus Scheme, introduced in 1998, provides for an additional payment of 9% on top of the standard pension for those remaining in beyond age 65. In 2002, this was supple-

mented by providing for a lump sum payment of \$20,000 in lieu of the pension in increase.

Early in 2004, the 'cult of early retirement' was attacked in several speeches by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer. Mr Costello, in particular, foresaw that full-time retirement would disappear and would be replaced by a combination of part-time work and part-time retirement. He announced a number of changes to the superannuation system, such as the liberalisation of restrictions on superannuation contributions for persons continuing in employment between the ages of 65 and 74. He also announced tax incentives which would encourage workers to access their superannuation assets while remaining employed, and to invest some of these funds. Part-time work, combined with a part-pension, would keep people working longer.

Unlike some European countries, which have raised the age of eligibility for old-age pensions, our Government, like the British government, has firmly denied any intention to raise the pension age beyond 65. Experience suggests, however, that politicians' denials should be treated with some scepticism.

While government proposes, it is employers who dispose. In general, employers show little inclination to employ or retrain older workers. When companies downsize, older workers are the most vulnerable to retrenchment. As a result, there is a disproportionately high rate of long-term unemployment among men over 55, and it has actually increased despite a fall in the overall rate of unemployment. Although discrimination in employment on the grounds of age became illegal in the 1990s, there is no doubt that discrimination is alive and well.

Two years ago, the Business Council of Australia published two reports entitled 'Age Can Work', one of which I wrote. The second report contains a code of conduct for

employers, but so far it does not seem to have made much impact. Similarly, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has suggested that the Government pay employers a 'learning bonus' to encourage older workers to retrain. The Government's response was to introduce tax cuts for workers over 55, and to appoint a Minister for Workforce Participation, charged with the task of increasing participation rates among older workers. We invited that Minister, Mr Peter Dutton, to address this forum, but he declined our invitation, as did Mr Andrews, who retains his interest in the subject although he is no longer Minister for Ageing. We do, however, have an official from Mr Andrews' department to speak to us today.

We have a varied panel of speakers to discuss a wide range of topics associated with the issues of mature-age employment and unemployment. Being myself a mature-age worker, I look forward to learning a lot more about the subject today, and I am sure that goes for all of us.

**Emertius Professor Sol Encel**  
**SPRC, UNSW Kensington**

### Age Balance at Westpac

Westpac Bank looked at its history of employment and decided to make changes. It was decided that they would look at a program of reintroducing the 45+ age group back into their work force, providing suitable jobs and training and over a period of a year or two have over 900 of this age group back on their work teams.

This discussion looked at why they decided to employ older aged people, what sort of jobs and retraining was given and Westpac's decision to go down the path of looking at 45+ as an area of untapped resource.

**Madeleine Seletto**  
**Business Unit Consultant Westpac**  
**For further information please email:**  
**[mseletto@westpac.com.au](mailto:mseletto@westpac.com.au)**

### Living longer – Working longer: The Health Picture

With population ageing and increasing average lifespan at birth, there is good evidence for “healthy ageing” and compression of morbidity or disability in younger-old people - those 60 to 75 years of age – but not in the older-old. This paper will discuss the distal and proximal causes of “healthy ageing” in the young old and contrast “healthy ageing” with “ageing with disability” in the old-old, those aged 85 years and over, with the following conclusions:

- Longevity is likely to be more of a boon, than doom and gloom
- Future drivers of costs are likely to be high technology health care for the younger-old, rather than good Residential Aged Care or Community Services for the older-old
- A number of future drivers of employment and productivity are likely to include a high technology health industry
- Healthy ageing in the younger-old will mean we could work to 80 years of age, in a brave new world of more attractive part-time jobs, but it may not be an economic necessity as the politicians are telling us
- However, we will need to conquer the neurodegenerative diseases if we want to work, or to enjoy life, to 100
- Education across the lifespan is one key to healthy ageing of the older-old

**Professor G A (Tony) Broe**  
**AAG National President & Scientific**  
**Director, Ageing Research Centre,**  
**Prince of Wales Hospital**

## The Policy Imperative for Mature

### Age Employment

With population ageing a phenomenon being felt around the world, decreasing fertility rates and labour force participation rates declining further each year, Government, businesses and the community need to set in place policies to retain their mature age workers to combat significant skill shortages and loss of operational knowledge and experience.

