

### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



Writing this document for 2019 I had no sense of what was to come. It is hard to believe with hindsight that I was so completely unaware. It is shocking how our world can change so radically around us as the environment changes with fires and pandemics testing us.

Yet, this has always been the case in human history, and it is adversity that tests us and hones us. Adversity reveals our weaknesses with great clarity requiring a response.

The aged care service sector has been at the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. The staff and people of our organisations have responded magnificently and while it has been tough, we have managed to halt spread and minimise the death rate for older Australians.

ACSA's response pivoting to deliver strong advocacy for equipment, funding, system, and policy support has been highly effective. And all this while ensuring advocacy and influencing the system design of the future through being on the record and responding to critical issues at the Royal Commission.

When I look back over the past 12 months, I am amazed at what we have achieved. And the next 12 months are even more critical.

Now we know, the evidence has been presented, the fault lines revealed, the aged care system is broken. The staff are woefully underpaid and under recognised for their skills. Our business models cannot deliver to expectations as successive governments have had in place a constraint model of funding not a model responding to need.

It is time to demand much more of the system to meet the expectations

of the Australian people. It is our job to provide the services older Australians need and want in future. It is the government's job to work out how to fund that system. And ACSA will be there providing the advice and advocating on your behalf to make sure it happens.

In my view government is like a mission focused not for profit, it exists to improve the quality of life of all Australians. And our society is measured by how it treats the most vulnerable. This is the test for our political leaders.

ACSA has passed the adversity test of 2020 with flying colours. Patricia Sparrow CEO, is recognised as a credible source of information about aged care, always speaking truth to government and providing firmness and clarity in supporting members to deliver the services older Australians need and deserve. Pat's ability to do so comes from the hardworking ACSA team standing with her and contributing; analysing, responding, and supporting members.

The Board and I wish to thank all ACSA staff for all they have achieved in this tumultuous year. Thank you to you, the ACSA members who enable us to achieve so much through national collective effort and action.

I look forward to 2021 and all it may bring. Through our collective efforts we will continue to achieve better outcomes for older Australians – and ACSA is poised ready to respond to the unexpected emerging in these volatile times.



**Sara Blunt**  
Chairperson

### ABOUT ACSA

**Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) is the leading national peak body supporting not for profit, church, charitable and for purpose providers of retirement living, community, home and residential care for older Australians.**

We are committed to being a strong and effective advocate with a persuasive national voice that leads the national aged care agenda.

ACSA is at the forefront, representing and supporting members to achieve excellence in providing quality and affordable housing, home care and residential services to older Australians.

We provide our members with support and services in the areas of legislative compliance, policy advice, work health and safety,

employee relations, aged care legislative review, training and professional development.

Our close relationship with our members ensures we understand the unique challenges faced in the sector, and that our focus remains on providing effective services to enable our members to meet these challenges. ACSA has enormous strength through its numbers across Australia, and by the high regard in which it is held by communities and stakeholders.

### OUR VISION

**A strong industry delivering the services Australians want.**

### OUR MISSION

**To advocate for, and support, our not-for-profit members to continue to provide high quality services valued by older people.**

### ACSA BOARD



**Sara Blunt**  
Chairperson, CEO, James Brown Memorial Trust, SA  
5 of 6 meetings attended



**Stephen Cornelissen**  
Vice Chairperson, Group CEO, Mercy Health, VIC  
6 of 6 meetings attended



**Lucy O'Flaherty**  
CEO, Glenview Community Services, TAS  
4 of 6 meetings attended



**Stephanie Buckland**  
CEO, Amana Living, WA  
6 of 6 meetings attended



**Mark Sewell**  
CEO, Warrigal, NSW  
6 of 6 meetings attended



**Greg Skelton**  
CEO, PresCare, QLD  
4 of 6 meetings attended (retired March 2020)

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



2020 played out unlike any other year we have experienced. Starting with a horrendous bushfire season and then the COVID-19 crisis that challenged us profoundly as individuals, communities and professionals in the aged care sector.

