

ACST

Annual Report



**Aged & Community
Services • Tasmania**

2007 – 2008

Annual General Meeting
26 September 2008
Tamar Yacht Club, Launceston

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President's Report

A former Minister for Ageing, Santo Santoro stated to industry representatives in Sydney in August 2006, that all the efficiencies, that could be extracted from the residential sector had been realised. He stated that this efficiency dividend was 15% since 1997.

The Grant Thornton Report released earlier this year states that at least 40% of providers across Australia are running at a loss.

Most recently, Max Hopkins (Stewart Brown & Co.) stated that the results of their March 2008 Survey showed that the "year to date operating deficit per bed per day in high care has increased from \$4.29 to \$7.90" and that in low care the "operating surplus of \$2.18 has moved to a deficit of \$1.59." He goes on to say, "Given the results in March 2008, we expect further deterioration for the full year results to June. High care is likely to have an average operating result similar to 2007 and low care is likely to be worse than 2007. Apparent efficiency gains made during the year are likely to have been substantially eroded by costs in other areas". (source - Australian Ageing Agenda Sept-Oct 2008)

A brief review of the Hansard for Senate Estimates suggests very strongly that the bureaucracy is not well informed perhaps even insouciant.

The effects of low pensions are also affecting clients and providers of all services. Pensioners comprise the largest proportion by far of clients in our residential and community care services. The capacity to recover increased costs is denied the sector, as its clients cannot afford any increases and in any case, we are not able to levy them. The sector relies on and values volunteers, but the cost of living, and of fuel in particular, reduces their capacity to give of their time to the sector.

It is extremely difficult to develop, retain, replace and remunerate employees who are very desirable employees in other sectors as well.

In summary -:

- We are running with escalating losses for the second, third or fourth consecutive year;
- We have an insufficient pool of staff;
- We have no real access to capital,
- We have a very large client group that is totally dependent on the Government for income which is to be frozen until at least February, 2009,
- We are losing volunteers,
- We incur all the costs of similar businesses but are prevented from recovering any of them.

Whilst some providers are able to continue to subsidise the operations of their residential care services by the operation of ILUs, the attenuated state of the sector in Tasmania is concealed from public gaze. However many of these ILUs have almost reached their "use by date" and will not easily be replaced.

As the peak body for the sector we need to ensure that our Governments and policy makers clearly understand the challenges we face and their ultimate responsibility to address the viability issue. It is only a matter of time (months if not weeks) before the crash occurs and when it does Governments should not be surprised to find the wreckage in their front yard.

Susan Parr
ACST President

Treasurer's Report

The financial report discloses that we have maintained our strong financial position established in 2004 following the hosting of the National Conference with cash reserves used to finance a small deficit for this year.

Income from member's subscriptions has remained steady and this has been supplemented by small increases in interest and other incomes. The income received by our two project grants has been expended within the year.

Expenditure has increased during the year with the employment of a full time Chief Executive Officer who replaced a part time contracted service; this resulted in a duplication of costs for a short period and in total results in an increase of \$26,000 for the year. Generally other costs were well controlled.

Cliff Partridge
Treasurer

CEO's Report

Strategic planning

ACST had been guided by a Strategic Plan that has been in place since 2005. As part of our aim to increase our influence, relevance and continually improve our operation the Board decided to undertake another strategic planning process. Jeof Falls from Measured Insights facilitated a Board Strategic Planning Workshop on the 22 and 23 May. Below is an outline of the further steps in this process:

- 1) Draft Strategic Plan (2008-2011) circulated to members - end of June
- 2) Members feedback sought by end of July
- 3) Board to endorse Strategic Plan and Action Plans at September Board Meeting
- 4) Presentation of draft Strategic Plan to AGM, 26 September - **see attached**

Government Policy & Funding

We have had a number of meetings with Senators Carol Brown and Catryna Bilyk, recently elected Members for Franklin and Bass Julie Collins and Jodie Campbell, and Member for Lyons, Dick Adams. A number of north-west members have also engaged with the Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom. We have also engaged with the Opposition through the provision of a briefing for their full Senate Team and have been keeping the Liberal Senate briefed through Senator Richard Colbeck. We have recently briefed the full ALP Senate Team. We have raised the major issues of underfunding, workforce and the burden of the current (and increasing) compliance regime. We have highlighted the recent ACAR Round results for Tasmania and underlying issues of the capital deficit and provider's inability to support more places due to the rising cost of care. The ACAR system has also been discussed in terms of its adequacy for regional areas like Tasmania and the adverse impact of the unpredictable timing of the application process has on providers planning and operational processes.

ACFI has also been a topic of discussion and we have indicated the need for the new Government to keep a close watch on the implementation of this funding instrument and its impact on the viability of operators.

