

COTA NATIONAL SENIORS  
WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



*Response to*

*Department of Treasury*

*Australia's Demographic Challenges*

COTA National Seniors National Seniors Partnership A.C.N. 008 483 574  
National Policy Secretariat  
Level 2, 3 Bowen Crescent, Melbourne, Victoria 3004  
Telephone: (03) 9820 2655 Facsimile: (03) 9820 9886  
E-mail: [cota@cota.org.au](mailto:cota@cota.org.au)

[www.cota.org.au](http://www.cota.org.au)

**May 2004**

## INTRODUCTION

COTA National Seniors welcomes this inquiry into issues for Australia’s ageing population as outlined in the Treasurer’s paper *Australia’s Demographic Challenges*.

COTA National Seniors believes that Australia is well placed to meet the challenges of an ageing population. It does not believe that population ageing will lead to an economic and social crisis. The projected dependency ratio (i.e. the proportion of dependent persons to those in the workforce) over the next 50 years in Australia has already been exceeded overseas, with neither disastrous social consequences, nor economic failure. As the population ages, youth dependency declines. Total dependency ratios in 2051 will be approximately the same as they were in 1970 in Australia. The number of dependents that each worker had to support in 1947 was greater than it is projected to be in 2040, (Kinnear, 2001, pvi)

Total dependency ratios in Sweden, Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom, for example, as projected by the Population Division of the United Nations (current website) all exceed those of Australia, as does that of the USA for most of the coming years:

<b>Country</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2050</b>
Sweden	55.8	55.3	63.8	79.6
Japan	47.5	46.8	69.6	95.8
Canada	53.0	46.5	58.0	68.4
UK	59.5	53.2	58.9	73.3
USA	55.4	51.5	58.7	65.6
Australia	56.9	48.8	57.0	67.0

One of the most pervasive myths is that of the “disappearing taxpayer”. Many writers, (such as Smith, quoted in Cameron, 2001, p2) bemoan the fact that there will be insufficient taxpayers to support the legions of retired people, disregarding the fact that retired people also pay tax. Changing demographics will not necessarily reduce the number of taxpayers. Many more people will have higher incomes in retirement than the current cohorts because of increasing levels of superannuation and other savings.

In addition, Australia’s recent switch to a consumption tax will be of considerable assistance in terms of a source of revenue for government because all consumers pay tax. Consumption patterns may change with ageing, but seniors remain consumers of goods and services. The Goods and Services Tax provides a reliable long term source of revenue to the Commonwealth – revenue which flows through to the States and Territories for crucial social and community services.

Many older people pay income tax on their investment and other earnings. Fuel taxes, taxes on alcohol, tobacco and gambling will continue to provide revenue to government, irrespective of the ageing population. In fact, increased leisure brings about increased usage of many goods and services, increasing tax revenues. Similarly, retention of mature age workers within the workforce will generate additional income tax revenue.

Neither is it a fact that income tax receipts will necessarily fall, even if workforce participation decreases, and the dependency ratio increases. A tighter labour market may lead to increased wages for those whose skills are in demand. Higher wages will incur higher income taxes if the current progressive income tax regime is maintained. Falling unemployment rates will reduce Commonwealth government expenditure.

While the tax burden may be expected to increase marginally due to increased expenditures and reduced revenue, this does not lead us to anticipate an unacceptable, nor unmanageable burden for future generations, nor the Commonwealth:

*Some growth in social expenditure, relative to GDP, is expected, but it seems excessive to view this in terms of leading to a social security crisis*  
(Productivity Commission and Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, 1999, p 248)

Taking a holistic view of revenue and expenditure, and allowing for adjustments in the balance of public and private expenditures which can be anticipated over the coming years, it seems likely that the overall tax impact attributable to population ageing will be minimal, and is it certainly within the nation's capacity to deal with even the most dire (and least likely) consequences of the ageing population.