ACSA members and staff rose up to work against an enemy we didn't know enough about – having to learn as we went with things changing regularly.

The way we engaged changed and in many ways for the better. The ACSA team and members saw each other on a weekly basis through Zoom. The connection was strong at a time when I think we all needed that. While it isn't the intention to meet weekly forever, ACSA is looking to utilise technology to keep connection and engagement high on a permanent basis.

The other feature of the year has been a re-evaluation of what's really important. Purpose and kindness have always been important but never more so than the last year. We saw it through the way members worked tirelessly to support residents and clients and each other. And in the ACSA team pivoting to working from home – the support for members didn't waiver and only grew stronger as the situation worsened. It affirmed the "for purpose" ethos that ACSA and its members embrace and embody. Our work on a new Strategic Plan has also reaffirmed the centrality of purpose to all that ACSA does.

I want to acknowledge and thank:

- all of our members for the amazing work they have done in adversity this year – it was inspirational;

- our partners and supporters who have constantly looked at how they can support ACSA and its members as we evolved and changed to operating in a COVID-19 environment;
- the ACSA team who work tirelessly because they believe in what we all do. They do it well and are an incredible support;
- our outsourced partners – Essential for media and strategic advice and ACCRU for our accounting function. They really are an extension of the team providing support in a way that aligns with our values; and
- the ACSA Board for having a vision, and challenging and supporting the ACSA team to ensure that we are delivering for our members.

We have learned much from this year and know where things need to be changed as we move toward living and working in a COVID-19 normal world.

COVID-19 made a terrible impact and exposed the aged care fault lines clearly for all to see.

To permanently address the fault lines we look towards the Royal Commission. It will report next year and provides the best chance of creating a better future for older Australians who need aged care, their families and all of us working in aged care. It gives us an opportunity to ensure that 2020 becomes the year everything changed – and ACSA will be doing its utmost for our members and for older Australians to ensure that's the case.

Patricia Sparrow  
CEO

## A special thank you to all the state Divisional Councillors for their time and dedication.

Alexandra Davis, NSW

Anna Howard, SA

Ashley Cooper, SA

Barry Lange, TAS

Birgit Goetz, VIC

Cherylee Treloar, QLD

Connie Bruckard, TAS

Craig Bardrick, VIC

Daniel Aitchison, SA

Danielle Sullivan, QLD

Darren Birbeck, SA

David Fenwick, WA

David Moran, SA

David Reece, VIC

Fiona Onslow-Agnew, TAS

Frank Weits, SA

Genevieve Green, QLD

Geoff Batkin, QLD

Helen Emmerson, NSW

Irene Mooney, WA

Jackie Howard, TAS

Janna Voloshin, VIC

Jennene Buckley, QLD

Jenni Allan, NSW

Joy Leggo, VIC

Juanita Walker, SA

Justine Barwick, TAS

Justine Colyer, WA

Karen Crouch, QLD

Kate Hurrell, NSW

Leigh Kilday, NSW

Lucy O'Flaherty, TAS

Mandy Rudat, QLD

Mark Sewell, NSW

Marta Terracciano, NSW

Matt Sierp, NSW

Merinda March, WA

Michele Lewis, VIC

Nick Furnivall, WA (dec)

Nicole Hornsby, VIC

Olive Wright, WA

Paul Sadler, NSW

Phillip Goulding, VIC

Ricki Smith, Dr, WA

Rosa Ginevra, VIC

Rosy Walia, NSW

Russell Bricknell, WA

Sara Blunt, SA

Saviour Buhagiar, NSW

Shane Yensch, WA

Sharon James, WA

Sharyn Broer, SA

Stephanie Buckland, WA

Stephen Carmody, WA

Stephen Cornelissen, VIC

Sue Thomson, NSW

Tony Bidstrup, NSW

Vanda Iaconese, VIC

Wayne Knapp, QLD

Wendy Mitchell, TAS

## ACSA'S RESPONSE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### ACSA's Policy Positions: supporting equal human rights for older Australians



All human life is equal, and all people should be able to access healthcare and live with dignity, regardless of their age, expected longevity or where they live.



