



Caring for Older

Australians Symposium

**Australian Social Policy Association
and La Trobe University's
Institute for Social Participation and
School of Social Work & Social Policy**

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**Barbara Squires
The Benevolent Society**

www.bensoc.org.au
Barbaras@bensoc.org.au



Productivity Commission

Has been asked to develop detailed options for restructuring Australia's aged care system to ensure it can meet the challenges facing it in coming decades including:

- examine the social, clinical and institutional aspects of aged care in Australia, building on past reviews
- develop options for reforming the funding and regulatory arrangements across residential & community aged care (incl. HACCC)
- address the needs of special needs groups (rural & remote, ATSI, CALD communities & veterans)

Productivity Commission (contd)

- examine workforce requirements
- recommend a transition path
- examine the regulation of retirement specific living options (e.g. retirement villages) – should they be more closely aligned with the rest of the aged care sector, and if so, how
- assess the medium & LT fiscal implications of any change in aged care roles & responsibilities

Submissions may be ‘on any other issues considered relevant’. (www.pc.gov.au)

Challenges of responding

- easy to list the shortcomings of the current system
- fairly easy to list the principles on which a new system should be based (equity of access, efficient, responsive etc)
- much harder to be specific in suggesting how the system should be changed
- suggestions will inevitably be shaped by a variety of values, experiences and perceptions
- we can at least focus on what is working well now, so if possible, those elements can be retained and built on.

What is the view of the aged care sector?

The National Aged Care Alliance is a representative body of peak national organisations in aged care, including:

- consumer groups
- providers
- unions
- health professionals

“Working together to determine a more positive future for aged care in Australia”. (www.naca.asn.au)

National Aged Care Alliance

‘Leading the Way: Our Vision for Support and Care of Older Australians’ – September 2009

A document endorsed by all members of NACA, so a very high level, general viewpoint.

The document contains –

1. The Vision: ‘Every older Australian is able to live with dignity and independence in a place of their choosing with a choice of appropriate and affordable support and care services as and when they need them.’

2. The Underpinning Principles

3. What a reformed care and support system would mean for older people

4. Fundamental reform is necessary to achieve this vision.

The elements of reform needed for better care support of older people are:

4.1 Promoting a society for all ages

4.2 Consumer focused, user friendly and equitable

4.3 Entitlement to robust community care is front and centre – within a seamless continuum of care and support services

4.4 Properly funded and equitably financed

4.5 A framework of support for informal carers and families

4.6 Continuous improvement and quality control

My viewpoint – not necessarily shared by the aged care sector

- I am part of a service provider organisation that has been around for nearly 200 years (The Benevolent Society)
- Its central elements: creating caring and inclusive communities, social justice and innovation
- We work across the life span, in NSW & SE Queensland
- Child and family work in rural and remote areas
- Work with older people in greater Sydney area only, so I cannot comment with any authority on the needs of rural and remote communities.

Ageing – A Core Focus



- 1. Transition away from residential aged care nearly complete (we will not provide any RAC after 2010)**
- 2. Community care services**
- we are a large provider of all forms of community support and care for older people and carers in greater Sydney.
- 3. Housing with care and support (i.e. service integrated housing) - what we want to develop further, esp. the Apartments for Life model.**
- 4. Community engagement – social inclusion of older people**
- 5. Advocacy**

Residential aged care



- It will always be needed, but it will always be the workplace of the staff
- At worst, it can be all about compliance, risk avoidance and 'game playing'
- Big investment in inflexible, single purpose buildings

Community Care

- the way of the future
- focus on people's strengths, and on their goals - older people want to be 'the boss of their own lives'
- social and emotional wellbeing outcomes need to be better understood - lack of research
- a personal 'navigator' can help when there are multiple access points and services
- where should 'navigators' be based and how funded?