We continue to communicate regularly with the local Department of Health and Ageing through the State Manager and Acting Assistant State Manager on major issues affecting our sector in Tasmania. These communications are both informal and formal bi-monthly meetings. The Department has also agreed to attend our Regional Member Forums to provide information on current issues and programs and build relationships with providers.

At every opportunity we have highlighted the specific challenges providers face in a small state like Tasmania whilst promoting the high standards, links to our communities and the key role our sector

plays in local employment, economies and community life. We have used an idea implemented by the State Government to put forward a proactive approach to potential consolidation in our sector.

Due to the decrease in our school population the Tasmanian Government has to deal with an over-supply of schools and infrastructure. The State Government have put in place a “future fund” that is available to communities who voluntarily look at mergers, sharing of resources etc. This may be a useful model for our sector to examine with the Federal Government. Consolidation and efficiencies seem to be part of the agenda however a scheme like this applied to aged care might have the following benefits:

- Is a practical response to the demands an aging population will place on our sector;
- Brings communities into the debate about our facilities particularly those in rural areas;
- Highlights the importance of our facilities to communities and the need to ensure they remain part of their community because of the economic and social benefits (from a social inclusion perspective keeps our elders in their communities);
- Is a positive and proactive opportunity for the Government;
- Offers the opportunity for a collaborative effort around efficiency, sharing resources with a focus on community and sustainability (and not rationalisation);
- The Federal Government has the surplus.

CAP Lobbying

ACST, ACSA, other state associations and members played a vital role in ensuring another 12 months Conditional Adjustment Payment was included in the recent Federal Budget (however still none for community care). There is no doubt that the combination of coordinated national activity in the media and local conversations with members of parliament had an impact.

In Tasmania we had made personal contact on this issue (usually in the form of briefings) with four of the five MHR's, two Government Senators and the Liberal Senate Team. We have Senator Carol Brown and Julie Collins MHR emerging as strong supporters of the sector and Senator Richard Colbeck is our key contact in the Opposition. We have also made contact with the State Government and Opposition on this issue.

The other constructive outcome was the Government's CAP review. This will examine the extent to which the payments have been effective in encouraging efficiency, as well as the need for, and level of, any further medium term financial assistance. It is essential an appropriate index for annual funding adjustments is implemented for both residential and community care. The sector and stakeholders have an opportunity to move away from the “patch-up” solutions of the past four years and place the Tasmanian Sector on a sustainable footing.

The timeline for the review has been delayed. Existing data and submissions will be received and considered in October and November with a report due early in the New Year.

ACSA, ACAA and the state association have set up a national project team to progress a national submission and provide members with assistance in making their submissions. ACST has participated on this project team which has completed a draft submission and provided a guidance document for members. Further lobbying after the submission process will be critical to maintaining this funding or the implementation of an appropriate whole of costs annual index.

Minister's Office

The President and CEO met with the Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Minister for Aging in Sydney on April 8. Obviously key issues around recurrent and capital funding, workforce and regulation were raised. We also focused on the suitability of the current ACAR and funding system to regional and rural Australia particularly Tasmania. We provided details of Tasmania's future demographic profile and the specific challenges we face particularly with regard to workforce.

ACSA continues to communicate regularly with the Minister's Office and has a number of meetings with the Minister over our key issues. North West members have also participated in a forum with the Minister involving CEO's, senior staff and chairpersons outlining the major challenges for providers on the north-west coast.

Aged Care Act - Right of Appeal

Correspondence raising some issues with the Right of Appeal process and suggests some improvements was sent to the Minister for Aging. Our concerns were noted and the Minister suggested using the current system to deal with our concerns. After some legal advice on our ability to further challenge their reliance on administrative law we will consider whether this matter is worth pursuing further.

Working Groups – ACAR/ACFI

The ACAR Working Group was established to pre-empt the Government's proposed review process and to focus on key issues and solutions in building a better system particularly one more responsive to the need of regional Australia. After one meeting this group produced a number of suggestions for improvement. These were circulated to ACSA and other state associations and have now been fed into the ACSA working group established to progress this nationally. Jill Savell is participating on this group. It is worth bringing this group back together now that the ACPAC process has begun in preparation for the next approvals round scheduled to close in December 2008.

The ACAR Working Group involves Darren Mathewson (ACST), Kerry Ollington (Masonic Homes North), Jo Jones (Vaucluse Gardens), Christine Dibley (Glenview), Rod Hunt (St Anns).

The ACFI Stakeholders Group is focused on bringing local stakeholders together to discuss current issues, potential local solutions, input into the future review processes and collaborative opportunities. This meeting has met once and will reconvene now the initial ACFI implementation phase is complete.

The ACFI Stakeholders Group involves participants from the Department of Health and Aging, ACAT, GP Tas, RHH, Freemasons Homes and any member provider who would like to participate.

Engagement with the State Government

It is essential we engage with the State Government on a range of matters and also in keeping them updated on the state of our sector and the major issues we confront.