Demographic projections show that the working population will grow at a rate less than one tenth its current pace for the decade of the 2020's. With many older workers leaving the workforce between the ages of 55 and 65 on average and increasing life expectancies, some people could be facing 30 year retirements, placing a huge strain on Government spending.

DEWR has recently conducted a survey of a broad section of its workers and has discovered some possible strategies to retaining mature age workers in their workforce. They have also conducted research on other employers' strategies to retain older workers and will include these findings in today's presentation. Other findings to be presented are the correlation between work and health in older workers and dispelling some of the myths surrounding mature age workers.

To conclude, a summary of policies and strategies will be presented as a guide for Government, business and the community to consider for retention of mature age workers.

**Diane McEwan**  
**Assistant Secretary, Mature Age policy**  
**Group**  
**Department of Employment & Workplace**  
**Relations**

## No Room for Volunteering?

The presentation explores what motivates older people to volunteer. There is a difference between the current older generation and the Baby Boomers about to come through into older age category. Essentially current aged volunteers are motivated by a sense of civic duty or moral code. Baby Boomers are eager to contribute to the community (possibly from a sense of guilt relating to the 'me' generation) and enjoy new experiences and challenges

A typology for older volunteers is described with 'Nurturers', 'Adventurers', 'Socialisers' and 'Workers'.

Barriers to volunteering are also explored in the categories of personal, contextual, systemic and organisational. Also some ideas about how the barriers can be overcome.

The presentation concludes with some thoughts about how all of these factors impact on the future of volunteering.

**Stephen Duns**  
**CEO The Centre for Volunteering**  
**Powerpoint presentation [www.aag.asn.au](http://www.aag.asn.au)**

## Ageing and the future Labour Force

The Ageing population will see a doubling of the retired population over the next 40 years but very little growth in the working age population. This is projected to produce a slowdown in the labour supply growth rate, a lowering of the labour force participation rate and an increase in the part-time proportion. As there will be fewer young people coming through and lower unemployment, it will be harder to attract and keep staff. This means the retention of older workers will become more important.

Currently half of males and three quarters of females retire early, this trend needs to be reversed. With less young workers coming into the labour force, employers need them and their experience. With an ageing population there will be greater demands on the aged pension, and on health & aged care services, the Government also needs them to continue working – and paying taxes

**Dr Simon Kelly**

**National Centre for Social & Econometric Modelling**

**Powerpoint presentation [www.aag.asn.au](http://www.aag.asn.au)**

### **Capabilities of older workers**

#### **1) who are “older workers”:**

For the purpose of this paper, *older workers* are defined as *those between 45 and 64, plus the few over 65, who want to remain in or rejoin the paid workforce.*

There are two main groups of unemployed older workers:

(i) the white-collar workers who are well educated, have recent work experience, and only need some information and minimal updating training to become employable again, and

(ii) the blue-collar, labouring or semi-skilled workers who need to reinvent themselves to become employable in the workplace of the twenty-first century.

This paper will concentrate on discussing some educational approaches which have been successful in offering realistic options to this latter group.

#### **2) what are the main issues and problems that unemployed older workers face?**

*The mature age unemployed* encounter all the same issues and problems as all unemployed people but are particularly affected by the following additional factors:

- Many have been recently retrenched from vocational areas they have worked in for more than 20 years, and some of these vocational areas have now disappeared completely as

potential employers.