Politicians, the media and others in public life must be aware of and combat negative messages and ageist stereotypes that are persisting throughout the pandemic.



Decisions made about rationing access to lifesaving health and medical care, should the system reach capacity, must be based on a triage process free of conscious or unconscious bias against older people due to ageist attitudes.



The rights of individuals must be balanced with consideration of the welfare and wellbeing of others, particularly at a time when there can be severe consequences to life if adequate infection control measures are unable to be fully realised.

### ACSA's COVID-19 Member Support

ACSA's focus throughout COVID-19 has been supporting and informing our members.

**67** member updates sent

These figures reflect ACSA's COVID-19 response for the period March-June 2020

**534** member enquiries answered

**66** questions asked of the Government



A series of free COVID-19 webinars informed 1,419 members on a range of topics across residential care, home care, and retirement living.



ACSA's partners provided specialist resources and expert support for members, and offered in-demand products through the PPE/Urgent Product Finder on ACSA Procurement.



ACSA represented members through a range of advocacy efforts including regular Ministerial, state and federal government liaison efforts, submissions, calls for funding and the Visitor Code.



ACSA successfully changed the course of the public conversation around visitor restrictions through consistent advocacy efforts and regular media engagement.

## MEMBER SUPPORT

2019-20 saw a substantial increase in the number of member inquiries particularly throughout the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, where information and legislation was rapidly evolving.

Given this rapid rate of information flow and change, responding to member queries during this period required working in regular and close contact with the Commonwealth Department of Health and other governments, seeking clarity and confirmation on a range of queries to ensure accurate and timely support for members during this time. In response to the number of COVID-19 issues, ACSA prepared and published a summary COVID-19 reference guide for members which continues to be updated regularly.

ACSA continued to support and participate in State and National Advisory Committee meetings as well as state and territory topic-specific and network meetings. We also participated in other forums including the Aged Care Peaks meeting with the Department of Health, Services Australia, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and with the Department of Health on the Home Care Packages Program. This continued presence ensures ACSA's advocacy remains consistent with the requirements and concerns of our members and that our voice is heard in these crucial conversations.

## CONSULTANCY

ACSA continues to provide on the ground expert support for members. This service helps members navigate adverse compliance outcomes, prepare for crises such as COVID-19 and respond to emerging themes from the Royal Commission and regulatory performance data.

The Consultancy mentoring approach focuses on building internal capacity and strategies to transfer knowledge into practice, understanding the importance of sustainable solutions.

Insight and learnings of key success factors through the challenging times experienced in 2019-20 enables ACSA to evolve its member services and products to deliver what members need to plan, transform and improve business practices. ACSA is pleased to launch new Clinical Governance and Infection Control Champion workshops and toolkits, and Leadership Capability services in partnership with expert business partners.

Member engagement of the Consultancy service has enabled ACSA to expand its team of expert Consultants across Australia, all of whom are highly qualified in specific areas of Residential, Home Care and Independent Living.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

ACSA has been actively involved on the national Industrial Relations stage over the last year, representing members in the 4-Yearly Modern Awards Review, COVID-related applications to vary the Health Sector Awards before the Fair Work Commission, and numerous state jurisdiction matters.

COVID-19 has presented specific industrial challenges. We have supported members in navigating and resolving disputes and played an active role in assisting Victorian providers to implement and manage the Guiding Principles for Single Site Employment. A successful negotiation with the unions to delay the NSW/ACT template enterprise agreement (due to financial and COVID-19 pressures) has resulted in major resource savings across the country as other providers have sought ACSA's advice and successfully adopted a similar approach.

The Employee Relations team continue to support members in their day to day people challenges, with strong focus on performance management, consultation in the face of major workplace change and industrial instrument interpretation.

2,500+ responses to employee relations-related member enquiries during 2019-20

20 members represented over unfair dismissal conciliations, along with multiple applications for stop bullying orders

ACSA's frequency of communication has increased in order to keep members abreast of high impact issues such as underpayments, and high profile, wide reaching decisions including Mondelez and WorkPac. We partner with stakeholders to deliver targeted information to members through webinars and symposiums, and continue to remain informed about ER issues faced by members through regular engagement with ACSA's member-based ER network.