We have met with the Minister for Health, Lara Giddings in April to discuss Aurora rebates for pensioners in residential care, transitional places and opportunities for cooperation. We provided a full briefing on the major challenges for our sector. We scheduled a further meeting in June to provide a briefing on the issues and challenges specifically in the community care sector.

We ARE still awaiting a meeting with the Treasurer's Office to discuss land tax, implications of the aging population on future state budgets and discuss the Aurora rebates issue.

We have also engaged with the State Government (specifically the Housing Innovations Unit DHHS) on the affordable housing initiatives and programs that provide a potential opportunity for our sector and members.

Stronger Communities Report

This report has been released and is available on the Community Development Division section of the website of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Through our involvement at the taskforce level the demographic challenges and the needs of older Tasmanians have been included in this report. The issue of social inclusion is firmly on the radar of all levels of Government and we need to engage our members in both residential and community care in this discussion firmly focused on this as an opportunity to further enhance our quality of care and raise our profile in the community and with Governments.

Proposed research projects and partnerships

In preparation for the future environment and to position ourselves strategically to progress our key issues and increase our influence the following projects were considered by the Board:

Viability Project (State of the Sector)

The local Department has given an indication that they are aware there be viability issues for providers in Tasmania and that they would be prepared to consider information brought forward. Whilst they already receive all this information (financial reports) this provides us with an opportunity to drive the agenda in this area.

After meeting with Max Hopkins from Stewart Brown and Co. it was agreed that such a project was possible and could be a broad analysis that did not spotlight individual providers. Having a mainland aged care accountancy firm undertake such an analysis would allow us to promote the report as an independent, credible and expert production that should be considered by all politicians and policy makers. This project would also link with the second project.

The value of care to Tasmanian communities – economic and social

This would involve a partnership with the Australian Innovation and Research Centre (a research arm of the University of Tasmania).

After discussions with Professor Michael Hess we identified the following as potential elements of the project:

- Conducting a survey of key journalists/opinion makers to be followed up by targeted day tours;
- Interviews with all CEO's;
- Focus groups with other categories - customers, employees etc;
- Case study of a specific or a small number of providers;
- Analysis of our specifically Tasmanian aged and community care sector – e.g. great place to live, we care, we are a large sector and we are everywhere; and
- The impact of taking providers out of communities.

Due to budget limitations, the commencement of the Grant Thornton survey process and the secondment of Professor Michael Hess to a Canberra based project position these projects did not commence. The Board will review our financial position at the beginning of 2009 to assess the capacity for future research.

Elder Abuse

A report on the *Operation of the Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance* for the last six months of 2007 was the subject of a number of media stories. Both the media and Minister became over-excited about the figures which showed a significant increase in complaints. Unfortunately it seems that a simple statement at the beginning of the report was ignored, *"it was envisaged that the move to a more accessible complaints model would increase the number of issues raised and subsequent activity by the CIS"*. In addition the old system measured complaints whilst the new system reported on contacts. All this would suggest that the figures needed to be seen in context and be dealt with in a more mature and responsible fashion.

The original story was national and failed to provoke any local stories or reaction. As a result we chose not to respond with a media release or contact and the story failed to gain local traction. A number of members contacted ACST via email to see if we had responded and we communicated our strategy and advised that we had responded to the Minister and Department at a national level. We also raised the issue at the meeting with the Minister's advisors on the 8th April and again with the Department locally on the 11th of April.

ACST continues to play a key role in the Elder Abuse Alliance. Prior to Easter COTA, Advocacy Tasmania, TasCOSS and ACST met with the Department of Premier and Cabinet to discuss how to progress a whole of State Government approach to elder abuse. It was acknowledged by all parties that elder abuse is not limited to residential care facilities and that in fact the statistics show that the majority of cases occur in the community, involve family members and relate to financial matters. This process will continue and base its activity on evidence, education and a cooperative framework. Further to this the group has now agreed upon on a public forum with some keynote speakers in Seniors Week in October to highlight this issue and seek to gain some concrete commitments from the State Government similar to the recently announced Victorian model.

ACSA and the National Agenda

The CEO's of the State Association are now attending part of the ACSA Board Meetings and also meeting separately as a group of CEOs. This has been a productive process and has allowed us to establish closer working relationships with our larger mainland counterparts. We have recently circulated some tools developed by ACCV (HR Audit and Compulsory Reporting Tools) for use and feedback from our members. We hope to expand this cooperation around resources, training and support as a small branch like Tasmania can realise some clear benefits.

ACSA Budget Submission

ACST had input into the ACSA Submission to the 2008/2009 Federal Budget and conducted follow-ups with local political representatives particularly lobbying for the continuation of the CAP.