The apparent crisis connected with population ageing in part stems from a narrow focus on the spending needs of a few public programs. If the full span of private as well as public burdens is taken into account, the increase in dependency burden appears much more modest. (Burtless, 2001, p2)

We do not deny the need to plan for the changing demographic profile. Indeed, we welcome this opportunity to discuss the long term needs of Australia in the context of the shift towards an older population profile. However, we emphasise that planning and adjustment processes should occur in a rational framework, without sensationalism and an air of crisis, responding in a timely and appropriate way to changing circumstances rather than reacting inappropriately in haste.

*In Australia, ageing is not a "crisis" as suggested by the World Bank (1994), nor is it even that "complex and formidable set of interrelated challenges" proposed by the OECD (1998). Ageing promises to change some social and economic relationships and interactions over the next 30 or 40 years, but these relationships are not cast in stone. They have always been subject to change, development and renegotiation; ageing represents a continuation rather than a break with this historical trend.* (Productivity Commission and Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, 1999, p 28-29)

However Australia will need a forward plan for management of the changing demographics. The foundations for future success have been laid in many of Australia's existing institutions and policy frameworks including the three pillar retirement income policy, a quality health system underpinned by Medicare and Australia's residential aged care system.

It is prudent to review and evaluate current policies and programs to ensure that they will meet future needs and build on what has already been put in place. Ongoing research is needed to inform policy development.

As pointed out in *Australia's Demographic Challenges*, there are also some significant gaps in policy frameworks such as in relation to Australia's ageing workforce. Increasing workforce participation amongst mature age workers has beneficial effects for both the economy and individuals, and mature age employment opportunities must be increased. Government has an important role to play in assisting and encouraging increased workforce participation amongst mature age people.

While rises in health care costs must be monitored, the benefits of improved health for individuals and the economy should not be ignored. It is essential to maintain a strong and viable universal health system and a sound social safety net. This requires a sound revenue base at all levels of government. Redistributive mechanisms, including a progressive taxation regime and direct assistance to the most needy in the community are required to achieve equity.

It is COTA National Seniors' view that Australia has the opportunity to create an age friendly community which recognises the value and contribution of its seniors. This can be achieved without disadvantage to younger members of the community – a society for all ages.

This submission addresses the four major topics of *Australia's Demographic Challenges*:

- *Improving the capacity for work (page 5 below)*
- *Better incentives (page 8 below)*
- *Supporting more flexible work options (page 11 below)*
- *The policy challenge (page 13 below)*

This submission is built on the COTA National Seniors Policy Principles (attachment p14).

## ***Response to: improving the capacity for work***

### ***Page 3, Australia's Demographic Challenge***

#### **1. Education and Skills**

COTA National Seniors concurs with the discussion paper that investment in education and training is crucial to a strategic approach for Australia's ageing population. However, we believe it critical that a broad approach is taken in this area and must be framed in terms of *lifelong learning*.

Lifelong learning aims to provide opportunities for adults throughout the life course to undertake education and skills upgrading and is thus a much larger concept than employment related learning. The skills of mature age people will need to be fostered and enhanced to meet future workforce requirements in the context of the ageing population and a smaller pool of younger, recently educated people entering the workforce.

The technological environment will continue to undergo profound and rapid change. We will need a culture of lifelong learning if Australia is to respond to these continuous changes. The costs to Australia of *not* developing a culture of lifelong learning may be very severe with respect to our rate of economic growth and our competitiveness in the global economy. Over the longer term this translates into a fall in our standard of living.

Education is an important conduit into paid employment and is an important form of social participation in its own right. This has important effects in terms of social cohesion and equity. An economically polarised society damages the fabric of society creating negative effects for everyone. Lifelong learning will empower individuals to develop constructive responses and will assist in nurturing Australia's democratic and peaceful traditions.

As a small, open economy, the optimisation of Australia's human resource capacity will be essential to manage the challenges ahead in maintaining and increasing our international competitiveness. Our competitiveness will be linked inextricably to our capacity to be leaders in the knowledge economy. We cannot afford to lose our existing talent to other countries or to waste it through discriminatory employment practices and lack of attention to lifelong learning.

