

RESIDENTIAL CARE ISSUES PAPER

- In June 2009 permanent residential care was provided to around 147,000 people aged 70 years or over. Of these;
 - the majority of received high level care (76% under ACFI);
 - were aged 85 years or over (59%);
 - were woman (73%)
- The level of residents receiving high level care has increased from 58% in 1998 to 76% currently.
- In June 2009 there were 2783 aged care homes across Australia providing residential care.
 - Not for Profit - almost 60%
 - Commercial - around 34%
 - Government - around 6%
- Around 65% of all residential facilities offer fewer than 60 places
- Around 10% offer more than 100 places
- Between 1998 and 2007, the number of smaller residential facilities has declined – the share of facilities with 40 or fewer beds has decreased from 53% to 34%.
- The desire of most people to receive assistance in their own homes when possible has caused a shift in government policy. In 1995 Community care places made up less than 2% of all aged care places. By June 2009 this had increased to 22% (including flexible care places).

Questions:

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of aged care services – community, residential, flexible and respite s they are currently configured.
- Are the aged care services that older Australians require available and accessible?
- Are there gaps that result in a continuity of care?
- Is there sufficient emphasis within the current system on maintaining a person's independence and on health promotion and rehabilitation?
- How might any inadequacies in the system be addressed?
- How well does the aged care sector interface with the wider health and social service sectors/
- To what extent should the aged care system be treated as a separate arm of government policy to other social policies?
- Is the current system equipped, or can it adapt, to meet future challenges?
- Should there be greater emphasis on consumer-directed care in the delivery of services and would this enable more older Australians to exercise their preference to live independently in their own homes for longer with appropriate care and support?
- Do you have any suggestions for possible alternative arrangements to providing services to people with special needs, including those living in rural and remote locations, those with CALD backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, veterans, the older homeless, older people with mental illness, those with a disability and other special needs groups such as gays and lesbians?