- They are faced with continual change, while often being criticised as “old, past-it and out-of-touch”
- They are likely to be out of work much longer than any other age group  
(eg males 45 – 64 are out of work an average of 85.8 weeks, compared with 15.9 weeks for 15 – 19 year-old males – see Appendix 1)
- Computers and IT are foreign notions to most of them, rather than essential workplace tools.

#### **3) what can most older workers do more effectively than most teenagers?**

A combination of experience and enhanced “crystallised intelligence” means that most older workers have advantages in many areas including:

- People skills
- Quality assurance
- Mental arithmetic
- Problem-solving
- Concept understanding and interpretation.

#### **4) how can we educate under-confident older workers effectively:**

- a) be flexible:** to cater for their different needs and aspirations
- b) consult and negotiate** with the students involved: Outreach has found that consulting with students about the content of their short part-time courses has ensured an average retention rate of 85% as well as offering them hope and helping them make decisions and take control of their own learning and their own lives
- c) plan strategically:** developing educational programs around local skills shortages and opportunities for greater involvement in their local communities
- d) offer a range of short and part-time courses** which encourage students to make decisions, commit themselves to their courses and keep moving along their particular training pathways, while at the same time offering them the time to develop effective study

habits, reflect on what they are learning, and consider their options. Trying a range of short courses also offers the chance for students to discover what they enjoy doing and what they might excel at

- e) **encourage them to dream** – to form realistic long-term plans as well as short-term survival goals, which are achievable steps towards these dreams
- f) **encourage them to pursue realistic options:** to consider developing a *portfolio of options* including training, volunteer work, and part-time paid work, preferably in an area of local skills shortages. Out of these various roles, a more permanent niche may emerge
- g) **build on their strengths:** explore what older workers do better than teenagers, and concentrate on those areas rather than just computers
- h) **take time:** One reason for the great success of the Outreach *Australians Working Together* project has been the fact that funding has been long-term (4 years) and coordinators have therefore been able to recruit, train and support teams of specialist teachers, develop appropriate educational resources, establish effective local and state-wide networks of community contacts and employers, and build up local credibility with their programs, as *word-of-mouth* has been consistently demonstrated as the most effective way of allaying mature age students' fears and encouraging them to attend classes again.

Most students passed through our part-time program in 2 – 6 months, but a few had to take dramatic new vocational directions to get work, and required a five to six year *personal journey* to find a real niche – a job that offered money, fulfilment and opportunities in the long-term.

**Derek Waddell**  
**Tafe Equity & Outreach**  
**Powerpoint presentation [www.aag.asn.au](http://www.aag.asn.au)**

**2005 University Prizes**  
**Winners for**  
**OUTSTANDING STUDENT**  
**ACHIEVEMENT IN**  
**GERONTOLOGY**

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

CATHERINE WOLF

Catherine Wolf has been a student at UNE over a period of two years. During this time she has successfully completed the Graduate Diploma in Gerontology and hopes to continue into a Master of Gerontology (Hons)

Catherine's commitment to her clinical speciality of dementia care is more than evident in the high standard of work submitted during her studies. Catherine received three credits and one distinction in her initial year of study in 2004 and then went on to receive high distinctions in all of her units in 2005. The depth of knowledge and insight demonstrated throughout her work in 2005 is to be highly commended. As a consequence of her outstanding work, Catherine was also invited to sit on the School of Health Advisory Board for the review of the postgraduate Gerontology programs that occurred in 2005.

CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

MARGARET GARTRELL

Margaret is a graduating student in the Professional Doctorate Gerontology. She is with the ACAT team at Mid-Western Area Health Service in Bathurst. Her contribution through studies and practice has been outstanding.

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Yet to be named

SYDNEY



WOLLONGONG

**PROFESSOR JON PYNOOS** gave a wonderful talk on housing modifications to benefit those people wishing to stay in their own homes as long as possible. His entertaining journey showed us how even the simplest change can make all the difference, and the bigger changes make a world of difference.