## EVENTS



### ACSA NATIONAL SUMMIT

ACSA's flagship event the annual ACSA National Summit was held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on 8 – 10 October 2019 and was themed **Purpose | People | Performance**.

**905** attendees in total **93%** satisfaction rating from members, sponsors and partners

**49** events held around the country, including symposiums, networking functions and a fast-growing program of webinars.

**4,159** attendees at ACSA events. Up **49%** from 2018-19



### ACSA AGED CARE AWARDS

The annual ACSA Aged Care Awards, which were presented at the Summit, continued to recognise the outstanding work of ACSA members. The 2019 winners were:

- Provider of the Year:** Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution (NSW)
- Innovation in Service or Design:** SwanCare, "Senior Citizen Partnership Program" (WA)
- Rural, Regional, Remote Provider of the Year:** Feros Care (QLD)
- Distinguished Service:** Carolyn Wallace (TAS)
- Employee of the Year:** Dr Tim Henwood, Southern Cross Care (SA)
- Trainee of the Year:** Carol Goodger, Warrigal (NSW)
- Volunteer of the Year:** Jim Richardson, RSL Care (SA)

With the onset of restrictions on mass gatherings in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the major events program was successfully transformed to be fully online, with our first national online symposium held in June 2020

over **200** attendees.



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**During 2019-20 ACSA continued to work with both federal and state governments ensuring that relevant legislation could be analysed, influenced, or challenged.**

ACSA prepared submissions prior to federal and state budget announcements, in consultation with Divisional Councils ensuring the aged care sector's concerns were strongly heard.

Submissions and subsequent meetings with Ministers and their advisers were proactively made when new ACSA policy papers were published and reactively when legislation in states had the potential to impact members.

With the arrival of COVID-19, ACSA worked effectively and relentlessly with federal, state and territory Governments and with Departmental agencies to ensure aged care considerations were consistent and were communicated to members. ACSA advocated to all State Government Health Ministers on the interface between aged and acute care where there were positive cases of COVID-19 within an aged care home.

ACSA was invited to make submissions to both levels of government on their respective responses to the management of COVID-19, including ACSA's CEO appearing in person at the Victorian Select Committee.

ACSA made representations to major organisations such as Woolworths and Coles ensuring that aged care workers could participate in the community-hour shopping, outside of normal shopping hours.

During the pandemic, ACSA staff in all states and territories participated in advisory or consultative meetings at a local level with departments. We invited relevant departmental staff to participate in special COVID-19-related member meetings, including leading and co-hosting a member forum for over 1,000 aged care providers and staff to hear directly from the Minister for Aged Care, Senator Colbeck, and Chief Medical Officer, Brendan Murphy around visitation restrictions and managing COVID-19 in aged care.

## MEMBER SERVICES

**Over the 2019-20 year, ACSA implemented several new member service initiatives as a result of member feedback.**

The ACSA Procurement Portal was launched to provide ACSA members with a "one stop shop" for all their procurement needs and take advantage of leveraging a collective buying power. With COVID-19 challenging the sector's ability to source PPE at reasonable prices from March 2020, ACSA launched the Urgent Product Finder to assist members in securing much needed PPE supplies nationwide.

ACSA Media Alerts was launched in June 2020 providing all member organisations with a report of the latest aged care news across Australia's media outlets. This is delivered to inboxes daily.

ACSA Member Services focus is on delivering continuous improvement opportunities that will benefit ACSA members.

During COVID-19 ACSA was quick to respond with timely national and state-specific member communiques ensuring providers were kept up to date with the constantly evolving information coming from government and regulatory authorities. In addition, ACSA launched a COVID-19 platform on [acsa.asn.au](http://acsa.asn.au) as a hub of information, tools and resources for providers during the crisis.