Work on the 2009/2010 ACSA Budget Submission has commenced and State CEO'S have discussed a value adding exercise around the ACSA Budget Submission that would involve hosting a breakfast of "champions" in Canberra where a briefing on the submission is provided. This would be followed by a media briefing and further meetings throughout the day with state CEO's targeting their state based representatives. Further lobbying and briefings would occur at the local level.

Federation Communication Plan

A position paper was tabled that examined both our resourcing of media and communications and our coordination and processes. This paper also put a proposal for a national rapid response process to deal with matters that arise unexpectedly. The CEO's provided significant input and the paper is to be re-drafted and placed on the agenda for the next ACSA Board & CEO's Meeting.

Image Project

ACSA contracted a company to undertake research to establish a more accurate picture of how the sector is viewed by stakeholders and the public in general. Members were made aware of the surveys and asked to involve CEO's, staff and clients. A final report has been delivered and was considered by the ACSA Board in July. A decision was taken to employ a public relations company to advance the findings and recommendations of this report. Presentations on the findings from the research have been produced for both internal and external stakeholders.

Affordable Housing

ACSA in conjunction with Brotherhood of St Laurence and COTA organised an Older Persons Affordable Housing Forum on 1 July in Canberra to ensure that older Australians and our sector was not left out of this current debate and subsequent initiatives.

National Rental Affordable Housing Scheme (NRAS) has opened up some opportunities for our sector. Further to a briefing from the Federal Department of Families, Communities, Housing & Indigenous Affairs and the State Unit of Housing Innovations (part of DHHS) members were sent the following information:

- The scheme is focused on achieving a net gain in new housing;
- Incentives of \$6000 (Commonwealth) and \$2000 (state) per annum for up to 10 years are available subject to renting out at least 20 per cent below the market rate (about \$90,000 per unit over 10 years);
- ACSA has received funding to assist organisations to develop NRAS funded affordable housing for older persons - key contacts are Lesley Dredge and Roland Naufal:
- Incentives are available for new housing but also for rehabilitation of dwellings;
- Applications can be single, consortia or joint venture – opening up the potential for regional cooperation or metropolitan applications supporting smaller rural applications across organisations;
- The state government through its new formed DHHS Housing Innovations Unit is looking to be proactive in this area and will also consider requests for additional funds with respect to design and construction of housing for the disabled and older persons.

ACSA has received some funding to facilitate our sector's explorations and possible involvement in this initiative. We have conducted an initial workshop with a small group of interested providers and will be hoping to expand interest as further stages of the scheme are rolled out.

National Resident Agreement

The draft agreement developed by Kennedy Strang was accepted and will be made available for members to purchase

Role and Image of the Industry

We continue to apply resources to the promotion of the sector through publications like the Aged Care Guide, Prime Times and The Seniors Newspaper.

We are also focused on building strategic alliances and have involved ourselves in networks such as the Healthy Ageing Network and the Peaks (community service organisations) Network facilitated by TasCOSS.

We have continued our working relationship with the University of Tasmania and participate on a number of steering committees for particular projects (see page 14 for details). We have worked with the University of Tasmania Wicking Dementia Research and Advisory Centre (WDREC) in organising a Dementia Design Seminar for 3 October including an international expert in this area.

We continue to foster relationships with the Tasmania media and specific journalists. The assistance of Beyond PR and notably Becher Townsend has been critical. This has resulted in some significant coverage for the challenges the sector faces both prior to and after the federal election.

As advised previously in this report the Image Project has been one of our key tools to start to strategically advance the image of the sector.

Workforce

This has developed as a priority issue for members. The workforce challenge is upon us in Tasmania as our workforce ages at a faster rate than other states and our exits from the workforce start to outstrip our entries.

A Southern Forum of Members and external stakeholders was conducted in August. A number of presentations were made on key issues and strategies. The following is a snapshot of strategies discussed:

- Identifying specific target groups and be responsive to their needs
For example those marginally attached to the labour market number 24,000 in Tasmania. This includes women who have been caring for children or relatives, partners who have not been working, and older workers. Beyond this we need to consider moulding conditions to suit their needs such a mainland facility providing before school child care and transport to school. Look in your own community particularly parents in local schools.
- Promoting the positive image and contribution of our sector
Our research shows the public has a positive view of the sector and the response to our advertisements on television for our labour market project aligned with this. We need to think about how we can use this to attract and retain workers.
- Providing training and sponsorship opportunities across all occupations
Links with the training sector need to be strong. Identifying opportunities to support trainees, graduates into sector via sponsorship arrangements. Vacation work and scholarships are other options.
- Continuing to pursue adequate funding and indexation for the sector so we can build our capacity to offer competitive wages.

- Examining modern ways to design work that fit the new environment.
- Looking overseas to not only add value to our workforce but also community
- Promoting the advantages/strengths of working in Tasmania both overseas and interstate
- Leveraging of the strengths of our sector in Tasmania
- Being prepared to step up to attract and retain staff using flexible work arrangements, and considering portable (industry) long service leave
- Increasing the capacity of ACST members to respond by working collectively and sharing resources, expertise, skills and labour.