Service integrated housing:



‘All forms of housing for people in later life where the housing provider deliberately makes available or arranges for one or more types of support and care in conjunction with the housing provision’



p.11, *Service integrated housing for Australians in later life*, A.Jones, A.Howe, C.Tilse, H.Bartlett, B.Stimson, AHURI Final Report 141, Jan.2010

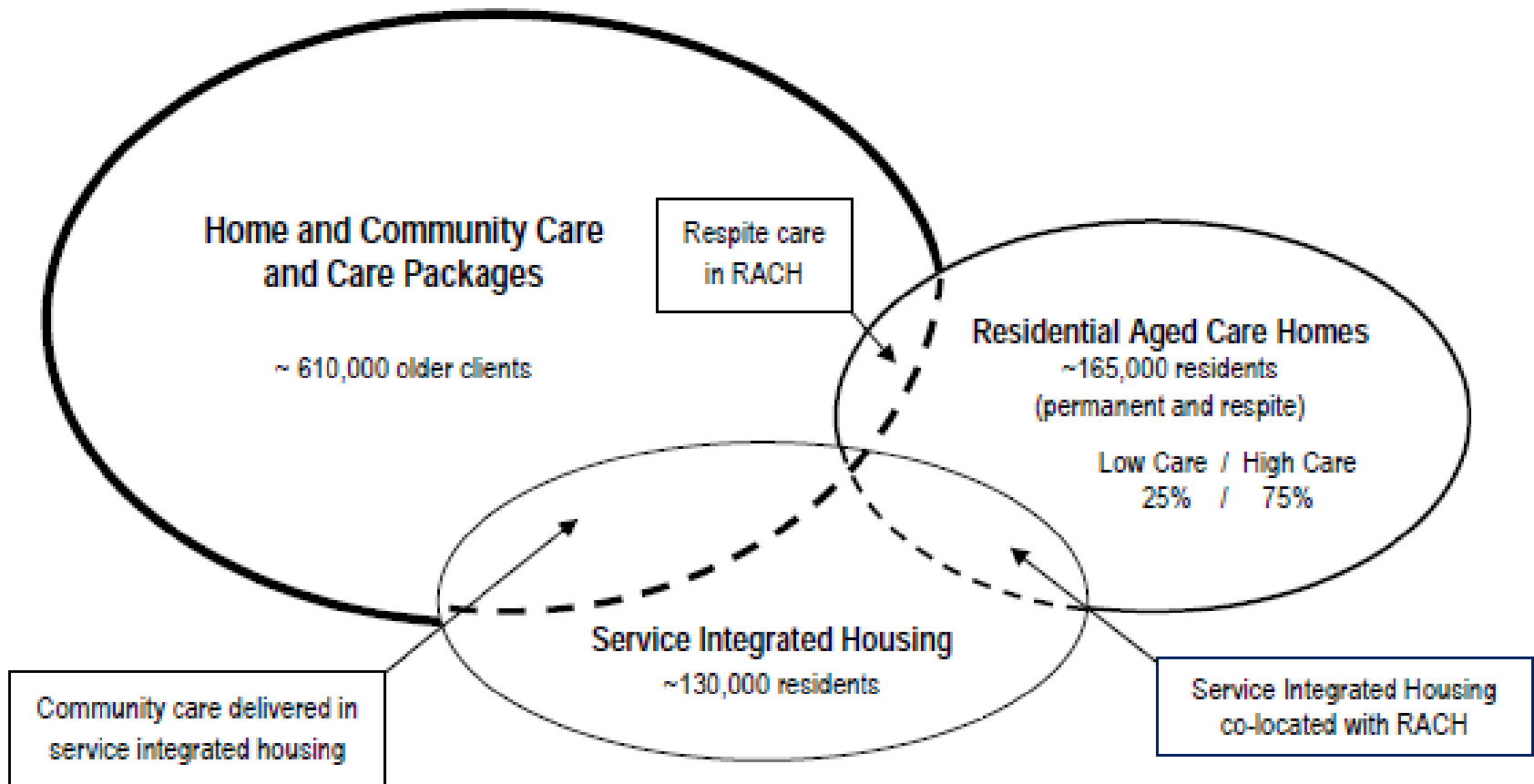
Service Integrated Housing

Sector can be: For Profit
 Not for profit (church, charitable and
 community)
 Public (government)

Can also vary in: Size and scale, design, services/care,
 cost

Can include: - large, exclusive retirement villages
 - small community based clusters
 - some public and community housing
 (i.e. social housing)
 - boarding houses

Figure 2: Service integrated housing as a third component of aged care intermediate between community care and residential care



Community engagement

- Older people tend to be left out of ‘social inclusion’ initiatives
- Helping people stay connected with their community of choice (or rebuild connection) important to wellbeing
- PC asked to ‘have regard to the Government’s social inclusion agenda as it relates to older Australians’
- A fitting conclusion!