50

ACSA Weekly editions



200+

member communications



## WORKFORCE & INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

**ACSA has developed and adapted a range of tools and initiatives to build the capacity and capability of the aged care sector's workforce. ACSA's Workforce and Industry Development (WID) unit are working with members and stakeholders to attract, recruit, retain and develop a 'right fit' workforce to deliver quality services.**

WID's key achievements include implementing new methods of working and diversifying activities and programs to suit an online environment. In 2019-20 WID launched an Online Learning Portal for people working in the sector and those aspiring to.

The aged care services Workforce Hub connects job seekers to employers at no cost. Providers can access 'right-fit' employees through the employment register including those who have undertaken suitability testing. The right-fit toolkit contains resources to support internal

recruitment, improve staff retention and reduce turnover.

COVID-19 necessitated the transformation of WID training programs from face-to-face delivery to facilitated online programs, with positive attendance and feedback.

ACSA's full calendar of online Training and Professional Development programs accommodates the current needs of the sector, and supports the aged care workforce to have the skills and knowledge required to deliver high quality care to older Australians.

## STRATEGIC POLICY

**ACSA's newly formed Strategic Policy team have had a baptism of fire this year with a reform-rich environment plus the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.**

ACSA has attended multiple submissions to the Royal Commission spanning our CEO witness statement, residential care, home care, program redesign, system governance, funding and financing, impact of COVID-19, home care propositions, capital financing and our response to Counsel Assisting's final recommendations to the Commissioners.

Along with the Royal Commission focus, ACSA has continued to advocate on key reform proposals, including proposed changes to the ACAR funding round, regulatory functions of the Quality and Safety Commission, residential and home care funding reforms, additional services, workforce regulation, Australian building code changes, financial transparency bill plus a range of other matters.

ACSA has authored a range of key documents, among them our framework paper for the aged care and healthcare interface during COVID-19. This important piece of work that advocates for the rights of the older person to access health care in an equitable manner was recently cited as an exemplar document by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Another important document is our support statement to the Global Ageing Network's 11 Key Statements that calls out how ageism has impacted long-term care for the elderly during COVID-19.

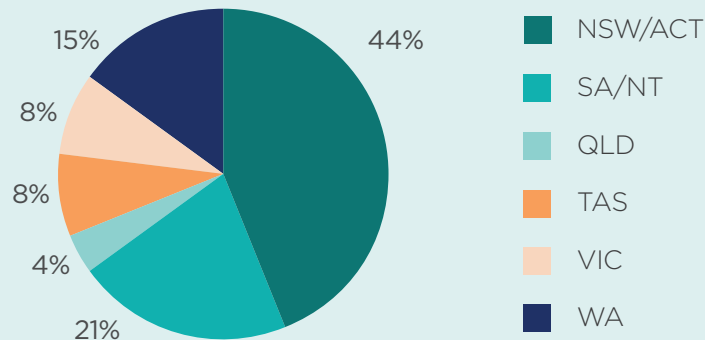
ACSA continues our vital work in representing member views on a number of departmental reform reference groups covering funding, prudential, governance, and quality.

## MEMBERSHIP

**ACSA's members are not-for-profit or for-purpose organisations, from large national faith-based bodies through to small, community-run services.**

ACSA members represent the full spectrum of aged care services, with approx. 60% providing residential care, 46% CHSP, 45% home care and 41% retirement living.

This year ACSA grew its membership overall, particularly in Victoria, and members showed their high satisfaction in ACSA with a 93% retention rate of members for the year. Membership continues to be spread across Australia:



## MEMBERSHIP TESTIMONIALS



"The additional workload generated by the Royal Commission, changing quality standards and now COVID-19 has been challenging – there is so much information to unpack and understand. ACSA have interpreted that information for us so that it is easy to see what parts relate to our particular business, and have also provided resources and education to help us implement it."

**Sue McIvor, CEO**  
**Fernlea Community Care, VIC**



"Being a part of ACSA is an opportunity to be informed and in touch with peers and people that can influence the decision-making in the sector."