The ACST Industrial Relations & Workforce Working Party will now consider the outcomes of the forum and provide further recommendations to both the ACST Board and Members. The following organisations participated in this forum:

- Department of Economic Development - Workforce Development and Business and Skilled Migration Units
- Department of Health & Human Services - HACC
- Migrant Resource Centre
- Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Searson Buck
- Essence Consulting – overseas nursing consultant
- Department of Health & Ageing
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Derek Bendall, Training Consultant
- Southern members – Freemasons Homes, St Ann’s, Tasman MPS, Corumbene, Uniting Care, Glenview, OneCare, Mary Ogilvy, CBS South

The National Workforce Committee has commenced its meetings and identified the major issues for focus as skills shortages, leadership, research and data collection.

The ACST Industrial Relations Working Group will broaden its scope and bring in “workforce” as a key area of focus.

Member Services and Engagement

Considerable time has been spent meeting members and visiting the regions through individual visits, forums and educational activities. In addition we respond to member requests for information, assistance and issue based activities as required.

Forums and Education

Regional Forums of members were conducted in both March and June with more scheduled before the end of the year. Attendance has been solid with an average of 15 participants attending.

Key issues by region included:

South – ACAR, relationship with Dept, planning/lack of research and data, community care, ACST lobbying role

North West – viability, communication, input into state and national agendas, support for informal network, services

North – financial viability (state of the sector), image, bonds in high care, strategic partnerships, ACAT/Complaints Unit and Department

The implementation of ACFI has been an issue across all regions.

Key topics/presenters included:

Federal budget, ACST Strategic Plan, ACST Update, DOHA, Advocacy Tasmania, The Public Trustee

ACFI Finance Workshops were conducted as follows:

Hobart 17 March – 12 participants

Launceston 18 March – 14 participants

Max Hopkins from Stewart Brown and Co. was the key presenter.

A quick needs assessment on email for future ACFI training was undertaken via email. Results were:

Course	South	North	N/West
ACFI Appraiser Training -1 Day	3	0	3
Comprehensive Assessment & Case Management -1 Day	2	1	3
Documentation Practice –half day	1	2	5
ACFI and the Financial Implications – 1 Day	5	1	3

As a result of the small number of responses from members to the emailed assessment for further specific ACFI Training and further discussions at ACST Board level we decided to implement further **ACFI education/workshops** focused more broadly. These would focus on the following:

- Evaluation and analysis of experience since implementation;
- Opportunities identified and tools to maximise outcomes;
- Further lessons learnt;
- Identify specific gaps where further education and resources are required;
- Establishing practical support networks.

We engaged Janine Lundie the Manager, Policy and Consultancy at ACANSW on the design and delivery of these workshops. These were conducted 28 & 29 August in Hobart and Launceston with over 30 attendees at each. Follow-up workshops are being planned for early 2009.

Southern Directors of Care Network Breakfast was conducted on 23 April. Guest speakers were Kim McGowan CEO, Hobart District Nursing and Christine Dibley, CEO Glenview Community Services. We had 30 attendees. HESTA sponsored the event. A state-wide event is currently being planned.

Industrial

Members have continued to access to industrial services through TCCI as part of the ACST membership. A flyer has been circulated outlining what this involves.

ACST though the IR Working Party has previously circulated a template nursing agreement and position paper to assist and guide members in negotiating Agreements. The Working Group has had a further meeting and an Industrial Update was provided to members. Consideration was given to the development of a similar template document for non nursing staff however the Nursing Homes Award remains a stable industrial instrument.

We have liaised with the Workplace Ombudsman over the audit of compliance in the sector. This Department has committed to work in cooperation with the sector on issues and indicated that it does not want this audit to interfere with the core operations of facilities.

The Award Modernisation through the AIRC has commenced. A national position paper was agreed by the state CEO's and has been circulated to members for comment. In summary our position was as follows:

1. *Award Flexibility* – will support the ACCI and AIG submissions
2. *Priority List of Industries and Occupations*
 - Seek the removal of the exclusion of “Nursing” from the scope of the Aged Care Industry Award
 - Aged Care should seek to be removed from the list of Priority Industries

A project team has been put together with Geoff Liggins from ACS-NSW our Project Team Leader. A Barrister has been briefed and represented our sector at the Sydney hearings set for 28 May. Paul Mazengarb TCCI is our key contact and will be liaising and providing information to the project team. TCCI has articulated the ACST and national position at the consultation hearing in Hobart on 30 May. TCCI has been briefed for these matters and provided with relevant resources.

The IR Working Group has continued to meet and recently released an options paper providing members with some direction with regard to industrial mechanisms for both Nursing and Non Nursing staff.

