



ARC/NHMRC Research
Network in
Ageing Well

**'Enabling Access and Independence - Translating Ageing Research Evidence to
Practice and Policy' Forum, Thursday, 17 August
Workshop discussions**

Introduction

In August 2006, the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well, with the support of the Victorian government, the Council on the Ageing (Victoria) and the Australian Association of Gerontology (Victorian Division) hosted an inaugural Forum to discuss translating ageing research evidence into practice and policy. Through the auspices of the Network, the aim was to bring together multidisciplinary stakeholders from all sectors whose business can influence the process of healthy ageing. The goal was to initiate and promote dialogue on how current research evidence can be translated into policy and practice. The theme for the inaugural Forum was access and independence, addressing social and environmental issues which can enable or hinder healthy ageing.

Three invited keynote presentations focused upon examples related to service access and transport. Amanda Tattam from the University of Melbourne discussed the VicLanes project. Rachel Carlisle from the National Heart Foundation discussed their Healthy by Design initiative. Anne Harris from RAVC presented the findings from their research on transport and mobility. The speakers highlighted the interaction between researchers, practitioners and policymakers with regard to the particular programs. There was a presentation by representatives of the Victorian Departments of Human Services, Infrastructure and Victorian Communities. The presenters outlined how their departments were working to assist research transfer and how they could be assisted in this effort (Appendix 1). The presentation slides are available at <http://www.ageingwell.edu.au/>. The delegates then participated in facilitated multidisciplinary workshops to discuss opportunities and strategies for future collaborative activity. There was a vested interest in improving the current systemic environment to enable more productive research effort. A summary of the delegates' discussions is provided below.

This report contains a number of strategies to be progressed by the respective stakeholders. The planning group will be meeting in October to consider the ‘next steps’. We would welcome any feedback from delegates and their colleagues to guide our future activities.

Workshop discussion

A/ What does ‘evidence based research’ mean in practice for researchers, practitioners and governments alike?

Different groups interpret ‘evidence based research’ in different ways (See box below). The meaning of the word ‘evidence’ can be context specific and influenced by an individual’s perception of reality. For some, ‘evidence’ may relate to an individual’s experience; others may only accept evidence from within their field.

The various ways in which people *use* research were discussed. Whilst researchers tend to focus on scientific research obtained from studies with robust, rigorous, validated methodologies, practitioners and governments use a range of research, from practical trials through to large scale longitudinal studies. For example, governments seek information from researchers to guide decisions about the extent of a problem, the effectiveness of available solutions, potential actions and whether the government should be involved in taking action. Practitioners tend to be guided by experience rather than by published research. Policy makers use evidence to make a case.

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were seen to be valuable, their use depending upon the context. There was some debate about the weighting of evidence sources, with general agreement that efficacy study evidence was preferable to anecdotal evidence. The importance of generalisable and locally applicable findings was highlighted.

Sector	Understanding
Researcher	Information from peer reviewed scientific journals Levels of evidence
Philanthropic agency	Means of documenting practice
Service provider	Respond to good ideas; not necessarily evidence based
Policy maker	Research based on proof or evidence

In general, the importance of the ‘independence’ of an evidence source was recognised, although it was acknowledged that information was often presented with ‘spin’ and that data could often be used to support or ‘prove’ a vested interest. Such factors have created a degree of cynicism about research.

The quantity and quality of evidence required depends upon the underlying purpose for its use. In reality, all stakeholders will make compromises and use information from a range of sources,

from scientific journals through expert opinion to consumer feedback, as best meets their requirements.

‘policymakers want access to available knowledge, not necessarily brand new knowledge’.

With regard to the approach to the conduct of research depending on its purpose it was noted that much action research is occurring at the local level. This is usually conducted by consultants who face fewer constraints than their academic counterparts in terms of flexibility and timelines.

In some instances, evidence may be available in previously collected data, such as Census data or longitudinal study data. For such data to be used comprehensively, funding will be needed for its further analyses to address specific queries.

There are certainly many gaps in the existing evidence base. Delegates highlighted a perceived paucity of ‘Victoria-specific’ evidence. Collaborative efforts will enable agreement to be reached on where best to focus energy and resources on extending the knowledge base.

The importance of a research-practice cycle and the need for built-in evaluation was reviewed and guided subsequent discussion.

B/ How can researchers, policy makers and practitioners work together more effectively?

