

The Budget and beyond

EVERY YEAR GOVERNMENT hands down a budget which both spends, and cuts, taxpayer funding.

Every year stakeholder groups, like Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA), make a pre-Budget submission. Generally, both parties focus on short-term timeframes and immediate issues.

This year our pre-Budget submission is future focussed. We aren't interested in quick fixes and patches that don't address, or contribute to improving, our industry's long-term sustainability.

The Aged Care Sector Committee's Aged Care Roadmap, which ACSA supports, outlines the aged care we want to be able to provide and the work required to ensure we can. There is a lot of work to do to get there, and it will be challenging for, and transformative of, our industry.



Pat Sparrow, CEO of ACSA

But it will be worthwhile because as we move to that market-based, consumer-driven system providers will emerge as socially important services making a major economic contribution to the economy – fundamentally changing our industry's role and relationship in society.

Two major contributing factors for our sustainability are the financing arrangements and

the supply of skilled and committed workers.

In light of this, ACSAs submission highlights the need for support for industry to develop a workforce strategy. Not one-off initiatives but an integrated approach that will mean we can recruit and retain the workers we need.

In conjunction with other provider peaks, ACSA has led the development of a workforce framework outlining what would need to be considered to give us an effective plan.

Sustainable financing is critical. Initially this means rebooting residential care funding and really tackling the issues rural and remote providers face. Fundamental change is needed to break the boom and bust cycle we are locked into with Government. Rebooting the funding approach will inevitably require us to tackle the public/private

mix of funding (including the wealth we have locked in our main asset – our homes) we all know we need to meet the demands of an ageing population. ■

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Housing for ageing: is the future low or high rise?

FROM THE 17TH Century, with an explosion of five to seven storey buildings in Paris, people in urban neighbourhoods started to live in high-rise buildings.

In the 1800s, there was the use of iron to construct even taller buildings and the advent of the first skyscraper.

The rest is history: millions of people around the world now live in high-rise accommodation.

However, the experience of high-rise living is still a foreign experience for most Australians, particularly older Australians.

We have delighted in spreading suburbia, with traditional quarter acre blocks being the norm in most of the urban regions our older population have known.

So while high-rise living may be the norm for many international urban dwelling older people such as those in Hong Kong, Tokyo or New York, we are only seeing

the introduction of multi-story retirement village and residential care living in Australia in more recent years.

Certainly in South Australia, where I spend most of my time working and researching ageing, we are only just beginning to see more opportunities for high-rise living especially designed for older people, mainly in the inner city.

But what does this mean for the way people interact and socialise, for the delivery of services, and engagement with the wider community and green spaces?

To date there is very little research on the potential benefits or drawbacks for older people choosing high-rise living.

What will the impacts be on housing costs; community connectedness; service delivery; integration with the wider neighbourhood; and access to green space, shops and social opportunities?



Dr Helen Barrie (Feist), president of the AAG

Are housing and/or aged care developers driving this shift in housing choices for growing older in? Or is this a result of boomers' indicating their late life choices?

This is an interesting space to watch in the coming decade, as where we live and how we live in later life begins to change.



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