***“ WE ARE NOT DISABLED BY ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS BUT RATHER BY OUR SURROUNDINGS ”***

He made the point that people like to remain in their own dwellings because they have a psychological attachment, feel secure and have ties to the neighbourhood that take a long time to create. They feel familiar with a residential situation and whether it is their home or a new home in an “elder friendly community”, the older person still retains their own independence.

Prof Pynoos explained that Home Modifications refers to converting or adapting the environment to reduce accidents, facilitate caregiving and healthcare, improve access, make daily tasks easier, increase comfort, support social interaction and engagement.

Professor Pynoos suggested that building appropriate housing in the first place would overcome these problems later in life. It was noted that people often postpone alterations and engaging healthcare providers as long as possible because of the associated stigma often waiting till something bad happens so it was recommended that education and enlightenment was the key factor in keeping the aged “staying at home safer, longer and happier.”

## DESIGN & AGEING IN PLACE

As a concept, ageing-in-place has been accepted by the aged care / retirement village industry.

It's important because it values the idea of choice, supports a person sense of identity and provides a least cost option to government. It also reflects an individuals housing and lifestyle preferences to decide where they want to live and the type and level of service they want to use. Essentially, ageing-in-place is a response to consumer choice, the notion of independence and enjoying well-being and quality of life.

Because of this, ageing-in-place challenges residential aged care providers to be conscious of individual wants rather than putting the needs of the group first.

In the design of retirement villages and residential aged care, environmental features can easily be incorporated to enable residents to stay as care needs increase and assistance may be needed.

While these design elements are considered important, residents cannot age in place and achieve a quality of life unless staff and management have care culture, skills and competence to confidently deliver the range of support required to assist a person to do so.

**Helen Guthrie**  
**Architect**  
**Project Manager**

### **Home Modification in NSW: Creating a safer environment**

**\* Catherine Bridge \***

Faculties of Health Science & Architecture  
The University of Sydney

#### **A changing population requires more Home Modification assistance**

##### 1. Changing population demographics

- \* Growth of older population
  - o 22% of the total population will be 65 + by 2031 (ABS, 2002b).
- \* Disability rates increasing
  - o 20 % of Australians currently have a disability, an increase of 2-3% from the last census (ABS, 2005).

##### 1. Governmental policies

- \* Ageing in place;
  - o 91% of people over 60 live in private accommodation (ABS, 2005).
- \* Deinstitutionalisation
  - o 93% of people with disabilities live in the community (ABS, 2005).

##### = Increasing demand

- o \$14,321 million of private monies spent on retrofitting houses (ABS, 2001).
- o 36% people with disabilities saying Home Modification needs are unmet (ABS, 2001)

#### **Care needed to age in the community as injury sustained at home is all too commonplace**

The World Health Organisation lists home related injuries fifth amongst causes of death (Ranson, 1993).

- \* 12% of persons indicated that they had sustained an injury at home in the previous month (ABS, 2002b).
- \* 32% of injuries to people resulted from falls. (ABS, 2003)
- \* Home injuries result in annual health related expenditure estimated of \$3,029 million (Hill et al., 2000, 2004; Atech Group & Minter Ellison Consulting, 2001).

#### **Home Modification Service Providers**

1. Private builders
2. Home & Community Care Program
3. Veterans Affairs
4. Motor Accident Authority
5. Court Settlement
6. Department of Housing
7. Charities (e.g. Variety club, Rotary, Country Women's etc.)

#### **The National Home & Community Care Program**

- \* The HACC program, a joint Australian, State and Territory Government initiative was created in 1985 to provide funding for services, which support people who live at home and whose capacity for independent living is at risk of premature or inappropriate admission to long-term residential care.
- \* The pool of HACC funding comprises approximately 60% Australian Government and 40% State and Local Government contributions.