In 2002 and 2003, COTA National Seniors has conducted a program with over 1000 mature age workers as a result of a program *an education campaign for mature age workers about the changing nature of the labour market and portfolio employment*<sup>1</sup>. The program sought to provide information to mature age workers about the world of work in the new economy as well as collect information about what they saw as the key issues that they faced in finding employment.

---

<sup>1</sup> The program was funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Training and skill development were rated very highly by participants in terms of what they believe would help them most get a job. Affordability and availability of courses as well as linkages to real job opportunities were the issues for most people. However, we noted that training is a thorny issue because it is sometimes not clear the extent to which the barriers people face are related to lack of skills or because of discrimination. Nevertheless, it is apparent that there are real issues for many people around training for jobs in the new economy especially in locations undergoing significant structural adjustment.

There is a very wide range of training needs amongst mature age people in accordance with their diversity of backgrounds and experience. On the basis of our experience, the formulation of recommendations in terms of training has proved a difficult one. There is clearly a plethora of policies, programs and activities in the area. It is not clear whether the problems mature age people face in relation to training are related to lack of access to programs, poor knowledge of entitlements, or slippage between policy and practice.

Lifelong learning for mature age people, should, at the minimum, encompass the following characteristics:

- High level accessibility in terms of time, cost and location.
- User friendly and at an appropriate speed for older learners
- Modularity – components of education should be linked to each other.
- Recognition of prior learning.
- Locally based.
- Relevant to both specific labour market needs and broader personal and social interests.
- Diversity in approaches, venues, methods, content.
- Appropriate use of technology.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is critical that there is much stronger commitment to adequate resourcing for adult learning. Significant and sustained investment is required. We have identified the following as key areas for investment:

- Research and development into methodologies for adult learners taking account of the diversity of individuals
- Educators specifically trained for adult learners
- Appropriate, comfortable, permanent accommodation for adult learning activities
- Infrastructure to promote and develop adult learning in the community.

## **2. Health and the capacity to work**

Good health is of course vital to ensuring that an individual can maximise their social and economic participation, including participation in paid employment.

There is a strong correlation between economic well-being and health status across all age groups, no less for mature age people. However, when lack of opportunities for paid employment interrupt the income generation process in the middle years, there are profound implications for the level of income for old age and retirement. This in turn can have a profound effect on the opportunity for “healthy ageing”.

In recent years “healthy ageing” has been an interest of Australian governments. The aspiration behind the “healthy ageing” banner is that people can grow old with a maximum of health and a minimum of illness or disability and, of course, a minimum cost to governments. It is a concept which promotes a notion of older age as a period of contentment and general life satisfaction underpinned by good health.

One of the most important pillars for “healthy ageing” is an adequate income and sound asset base for the post retirement years. For most people security and a comfortable lifestyle in retirement are based on what they are able to save and invest while they are in paid employment. The chances for an individual achieving “healthy ageing”, however, can be seriously compromised by circumstances in the pre-retirement years particularly being excluded from paid employment, particularly women.

For “healthy ageing” we must also look to a greater role for health promotion programs. Many modern diseases are caused by social, environmental and lifestyle factors. Public health focussed on prevention and early identification of health problems is particularly crucial to mature age people. Encouraging good nutrition and exercise is a more cost effective way of dealing with osteoporosis rather than hip replacement. Health promotion plays a vital part in cost control in the health system. Many of the common health conditions of senior people are preventable. Their prevention would mean huge savings to the public purse. Successful prevention also reduces social disruption and cost to individuals and their families. Expenditure on health promotion is a wise investment for the future.