**Anna Howard, CEO,**  
**Murray Mallee Community Care, SA**

## PARTNER TESTIMONIALS



"We're so happy with our decision to be an Industry partner with ACSA. The professional development forums and regular communication has kept us meaningfully connected to a community of aged care professionals who are at the forefront of driving change in this sector. It has also allowed us to create opportunities with key decision makers and current and potential members, helping raise the profile of Health Staffing as the leading staffing solution for health and community services."

**Ross Thompson,**  
**Managing Director**  
**Health Staffing, NSW**



"Pat and the team at ACSA have been a wonderful partner in the aged care industry for Epicor. We respect and value the contributions that ACSA makes and the advocacy they provide on behalf of aged care providers, particularly in the not-for-profit space. We're proud to be associated with the meaningful cause of supporting ACSA in their mission to build the aged care system that truly provides excellent quality of care. We have had extensive involvement with ACSA over many years and plan to continue on this path. Thank you to each of the ACSA team."

**Greg O'Loan,**  
**Director and Regional Vice President**  
**Epicor Software Australia**



"Bunnings Trade has a long history of supplying the building and construction industry, and we also work closely with a range of organisations and industries including Aged Care. We're proud to supply ACSA with the specialised products and services that help make a difference to their members and the communities they support."

**Paul Connolly,**  
**Head of Organisations**  
**Bunnings Group LTD**



"We are proud of our long-term partnership with ACSA, which helps us to foster deep relationships across aged care and drive meaningful change for our more than 200,000 members who work in the sector. Collaboration on conferences, workshops, events and member forums provides a broad range of engagement opportunities with key decision makers and current and potential members. This supports us to raise awareness of HESTA as the leading superannuation fund for health and community services."

**Debby Blakey,**  
**CEO**  
**HESTA**

## ACSA IN THE MEDIA

CEO Patricia Sparrow maintained her high-profile position in media advocacy throughout financial year 2019-20 with a share of voice (SOV) of 60%.

This was particularly apparent in activity to manage community sentiment and understanding around COVID-19 restrictions.

ACSA also took an aggressive stance in pushing for better hospitalisation policy, with major interventions in the later part of the financial year. The high-profile nature of ACSA's hospitalisation position resulted

in the Royal Commission recommending it be adopted in its interim COVID-19 report. Whether it was press conferences behind masks or live interviews by Zoom, ACSA continued to intervene on the issues that matter to its members. Patricia Sparrow was a regular guest on all the major TV networks including breakfast TV and the nightly news.



## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

ACSA has many valued corporate partnerships with leading organisations involved with the aged care sector.

The partnership program experienced significant growth this year, welcoming new national partners Provider Assist, Data Drives Insight and Dimple, joining longstanding national partners HESTA, Aware Super and Russell Kennedy.

The partnership program assists members to connect with credible and trustworthy organisations and acts as an extra available resource to help meet business requirements. ACSA's corporate partners gave

highly valued information and support to our members throughout the challenging year, especially in relation to assistance with Royal Commission matters, the bush fire disasters and COVID-19.

ACSA is delighted to acknowledge the following partners for their wonderful support and trust in our organisation and we look forward to continuing these relationships.

### National Partners



### Industry Partners



#### Victoria - Main Office

Suite 3, Level 6, 24 Collins St  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
Phone: (03) 9108 0750

#### New South Wales

Level 6, 5 Rider Boulevard (PO Box 3124)  
Rhodes NSW 2138  
Phone: (02) 8754 0400

#### Queensland

PO Box 1346  
Milton QLD 4064  
Phone: (07) 3505 3760

#### Tasmania

19 Brisbane Street  
Hobart TAS 7000  
Phone: (03) 6105 0246

#### South Australia / Northern Territory

Building 3 Level 1, 32-56 Sir Donald  
Bradman Drive  
Mile End SA 5031  
Phone: (08) 8338 7111

#### Western Australia

Suite 16,25 Walters Drive  
Osborne Park WA 6017  
Phone: (08) 9244 8233

#### Australian Capital Territory

Level 110 Thesiger Ct  
Deakin ACT 2600  
Phone: (02) 6282 7827

  
Aged & Community Services Australia  
ABN : 48 609 882 288