#### **The Home Modification Sub-Program**

The objective of the Home Modification sub-program is to provide a range of one off services to persons with disability, age related impairments and/or carers in order to prevent premature institutionalisation:

##### Minor modifications

- \* Grabrails;
- \* Handrails;
- \* Non slip coatings; and
- \* Widening doorways

##### Major modifications

- \* Ramps;
- \* Redesign of bathrooms and kitchens; and
- \* Converting gardens to low maintenance.

#### **NSW Home Modification Program**

There are 116 services (90 outlets across

NSW) at a cost of \$19 million.

There are also a number of coordination,

#### Practice Issues

- \* Lack of uniformity of service provision
- \* Lack of access to current and relevant information
- \* Issues with availability of 'experts'
- \* Limited resources – financial, people, time
- \* Rural and Remote issues
- \* Equity issues

#### HMMInfo Project

- \* The HMMInfo website was launched in November 2003.
- \* To create greater capacity within the Home Modification sector leading to improved residential housing outcomes for older people, people with disabilities and their carers
- \* The HMMInfo project provides a centralised and accessible online vehicle for collating, analysing and sharing information likely to improve home modification practice outcomes.
- \* To achieve this it works in partnership with the Home Modification service sector, peak organizations (both disability, ageing and construction) and State and Commonwealth government policy makers.

#### Timber Systematic Review findings

- \* No known published COF for timber i.e normal ambulation. let alone abnormal gait, wheelchairs etc.
- \* COF has linear relation to gradient as gradient increases COF decreases.
- \* Water, ice, mould & rot known timber issues
- \* Variety of timber profiles and coating systems available but no data on efficacy
- \* Coated timber composites, steel mesh or brushed concrete products being

recommended in preference to reeded timber.

#### Tile Coating Systematic Review findings

- \* A study into the friction requirements for people with mobility impairments was found, people with mobility impairments require a surface COF ~0.6 for level surfaces and ~0.8 for ramps (Buczek et al, 1990)
- \* Smaller tiles provide greater COF due to the tile to grout ratio
- \* Unglazed tiles have a significantly higher COF than glazed tiles
- \* The COF of a tile that has had a coating applied was similar for both glazed and unglazed tiles

#### Grabrail Diameter Systematic Review findings

- \* Power or cylindrical grip generates maximum gripping force (Achea, 1979;
- \* Dusenberry, 1996; Fothergill, 1992; Pauls, 1985)
- \* There is an optimal diameter for maximum grip force. This occurs when the wrist and forearm are aligned & the thumb and index finger are forming a 'C' when grasping the grabrail. (Achea, 1979; O'Meara, 2004; Pauls, 1985; Templer, 1992).
- \$ Grips spans that are too large or small or inappropriate shapes may reduce grip strength (Hedge, 1999; O'Meara, 2004).

#### Alerting systems Systematic Review findings

- \* Flashing lights are more efficient than static lights. Flash rate should be minimum of 1Hz and maximum of 3Hz.
- \* White light is more effective than coloured light.
- \* Strobe lights are most effective but could not be reliably depended upon to consistently wake deaf people sleeping
- \* Within a room or large space the per-

son should be no more than 15m away from the light signal.

- \* Only rooms that have a circumference of less than 15m can be adequately covered by a single strobe light centrally located.

### Home wayfinding lighting for visual impairment systematic review

- \* An adequate level of illumination for an ambient lighting system to enable safe movement through a building is 20 – 40 lux (Standards Australia, 1990, 1998; Watson, 2002).
- \* A low level of illumination (0.05 – 1.0 lux) was sufficient for a lighting system to enable safe mobility, provided that the lighting system creates a high contrast with the background environment (Aizlewood & Webber, 1995; M. Wright et al., 1996; M. S. Wright et al., 2002)

### Grabrail Orientations a Systematic Review

- \* Lateral orientation causes asymmetry and increases the compressive forces of the hip, the ankle and knee on the same side of the body as the rail (O'Meara, 2003).
- \* Horizontal grabrail may increase ankle torques where a vertical grabrail may decrease these torques.
- \* Hip torque is reduced with the use of a grabrail (Bahrami et al., 2000; Ongley, 1999; Roland, 1996; Schultz et al., 1992).
- \* Each orientation places the arm in a different position, which causes the joints to move differently.