This inquiry, focussed on the long term, is well positioned to recognise the benefits to the Commonwealth’s finances on health promotion and public health measures, which currently attract only about 1.6 per cent of overall health funding in Australia. . The attitudinal changes to smoking are a good example of what can be achieved through long term health promotion work. The proportion of people who now smoke in Australia is amongst the lowest in the world (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2002, p3), and we can expect concomitant reductions in smoking related disease and reduced health care costs as a result. COTA National Seniors believes that a fixed proportion of the health budget should be dedicated to health promotion measures.

A priority for health promotion measures needs to be the workplace. Much job loss amongst mature age people is associated with ill health or injury. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication, Retirement And Retirement Intentions, last released in June 1998 showed that "own ill-health or injury" is the reason given for retiring from full-time work by 37 per cent of males and 19 per cent of females aged between 45 and 64. We believe this is still an important trend in 2004.

Related to this trend, is the rise of reliance on disability pensions amongst mature age workers which is of current concern to the Government. There is a significant group of people who have sustained long term musculo-skeletal injuries because of physical work in industries such as manufacturing, resource extraction, nursing, construction, and agriculture.

However, for a significant group of mature age workers, it is likely that ill-health or injury is often a surrogate for social reasons for leaving workplaces where the mature age worker is neither valued nor encouraged, especially during organisational restructuring and downsizing. It is possible that many mature age people with relatively minor illnesses and injury retire because of their perceptions that their employment prospects are extremely limited. For many mature age people this means long term reliance on income support payments.

It is critical that the Government and employers address risk factors in the workplace that can lead to premature withdrawal from work. To retain mature age workers, workplaces need to be characterised by:

- equal opportunity and freedom from discriminatory practices
- provision of training and promotional opportunities
- ergonomic and safe conditions
- opportunities for diversifying tasks within the workplace.

### ***Response to: better incentives***

#### ***Page 7, Australia's Demographic Challenge***

The section in *Australia's Demographic Challenge* which examines the desirability for mature age people to remain in paid employment provides a good overview of the issues affecting the decisions that mature age people take into account in terms of work and retirement. However, the discussion pays insufficient attention to the barriers that a lot of mature age people face in maintaining their workforce participation.

As either job losers or job leavers, mature age people face very significant barriers in returning to work. There is also a significant group of people, primarily women, who have had marginal or no workforce attachment due to caring responsibilities but who are seeking a place in the workforce.

The nature of these barriers is at the heart of the issues regarding the participation of mature age people in paid employment.

COTA National Seniors believes that the barriers faced by mature age people are complex and involve:

- discrimination in terms of recruitment and retrenchment on the basis of age
- lack of appropriate skills and training for employment in the new economy
- lack of jobs in particular regions and locations
- the effects of long term unemployment in terms of getting back into work
- social security and tax disincentive effects.

To improve the participation of mature age people in the labour market each of these barriers will need to be addressed. In this process there needs to be recognition of the diversity of circumstances and backgrounds of mature age workers and their pre existing relationship to the labour market. Mature age workers are as diverse as any other group in the community.

While population ageing in the long run may fix the problems of the participation rate of mature age people, there is a serious problem in the short to medium term which must be tackled.

It is vitally important that action is taken now to improve the employment prospects of mature age people in the labour market. Without action, a large cohort of people will enter retirement with insufficient savings, and they will experience social and economic exclusion. In addition, there is a serious loss of skills and productivity to the economy.

There is no question that age discrimination is a significant barrier for many mature age people. We had thought that the situation may have improved in the last few years but we are convinced by our ongoing contact with mature age people that age discrimination remains a major barrier.

Mature age workers tell COTA National Seniors that age discrimination is the single most important cause of the problems they face. The significance of this factor should not be underestimated. However, we understand the interplay of age discrimination with other factors:

- The problems of finding a job while unemployed. It is much easier to find a job when one has a job. However, swift, unplanned retrenchment means that the individual is forced into a job search from a position of unemployment. The way retrenchments have been handled can lead to a significant loss of self-esteem and confidence, which can impact on a person's capacity to cope with the rigorous demands of job searching.
- The longer one is unemployed, the higher the probability of remaining unemployed. This phenomenon is known as hysteresis in the labour economics literature.
- There have been significant changes in business practice in the past ten to fifteen years: eg. flatter structures, reliance on contractors and technological change. To a large extent, the entire workforce has been affected by these changes, however, mature age people may be more affected because they have had the longest exposure to earlier workforce structures and cultures.