Aurora

At a meeting with the Minister for Health, Lara Giddings on Aurora rebates for those pensioners in residential care we were advised that this matter has been referred to Treasury and is the subject of a Report that is currently with the Treasurer for consideration.

Aurora released their pricing proposals at the end of February and ACST responded with a submission outlining that their initial proposal of a 30 per cent average increase to nursing homes tariffs was unacceptable and failed to understand the nature of the sector and the specific challenges we faced. Aurora subsequently revised their increases downward to 16 per cent.

We again contacted Aurora and requested that they further review this decision. They advised that Aurora Distribution and subsequently Retail will be providing a resubmission of prices in the near future and they envisaged the final increases coming in at around 8-9% for Nursing Homes.

The Energy Regular published new tariffs in newspapers on 30 June. The regulated Nursing Home Tariff 34 came in at an average 7 per cent increase. Whilst this not a great result in terms of the annual funding increases we receive we should consider the following:

- The original Aurora pricing strategy had these increases coming in at an average 30 per cent. With written submission and follow up contact from ACST we gradually reduced this position;
- We have written to the Treasurer seeking an urgent meeting on increased electricity costs faced by our members and putting options up for providing relief;
- We are examining options to strengthen the industry's position in a contestable market;
- This is a stark example of increasing costs outstripping funding adjustments – which we should use in our submissions to the CAP Review and all other contacts with the Government regarding funding.

The Regulator went on to recommend that full competition not be extended to small businesses (less than 50 MWh or annual electricity costs of less than \$8000) on the 1st of July 2010. The drought conditions and market structure may hinder the development of competition and retailers entering the market at the small end.

Aurora made presentations on contestability on retail pricing at our March Regional Member Forums. We have had discussions with energy consultant Goanna Energy with regard to providing assistance to our members as they move into the retail contestable environment. Some providers are exploring collective approaches to pricing with Goanna Energy. This new environment remains a challenge for our members especially in the context of our ability as a small state to attract other retailers into the market.

Energy Users of Australia (EUAA)

The Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA) is a Not for Profit organisation formed over 12 years ago and focuses solely on energy issues that impact on large energy users. EUAA activities cover both National and State issues dealing with electricity and gas, as well as Climate Change and energy efficiency and are member driven. Their current membership stands at 100. Most of these members are amongst Australia's largest energy users, collectively consuming more than \$1 billion of energy per annum. We are in discussions with this association to see how they can assist our sector in Tasmania.

We have provided support to EUAA in preparing a funding submission to the National Consumers Electricity Advocacy Panel. The aim of this Submission is to provide National Electricity Market education initially to Tasmania's Commercial and Industrial electricity consumers, including Aged Care providers.

Food Safety Program – new standard 3.3.1 (vulnerable persons)

We have had discussions with the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the implementation of this new requirement in Tasmania. This included the conduct of workshops (one day) for our members. These workshops were focused on preparing facilities for the commencement of this new standard in October and are targeted at responsible managers in both operational and administrative areas. Workshops were held in June and July in Launceston and Hobart respectively and were well attended by members. These workshops were facilitated by Jim Smith from Infocus Management the company that had been contracted to prepare the public sector.

The food safety programs that members put in place will require an independent audit which is a new step as part of the vulnerable person's standard. This will need to be completed by March 2009. As this is a new requirement Tasmania does not have the auditors available. To reduce the costs for members we entered discussions with the mainland auditing firm Food Hygiene Australia. We have received a proposal from Food Hygiene Australia for an all up audit and follow-up at a cost of \$750 (plus GST) per facility. After checking with other states this compared favourably. We are locking in members into the process which will be scheduled for February 09.

LAWLEX

SAI Global (LAWLEX) Premium Research and Legislative Alerts subscription has been renewed and members have registered and will make use of this service at a reduced rate as a result of our collective approach.

Communications

Our electronic newsletter *Newsbriefs* has continued as our most regular and read communication. The ACSA National Report continues to be circulated to members however we are attempting to reduce duplication between our various communications so members are not snowballed.

Mailouts of the *Agendas Magazine* and promotion of particular events has continued.

Media

We have continued to be contacted by the media for comment on a range of matters notably Industrial issues, funding, and complaints matters. Where matters are specific to individual members we provide assistance where requested.

We have also continued to circulate media releases on behalf of the sector and over the last six months these have focused on the above issues and particularly the CAPs issue. Beyond PR continues to assist us in this area and with our three weekly *Newsbriefs*. Our thanks to Becher, Emily and Iris for their continued hard work and service.

ACSA Community Care Conference

Highlights:

Social Inclusion

This issue was taken up at this conference as an emerging issue in the context of the growth in community care and all levels Governments focus on social inclusion strategies. It was clear that many of our organisations are practicing social inclusion for older persons and that the “wellness” approach and positive aging are natural parts of future strategies. Housing initiatives in the area of affordability and access could also be part of these strategies and add to an agenda focused on maintaining social networks and creating a sense of community connectness for our elderly.

