



## **UPDATE for ILC Australia: March 2019.**

### **Grant Proposal on Long Term Care submitted to Australian Research Council**

As a result of the work commenced during the Research Workshop hosted by ILC Singapore last year, the LTC working party, led by Julie Byles submitted a grant proposal to the Australian Research Council to complete the next phase of the project. The aim of this research is to develop an international framework for describing and classifying Long Term Care (LTC) systems in different countries according to their ability to meet the needs of older people. We further aim to use this framework to identify examples of best practice and innovation in LTC systems, and to identify potential to transfer specific elements of LTC across different settings. This research is designed to strengthen our understanding of how LTC is delivered across the world, and to enhance the ability to learn from each other and adopt best practice examples to improve the wellbeing of people in later life.

### **Abstract Submissions now open for the Australian Association of Gerontology Conference**

The 52nd AAG Conference will be held in Sydney from the 6th to 8th November 2019 (Pre-Conference Program 5<sup>th</sup> November) follow the ILC-GA Meeting.

The 2019 AAG Conference welcomes abstracts submissions for Symposiums, Interactive sessions, Orals, Tabletops, Rapid-fires and Poster presentations from researchers, educators, aged care and health practitioners, policy makers, educators, students and those interested in improving the experience of ageing for older people. Submissions presenting ideas, critical reflections or case studies from practice, policy or the lived experience are also welcome.

Submit an abstract today under one of the following five themes:

- ~ Health and medical
- ~ Service delivery and workforce
- ~ Policy, advocacy and planning
- ~ Social engagement and wellness
- ~ Environment, design, innovation and technology

Do not miss this powerful opportunity to share your expertise with Australian and international thoughts leaders, through joining Australia's leading multi-disciplinary conference connecting research, policy and practice to improve the experience of ageing. The Call for Abstracts is open until 29 April. Further details regarding the conference and the link to the abstract submission portal are available at <https://www.aag.asn.au/national-conference/2019-conference>

### **Symposium on Social Connection in Older Age**

Social connection in older age is everyone's business, and is vital for physical, psychological and social wellbeing. That was a key message from Bolton Clarke Research Institute's Symposium on Social Connection in Older Age on March 22, in Melbourne Australia. Over 100 hundred people, including older community members, policy makers, researchers and industry representatives came to hear the issues around social connection and what is being done about it.

The first part of the day discussed the issues relating to the barriers that older people experience with feeling connected in their community. Findings from a project involving older Australians, identified that older people want to feel like they are meaningful members of society. Unfortunately, as a group, they do not feel like integral parts of the community, and many say that they have lost their identity, are ignored and made to feel a burden. These all contribute to older people becoming socially isolated. Loneliness and social isolation are associated with serious health issues. Further, there are social, physical health and psychological issues that can contribute to loneliness, discussed by Dr

Michelle Lim Director and Dr Karra Harrington from the Social Health and Wellbeing Laboratory, Swinburne University.

Many initiatives are being developed in the community to address these issues. The Commissioner for Senior Victorians, Gerard Mansour, spoke about his listening tour, where older Australians talked about what was important to them. People wish to connect more to their community as they grow older, and maintaining independence was very important. Commissioner Mansour talked about the new Victorian Government funding that is now available to increase support for initiatives on social connection. Dr Barrett, the Australian Association of Gerontology Glenda Powell Travelling Fellow, spoke about Intimacy in Older Age. Her work aims to convey to the community that we get 'differently beautiful' as we age, and that we need to make older people feel comfortable to enable social connection with all community members.

Planning for retirement and supporting older women living by themselves highlighted the importance of social connection by Dr Alana Hewitt, from Monash University and Dr Rajna Ogrin from Bolton Clarke Research Institute, respectively. Then Jennie Holdom, from Uniting VicTas, described work to develop supports for older women living by themselves.

Professor Barry Golding spoke of one of the most successful initiatives, Men's Sheds. These are places where men can gather, giving them: "Something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk with". There are now 1000 Men's Sheds around Australia.

Danny Vadasz, CEO of the Health Issues Centre, described driving change using the diverse, vulnerable and hard to reach voices of community members through social listening. The Centre aims to support people to rethink how they can contribute and have a new meaningful contribution to their world once they are no longer able to do what they used to.

Building social capital was discussed by Matiu Bush, Bolton Clarke Senior Strategist in Business Innovation, whereby he is leading a number of local initiatives to support vulnerable groups and people experiencing social isolation, through local volunteers including One Good Street and the Library of Aged Care Things.

Dr Michelle Lim, spoke of the Coalition to End Loneliness, a collaboration to advocate and support the end of loneliness in Australia.

In summation, it was a day that confirmed that older people do want to be more a part of the community. Ideally, we need health-enhancing community places and spaces that include diverse adults of all ages. To achieve this, country-wide cultural change is needed. This can be done by working closely with older people, not just to co-create or co-design, but importantly to co-lead project and service development.

A second symposium will be held by Bolton Clarke in Brisbane on April 4th, showcasing local speakers discussing issues and solutions to support social connection.

### **Australian Association of Gerontology NSW Hunter Chapter Seminar on Healthy Ageing - A Lifelong Process**

A one-day seminar was held on Friday 15 March at the Hunter Medical Research Institute offering new perspectives on healthy ageing across the life course. Presentations from Professor Julie Byles (ILC-Aus), Professor Carol Jagger (Newcastle University – UK) and Dr John Ward reported findings from recent Australian and UK research on healthy life expectancy and outlined practical approaches to encourage healthy ageing in late life, including community and residential care settings and at end of life. A panel of distinguished speakers discussed concepts of autonomy and independence in healthy approaches to care.

### **Recent Papers from ILC-AUS**

A Paper on Community Care in Australia Published in the Global Social Security Review. The article by Julie Byles, Briony Dow and Diane Gibson provided an overview of the Community Care System in Australia.

Students from the Research Centre for Generational Health and Ageing led by Julie Byles recently published papers on Factors Associated with patterns of home and community care by older Australian Women (available at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10433-018-0495-y>, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2018.11.010>) and Predictors of 15-year survival among Australian women with diabetes from age 76-81 (available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.diabres.2019.02.016>). Additionally, Liana Green wrote an article on "*Building a relationship with death: How do residential aged care workers find meaning when caring for people who are dying?*" for Meaningful Ageing Australia.

**Research Centre for Generational Health and Ageing hosts world renowned epidemiologist**

Professor Carol Jagger from Newcastle University (UK) visited the Research Centre for Generational Health and Ageing to work with Professor Julie Byles on their project testing the WHO Health Ageing framework, moving beyond definitions of successful ageing, which apply to only a minority of older people.