### Hot Topic Summaries address niche products and legal liability

- \* Thermostatic mixing valves (Addresses Scalding & loss of core body temperature)
- \* Residential lifts (Addresses Under utilisation & misunderstanding of allowable types)
- \* Electrical safety in bathrooms

(Addresses Electrocutation & misunderstanding of wet areas and zones)

- \* Home Modifications & Children's Growth (Addresses Changing need & individual measurement)
- \* Fire Egress (Addresses Modification of fire exits, smoke detectors and egress planning)

### Benefits to practitioners

Practice questions can be more easily answered leading to more efficient use of resources

- \* Ease of locating & sharing a variety of materials
- \* Ease of access to & sharing of product information
- \* Reduction in duplication of effort

[www.homemods.info](http://www.homemods.info)

### FALLS & AGEING IN PLACE

Lorraine Lovitt  
NSW Leader Falls Provention Program

WHAT DOES AGEING IN PLACE Mean – an  
Australian Perspective  
Gillian McFee  
Uniting Care Ageing

Rex Leighton

**\*\*\* DR ELSIE HARWOOD \*\*\***



**POSITIVE AGEING -  
Something to Sing About**

**23-24 March 2006  
Tamworth Regional Entertainment Centre  
Tamworth NSW**

*Each year AAG (NSW Division) organises a conference to bring information on new developments in ageing research, policy, education and service provision to rural areas. This year's conference, in conjunction with the Division's Hunter Chapter, will highlight positive lifestyle and positive ageing, new or alternative approaches to aged care, and specific issues for rural areas and indigenous ageing. It will be of particular interest to AAG members, policy makers, social planners, researchers, students, aged care and health service providers.*

Just to give you an example of the excellent programme being put together, below is the first session of day one. Titled **LIFELONG ENGAGEMENT: jiving to the beat**

- *Close encounters of the third kind: sex and sexual expression in residential aged care* – Michele Chandler, PhD Candidate, University of New England
- *Empowering the ageing: something to sing about* – Audrey Guy, PhD Candidate, University of Canberra
- *Gerontology in Gerontology: integrating humour therapy into dementia care* – Helga Merl, Manager and Laughter Boss, Dementia Advisory Service, Northern Sydney Central Coast Health
- *Keeping the doors open: singing for your supper after 50* – Beryl Shaw, Principal, Another Life Services
- *Creative arts, well-being and the older person: the Australian National Choral Festival* – Dr Terrence Hays, Faculty of Education, Health and Professional Studies, University of New England

**Speakers also include Professor Julie Byles, Professor Hal Kendig, Professor Colleen Cartwright, Dr Isabel Higgins to name just a few and some of the topics covered will be assessment, rehab and aged care, highs and lows of ageing, older people and their communities, and many more.**

**Our Brochure will be sent to you shortly but in the meantime keep the 23-24 March available to spend time at this rewarding Conference.**

For further information at this time, please contact  
Julia Atkinson or Jane Howorth  
Conference Coordinators – AAG NSW Rural Conference 2006  
East Coast Conferences  
PO Box 848, Coffs Harbour, NSW 2450  
**Tel: 1300 368 783 or (02) 6650 9800**  
**Fax: (02) 6650 9700**  
E-mail: [info@eastcoastconferences.com.au](mailto:info@eastcoastconferences.com.au)

# NEWSDESK

2005 was very busy with many seminars and conferences organised and well supported. From the Rural Conference in Albury – “**Crossing the Borders – Multidisciplinary approaches to ageing**” to the National Conference in Queensland, “**Exploring the Meaning of Ageing**” and also the two day seminars “**Work Till 100? The Labour Market of the Future**” and “**Ageing in My Place**”, the Executive Committee has been very active and committed to carrying out the ideals of the AAG. We had great feedback and enthusiasm regarding the year’s events from the quality of the speakers, the excellent topics, and the great locations. If you weren’t able to attend any in 2005, then I suggest you try and get to at least one of these years.