Workforce

This was one of the major issues of the conference in both keynote speakers and workshops. A couple of key and simple points that stood out:

We need to do better –

- Developing and investing in our staff
- Retaining our staff particularly those under 30
- Providing recognition starting from a thank you
- Providing the resources to do the job

Our workforce shows “high satisfaction” based on a sense of personal accomplishment in caring for others. We need to recognise this strength and build upon it.

Housing

We need to examine the possibilities in this area. The Benevolent Society’s new *Apartments for Life* scheme is an initiative worth considering.

Change Management

Two key elements of recent workplaces change processes in community care:

- a. Engagement and involvement of staff is critical;
- b. Introduction of new technologies needs to be considered and supported.

The Demographic Opportunity

A number of speakers referred to our demographic challenge however others speakers spoke about “the people” and the need to see this as an opportunity to harness the wisdom, knowledge and caring of our older Australians.

Hosting a National Community Care Conference

Traditionally this conference has been based in NSW. State CEO’s will be discussing the possibility of rotating this national conference on a similar basis to the ACSA National Conference.

Portfolio Areas, Committees and External Projects

ACSA Board – Peter Nute, CBS South, ACST Vice President

HealthConnect Steering Committee – ACST Chief Executive Officer

ACSA National Workforce Committee – ACST Chief Executive Officer

ACSA Business Development Committee – Cliff Partridge, Aged Care Deloraine, ACST Board Member

ACSA Rural & Remote Committee - Christine Bevan, South Eastern Community Care.

ACSA National Residential Care Advisory Committee – Angela Holzberger, Southern Cross, ACST Board Member

ACSA Community Care Advisory Committee – Jill Savell, Southern Cross, ACST Board Member

ACSA Workplace Relations Advisory Committee – Greg Burgess, Freemasons Homes, ACST Board Member

ACSA Housing and Retirement Living Committttee – Kerry Ollington, Masonic Homes North, ACST Board Member

Falls Prevention Project in Resicare - Simone Baxter, DOC at St Ann’s Davey Street

RedUSe Medication Project – ACST Chief Executive Officer

Wicking Dementia Research and Advisory Centre (WDREC) - ACST Chief Executive Officer

2010 ACSA National Conference

ACST has successfully put in a bid to host the 2010 ACSA National Conference. A local Conference Committee has been convened and has met twice. At its next meeting in November a theme and speakers will be discussed.

Negotiations are continuing with both the Grand Chancellor and Wrest Point and the venue will be finalised in September. The conference dates are dependent on the venue chosen. The time windows are 11-15 September at Wrest Point or 15-22 September at the Grand Chancellor.

Proposals from PCOs have been sought and reviewed. Interviews will be held with 3 local providers at the end of September.

Submissions

ACST has made submissions on behalf of the sector to:

- HACC Triennial Plan – Consultation Paper
- Australian Fair Pay Commission – future wage movements
- Aurora – 2008-2009 Retail and Network Tariff Pricing Strategies
- House of Representatives Stand Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations - Pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce

Funded Projects

ACST managed two projects over the 2007-2008 period:

- New Entrants to Aged Care funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Improving Access to Care for Aboriginal People funded by Office for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH)

New Entrants to Aged Care

The 8 month pilot project in the Tasmanian aged care industry funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations trained 20 new people for our industry.

There is still a great disparity between the North and South of the state with respect to opportunities for course graduates. While most vacancies are in the greater Hobart area, the best calibre trainees are in the North and have limited opportunities for work.

All the participants were very positive about the program and many have told our Project Officer that it is the best thing that has ever happened to them and has been life-changing – and this is prior to any of them obtaining employment. There is no doubt that this opportunity is valued by those participants that have been wanting to return to the workforce after a considerable absence raising children. The training that has been provided fulfils their needs; with the only negative comments pertaining to the hardship caused by additional costs related to undertaking the training – principally fuel!

The model developed by this pilot is already proving to be sustainable – with the Job Network Members referring clients to the training provider for another course that is being planned on the basis of demand from new industry contacts given to the training provider.

The project had a small budget allocation for TV advertising and the implementation of advertisements positively promoting the sector as an employer provided a valuable insight. We had three hundred people enquire about employment in the sector and whilst many were not eligible as they were not registered job seekers it did identify a significant amount of interest in our sector from those defined as “marginally attached to the labour market”. Promotion of our sector to specific target group needs to a strategy we consider in the future.

Whilst not achieving the numbers that we would have hoped, this program has achieved its objectives as a pilot in that it tested new models of recruitment and training and highlighted lessons that will prove of immediate value to the industry as it comes to terms with an ever-tightening labour market. The rising demand in this sector should guarantee employment for all participants that successfully complete this program and create a market for future similar programs tailored to the needs of the industry.

Project Officer Derek Bendall has worked very successfully on this project and has forged strong networks. Our thanks to Derek for his hard work.