- The unemployed person's skills may not be compatible with employers' current needs.

Age discrimination is the outcome of a complex set of forces at work in this society and the economy including:

- outdated and stereotypical attitudes across society about the capacities of mature age people
- a shortage of jobs for all who want to work and the need to ration employment
- a belief that young people need jobs more than mature age people
- a very rapid process of economic and labour market change that has particularly disadvantaged mature age workers competing for jobs in the new economy
- the focus on mature age workers in terms of retrenchment and downsizing processes which has resulted in younger profiles in management.

There needs to be action on a wide range of levels to counter age discrimination and many players are needed to have a role, including:

- the Commonwealth to take leadership in terms of public policy
- forward-thinking employers to set examples and establish best practice
- COTA National Seniors to keep the messages in the limelight
- Job Network and other employment service providers to ensure that mature age job seekers are promoted to employers.

### **Retirement incomes issues**

COTA National Seniors supports increasing workforce opportunities for mature age people so that they can maximise their saving for retirement. However, this goal must be linked to a broad range of strategies for increasing their workforce participation as indicated throughout this submission.

COTA National Seniors believes that the issues regarding replacement rates (the amount of retirement income replacing income from paid employment) as canvassed on page 12 of the report are still very subjective. Some research has been carried out by the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia for Westpac (2004) and the Social Policy Research Centre for the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia on this issue (2004). However, the amount that people need to live on in retirement depends on a very large number of factors such as health status, location, housing, family support, and access to community facilities. Other factors to be considered are the length of time since retirement and marital status. Much more research and debate is required in this area. Retirement savings objectives need to be balanced with other savings and spending needs throughout the life course such as buying a home, raising a family and investing in education.

COTA National Seniors agrees that the preservation age for superannuation of 55 years can be an incentive to premature retirement. However, we recognise the

difficulties of changing the current preservation age in advance of the current date current date of 2024 when it will become 60 years. This is a complex issue that the Government will need to investigate in more depth. However, an expansion of employment opportunities and a reduction in age discrimination could be effective in ensuring that the majority of mature age people delay retirement as long as possible.

### ***Response to: supporting more flexible work options***

#### ***Page 13, Australia's Demographic Challenge***

In our experience, there is still a strong demand amongst mature age people for full time permanent work. They point to the difficulties they face in the part-time and casual labour market:

- earning enough to live on;
- the lack of coverage for sick leave and other benefits;
- if on Centrelink payments, the havoc of getting back on to benefits following a short term job;
- the uncertainty of many jobs; and
- the difficulty of balancing two or more jobs in a portfolio arrangement, especially where one or both are casual and at call.

However, the reality is that much growth in the new economy is in part time, casual and contract work.

Increasingly mature age people do acknowledge that they would need to look at portfolio employment as an option given the growth of these sorts of jobs. For some people, this is the desired option for their working life, especially those with skills that are in high demand and who can command very good pay rates.

In addition, for a significant number of people, phased retirement – gradual rather than sudden departure from the workforce, is an attractive option. Increasing the age of departure from the workforce can make a very significant difference to retirement savings and reduces the demand for government benefits. Income tax receipts are also increased if people are working for longer. As the OECD has suggested, small changes to the labour market participation of mature age people can make a big difference:

*...the payoffs from relatively small changes in the balance between work and retirement could be particularly large. (OECD, 2001, website)*

The Western Australian Office of Public Sector Management (Western Australian Government website) gives a range of reasons why phased retirement is attractive to public service employers:

- to prevent skills shortage particularly at middle to senior management.
- to maximise the return of investment in human capital.
- to provide a system for effective succession planning
- to respond to ageing clients and their needs.
- to retain "public sector knowledge"

- to assist with the creation of a flexible responsive workforce

These arguments apply equally to private sector employment. However, there are barriers to phased retirement, including negative stereotypes of mature age employees and age discrimination, and poor interface between social security, taxation and superannuation policies.