AAG NSW is hosting this year’s National Conference in Sydney on the 22-24 November. It is titled “Diversity in Ageing” and I urge everyone to support this fantastic event. Many of us live in Sydney and it would be terrific if you could come along this year and enjoy, learn and network.

In March 23-24, our annual Rural Conference is being held in Tamworth and is aptly named “**Positive Ageing – Something to Sing About**”. I hear Rural Conferences are a lot of fun with everyone absorbing the wealth of information. Often country aged care workers find it difficult to get to city locations for these information feasts so AAG’s dedication in choosing country locations is thoroughly appreciated.

Two seminars were held in Sydney this year – “*Work Till 100? The Labour Market of the Future*” was a fascinating look at both the employers and the employees perspective. Emeritus Prof Sol Encel’s “Introduction” at the beginning of these “Notes” gives a great insight into a fascinating round table topic.

“*Ageing in My Place*” attracted over 225 interested age care workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, etc who were all keen to get the latest information on how to keep the aged in their own dwellings safely and happily. These half day seminars were held in Sydney and Wollongong. Prof Jon Pynoos from University of California was a huge drawcard, with his enormous list of publications, books and public speaking credits, and with the other local experts, this seminar was very well received.

A couple of notes of interest, Sue Kurrie has been appointed as first Curran Professor of Geriatric Medicine, and AAG Treasurer Chris Shanley has been awarded his Doctor of Education, based on a study of change management in residential aged care. Also we were sad to learn that Dr Elsie Harwood passed away. Her tribute can be seen on page 13.

Thank you to all who have supported and helped during 2005 and we look forward to seeing you at what already promises to be a very inspiring 2006.

Janet Gilchrist  
Executive Officer



## INDEX

- 1 President's Report  
*Felicity Barr*
- 2-4 Work Till 100?  
*Prof Sol Encel*
- 4 Age Balance at Westpace  
*Madeleine Seletto*
- 4 Living Longer – Working  
Longer, The Health Pic  
ture  
*Prof T Broe*
- 5 The policy Imperative for  
Mature Age Employment  
*Diane McEwan*
- 5 No Room for Volunteer  
ing  
*Stephen Duns*
- 5 Ageing & the Future La  
bour Force  
*Dr Simon Kelly*
- 6 Responsibilites for Older  
Workers  
*Derek Waddell*
- 7 2005 University Prizes
- 8 Ageing in My Place  
Summary *Prof J Pynoos*
- 8 Design & Ageing in Place  
*Helen Guthrie*
- 9 Home Modifiations in  
NSW – *Catherine Bridges*
- 11 Falls & Ageing in Place  
*Lorraine Lovitt*
- 12 *Rex Leighton*  
*Jacqui Close*
- 13 Tribute – Elsie Harwood
- 14 Positive Ageing – some  
thing to Sing About
- 15 Newsdesk

## DIARY DATES & INFORMATION

10-12 Feb 2006 Meeting is planned in Melbourne to discuss possible formation of an Interest Group on GLBTI Ageing  
If you interested contact:  
Heather.Birch@duc.vic.gov.au

ACONs Healthy GLBT Ageing Strategy. The Aids Council of NSW (ACON) has released its draft Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender (GLBT) Ageing Strategy. The strategy can be downloaded from the web site below. Comment is invited:  
<http://www.acon.org.au/community/index.cfm?doc id=1627&cat id=112>

23-24 Mar 2006 -**Rural Conference**  
“Positive Ageing –  
something to sing about”  
Tamworth Regional Entertainment  
Centre, Tamworth

22-24 Nov 2006 - **National Conference**  
“Diversity in Ageing”  
Wesley Conference Centre,  
220 Pitt Street, Sydney