OATSIH

The work of Linda Jamieson the Project Officer gained positive feedback from the Department and the Aboriginal Community. Linda set up a steering committee involving ACST members and aboriginal and community organisations and established strong and effective networks.

Specific outcomes included:

- Seventy plus participants in the cross cultural training around the state plus additional courses had to be scheduled.
- A Booklet Resource, *Providing Culturally Appropriate Care* was also produced and distributed by the Project Officer.

The Department offered additional funding to build on the community networks established by this project. ACST decided not continue to host and manage this project beyond 30 June however ACST supported the extension of this funding and will continue to support its activities through promotion of the project and encouraging the involvement of our member organisations.

Our thanks to Linda for her hard work.

Administrative

The setting up of the new ACST Office was finalised in early 2008 and has involved not only a physical move but also the transfer of electronic files and financial records and obviously putting in place new systems. We share reception, clerical and bookkeeping support with a number of other organisations. We thank members for their support during this process.

Member subscriptions and associate membership will be reviewed by a Board Working Group over the next six months with a focus on modernising our arrangements to reflect the changes in the sector. Recommendations will be put to the Board followed by consultation with members

ACST Board

Many thanks to the Board for their support, assistance, active involvement, leadership and education.

Director Susan Parr (President)

Director Peter Nute (Vice President)

Director Cliff Partridge (Treasurer)

Director Greg Burgess

Director Kerry Ollington

Director Ron Dell

Director Rod Hunt

Director Jill Savell

Director Angela Holzberger

Sponsorship & Support

Many thanks to HESTA Super for their generous annual sponsorship of our events and education program.

Darren Mathewson

ACST Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

ACST is the peak organisation representing providers of services to the aged in Tasmania. ACST represents a diverse range of charitable, government and private sector residential and community care providers in Tasmania.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to facilitate and coordinate advocacy, networking, guidance and support, empowering members to thrive in a challenging environment.

Our Vision

Our vision is an aged and community services industry in Tasmania that is vibrant and viable; promoting positive ageing through collaborating to serve, protect and support the aged in our community.

Strategic Direction

Our strategic direction over the next three years is to:

1. Increase the influence and impact we have on government and the community;
2. Communicate and actively engage with members to further their interests;
3. Encourage stronger collaborative relationships between members;
4. Reduce the sense of isolation felt by members; and
5. Maintain and grow our membership.

Strategic Objectives

This Strategic Plan outlines the actions that will be pursued to ensure that ACST achieves the following Strategic Objectives:

1. To proactively influence government policy and funding.
2. To actively engage with ACSA and other state associations to shape the national agenda.
3. To promote the role and image of the aged and community care industry in serving Tasmanians.
4. To equip members to meet increasing workforce challenges in Tasmania.
5. To extend the current suite of ACST member services.

Strategic summary

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Over the next three years we will:

1. Increase the influence and impact we have on government and the community.
2. Communicate and actively engage with members to further their interests.
3. Encourage stronger collaborative relationships between members.
4. Reduce the sense of isolation felt by members.
5. Maintain and grow our membership.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Proactively influence government policy and funding

Actively engage with ACSA and other state associations to shape the national agenda

Promote the role and image of the aged and community care industry in serving Tasmanians

Equip members to meet increasing workforce challenges in Tasmania

Extend the current suite of member services

MEANS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES

1. Enhance relationships with senators, local members and ministerial advisors.
2. Engage with the Hobart office of the Department of Health and Ageing on issues and policies relevant to our members.
3. Form stronger relationships with the State Government and relevant departments and agencies.
4. Respond to and engage with other federal government departments and agencies as necessary.

1. Collaborate with ACSA to advocate for Tasmania's interests in ACSA's relationship with the Minister and heads of agencies.
2. Work closely with other state associations in coordinating lobbying activities and campaigns that impact on our members.
3. Involve ourselves in ACSA initiatives as a member of the national body as appropriate.

1. Actively engage with media to raise community awareness and support of aged & community care.
2. Be the first voice that media contact for comments and views on matters affecting the industry in Tasmania.
3. Support members to promote themselves and the industry in their local communities.
4. Identify and conduct research projects relating to emerging aged and community care issues.

1. Improve industry understanding of emerging workforce issues, including sourcing and disseminating relevant demographic information.
2. Explore relationships with other associations to identify opportunities for educating and supporting members in attracting and retaining staff.
3. Facilitate member access to IR and related expertise, information and advice through TCCI and other specialist providers.
4. Identify opportunities for encouraging members to collaborate and share increasingly scarce resources.
5. Identify opportunities to source government funding for the benefit of members.

1. Source tailored training programs in the areas of funding, compliance and other industry specific needs subject to member demand and adequate cost recovery.
2. Host the ACSA National Conference in 2010.
3. Identify opportunities to expand ACST's services to members.