COTA National Seniors believes that phased retirement will become the norm rather than the exception over the coming years, with beneficial effects for both individuals and the community. Government needs to take action to facilitate this by improving the interface between social security, taxation and superannuation, ensuring effective age discrimination legislation, and promoting the benefits of employing mature age workers to dispel negative stereotypes.

In COTA National Seniors experience, effective marginal tax rates or EMTRs continue to have major implications for the options of mature age people to remain in paid employment.

We acknowledge that the new *Working Credit* scheme commencing on 20 September 2003 will ameliorate some of the problems mature age people have encountered to date.

This scheme will help people to “smooth out” the effect of part time and casual work on their Centrelink payment by allowing them to “bank” their potential earning capacity at a rate of \$24 per week. This means that after a period of 12 months for example, a person on Newstart Allowance who has not worked at all, would have a bank of \$1248 potential earning capacity – so if they got a casual job for 3 weeks during the Christmas rush earning \$400 per week, this would not affect their Centrelink payment.

However, the income test for payments, particularly Newstart Allowance, remains severe. Individuals can only earn \$31 per week before they lose Newstart at a rate of 50 cents in the dollar for income between \$31 and \$71 per week and then 70 cents in the dollar for income above \$71. People tell us that this is a disincentive to taking part time work. Hence they continue to seek out full time work instead.

Mature age people also report that if they take a second job, they are taxed for that job at the highest marginal rate. While they will be reimbursed at the end of the financial year for any excessive tax paid, they nevertheless consider that these tax arrangements are a disincentive in terms of taking a second job.

Effective marginal tax rates are difficult issues to address but it is a very important policy area that the Government must address if it wishes to improve employment participation amongst mature age people.

***Response to: The Policy Challenges  
Australia's Demographic Challenge, p 23.***

COTA National Seniors has a strong commitment to intergenerational equity as set out in our Policy Principles (see attachment 1).

COTA National Seniors concurs that the best option for the future will be Choice 4 (page 27) to grow the economy through increased labour force participation and productivity.

However, the ability of the economy to meet the changing needs of the population depends on a commitment to investments as discussed throughout this submission,

*Productivity rises when workers are well educated, use the best, most advanced equipment, and are supported by a sound economic infrastructure (such as adequate transportation systems and utilities). These factors, in turn, depend upon high levels of investment in many areas — education, training, research and development, new equipment and facilities, and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure. (OECD, 2001).*

In this submission, we reiterate the need to maximise use of the labour force by increasing mature age employment, providing adequate skills training for mature age workers, enhancing lifelong learning opportunities and building social infrastructure. These investments will repay themselves many fold. Failure to invest in this way will result in reduced productivity, inability to meet the needs of the ageing population and inter-generational inequity.

The general principles on which policy and program development should be based include:

- Economic, social and environmental sustainability
- Guaranteed access to high quality health and other services
- Maintaining equity, including inter-generational equity
- Redressing disadvantage
- Recognising and valuing diversity
- Building on strength of existing systems/programs, while overcoming their shortcomings, to maximise their efficiency, appropriateness and effectiveness
- Building social capital
- Providing flexibility and choice to individuals wherever possible
- Enabling all people to participate in every aspect of community life

Current problems and emerging issues and concerns must be addressed to establish a sound basis for the future. In the short and medium term, policy improvements are needed in many areas affecting seniors, in order to address the ageing of the population over the next forty years.

## **ATTACHMENT 1: ABOUT COTA NATIONAL SENIORS**

COTA National Seniors Partnership is the largest seniors' organisation in Australia with more than 280,000 individual members and over 1500 seniors organisations under its umbrella. It offers members a vast range of services and benefits and is an influential vehicle for contributing to policy debates affecting older people in Australia.

The Partnership, effective from 11 December 2002, joined the State and Territory COTAs and Council on the Ageing (Australia) with National Seniors into a joint national operation that merges and shares various operations of the eleven organisations.

With its combined individual and organisational membership representing all aspects of Australian seniors interests, COTA National Seniors Partnership has a pre-eminent role in representing, advocating for and serving older people throughout Australia. In terms of policy, it adheres to four principles:

*Policy Principle 1: maximising the social and economic participation of older Australians.*

The Partnership seeks to maximise opportunities for social and economic participation by older Australians, including promoting positive approaches to the contribution of seniors and the ageing of the Australian population, and by breaking down age discrimination in all areas of social and economic life.

*Policy Principle 2: promoting sustainable, fair and responsible policies*

The Partnership is committed to the development of fair and sustainable policies for seniors that take account of the needs of the entire community in the short and long term. It develops policies which are fiscally and economically responsible and which fairly balance the competing needs and interests of diverse groups amongst the senior population and other sectors of the community.

*Policy Principle 3: protecting and extending services and programs that are used and valued by older Australians*

The Partnership develops policies and provides advice on maintaining and improving services and programs which seniors use and value. These include primary health care, hospitals, pharmaceuticals, employment services, utilities, public transport, residential care, housing and community care. It will seek to ensure that there is an adequate "safety net" of services and income support which all seniors can access according to fair and equitable criteria in order to maintain a reasonable quality of life.

*Policy Principle 4: focus on protecting against and redressing disadvantage*

The Partnership believes that all seniors have the right to security, dignity, respect, safety, high standards of treatment and care and to equal participation in the community regardless of income, status, background, location, frailty or any other social or economic factor. As a result we will have a strong focus on seniors who are most vulnerable or disadvantaged in terms of these criteria.

## References

- Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia (2004) *Wespac-ASFA Retirement Living Standards Detailed Budget Breakdowns Comfortable Lifestyle and Modest Lifestyle*, Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, Sydney available at [www.asfa.asn.au](http://www.asfa.asn.au)
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2002). 2001 *National Drug Strategy Household Survey: State and Territory Supplement*. AIHW Cat No, PHE 37. Canberra. AIHW (Drug Statistics Series No.10)
- Burtless, G. (2002) *Does Population Aging Represent a Crisis for Rich Societies?* The Brookings Institution
- Cameron, R. *It's Time for a Retirement Reality Check* (2001) Presented to the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, Conference, September, 2001
- Government of Western Australia, Department of Premier and Cabinet (2003) <http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/psmd/pubs/stremp/retirement/retire03.html>
- Kinnear, P. (2001) *Population Ageing: Crisis or Transition?* The Australia Institute
- United Nations, Population Division, DESA, *World Population Ageing 1950-2050* accessed at <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/worldageing19502050/countriesorare.htm>
- OECD (2001) *Ageing and Income: Financial Resources and Retirement in 9 OECD Countries*. OECD 2001 accessed at <http://oecdpublications.gfi-nb.com/cgi-bin/OECDBookShop.storefront/EN/product/812001121P1>
- Productivity Commission and Melbourne Institute for Applied Economic and Social Research (1999) *Policy Implications of the Ageing of Australia's Population*, Conference Proceedings , Ausinfo, Canberra.
- Rasell,E, Sawicky,M and Baker D. (1998) *America's Golden Years: Ensuring Prosperity in an Aging Society*, Economic Policy Institute, accessed at [http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/issuebriefs\\_ib125](http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/issuebriefs_ib125)
- Social Policy Research Centre (2004) *Updating and Extending Indicative Budget Standards for Older Australians*, Report prepared for the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales available at [www.asfa.asn.au](http://www.asfa.asn.au).