Delegates were provided with the box below for consideration:

Barriers to the effective use of research findings (Kendig et al. 2000)

- Lack of engagement between researchers/policy makers/practitioners in the formative stages of research
- Imposition of political imperatives (“policy on the run”, or “policy on the back foot”)
- Lack of timely information provided by researchers to policy makers due to differing timeframes and drivers
- Researchers publish in academic journals where the information is not available to stakeholders until years after data collection
- Misunderstanding by researcher and data gatherers of the policy process
- Misunderstanding by policy and decision makers of the relevance of information in policy relevant terms
- Lack of appropriate enumeration of available data, etc; and
- Inappropriate and/or poor presentation of research findings and information.

Planning: seeking partners and common goals

It was acknowledged that researchers, policy makers and practitioners have distinguishing languages, constituents, drivers and imperatives. We have been constrained in working together by our different systems, not least the political cycle.

‘Government manifestos are set and not responsive to research’

Nevertheless a common agenda is the start point for working together more effectively. *Ageing well is one such agenda.*

Relationships across agencies occur for a variety of purposes, not solely the conduct of research. There is scope to build upon these relationships to foster capacity building and the sharing of expertise. The advancement of trust through these exchanges will be helpful in the development of research proposals.

For effective working, all stakeholders need to know who to engage with within and across other agencies from the outset. For example:

- Researchers need to engage with policy makers
- Practitioners need to engage with local government
- Local governments need to engage with the community
- Government departments need to work together
- All parties should seek engagement with consumer groups, e.g. older people.

Policymakers and funders wanting to communicate with researchers with particular expertise may have difficulties finding the appropriate personnel across the array of University departments. It was noted that some Universities, such as the University of Melbourne, have addressed this by having a 'find an expert' page on their website.

In the formative stages, the stakeholders can determine the interests of potential partners and funders. Research needs to be responsive to contextual factors and prevailing consumer needs. Delegates called for greater collaboration in the conduct of research. A hybrid model, whereby the collective strengths of academic institutions and consultants were brought together to meet identified research needs was proposed.

Collaboration will enable an improved appreciation of partners' commonalities and differences. For instance, partners can work towards the use of a common framework and logic to underpin any proposed program.

There is already evidence of government departments and other agencies identifying common issues and research needs, such as walking. Walking has been an area that has attracted multidisciplinary interest, where data can have various uses in planning and service provision.

Seeking funding

Even where there is collaboration, there are some areas where it is difficult to attract funding. For example, it is difficult to quantify the societal impact of poor mobility or abstract issues such as 'lack of access'. Stakeholders will need to work together to use available evidence to build an answerable research question and make a case for funding. This will entail agreement on markers and estimators to use and, wherever possible the collection and usage of locally applicable data.

The funding approach will depend on the prevailing interests of funders. For example, where there is no interest, a decision needs to be taken on whether to advocate and lobby a specific funder or whether to approach a funding agency whose priorities are more aligned to the research goals.

Implementation

Structures such as reference groups have been used to guide program planning and implementation. There are challenges when personnel change or when the representative has insufficient influence within their organisation.

Key ingredients of any work are transparency and accountability. All protocols between partners and funders must ensure systems are in place to meet reporting criteria.

It was also acknowledged that working with certain groups, such as cultural and linguistically diverse communities and people with dementia poses particular methodological challenges, making research more expensive to conduct, but no less vital.

There was discussion of the value of applied and pure research.

‘Needs for quick, locality-based research doesn’t fit with pure research’

Both strategic and ‘blue skies’ research is needed. Philanthropic organisations have a role in supporting the former. Stakeholders should be working to identify and anticipate emerging issues in order to be proactive in formulating proposals for future research.

Strategies

The following strategies were proposed to enable future ageing well research:

- Multidisciplinary development, planning and advocacy
- Framework for collaborative ventures
 - Who is currently doing what?
 - What further work is needed?
- Earmarking of funding to address emerging issues
- Government undertaking more research auspiced by academic institutions
- Joint appointments across jurisdictions

Use of research findings

Kendig et al. (2000) and Lomas (1997) previously identified the following issues and suggestions to improve the **dissemination** of research findings:

- The problem is not the quantity of data but the quality and its accessibility
- There is inadequate translation of the available information between the providers of the information and the different user groups
- Some audiences see the conduct of research as an answer in itself, and do not always know how to use the information and findings
- There is demand for evidence-based research which is presented simply, to promote and present the practical implications of research findings in ways appropriate to differing target audiences
- Research should be disseminated widely in different formats depending on the information level required
- Information needs to be made available to those who are most at risk, e.g. older people of low socioeconomic status
- Researchers need to be more active in promoting their findings and in demonstrating the practical applications
- Consumer groups noted that findings from publicly funded research should be made publicly available, even if the findings do not fit the interests of policy makers

The groups considered the issues outlined above and agreed that they remain relevant, but considered that some progress has been made to addressing them.

Delegates agreed that we still need to develop researchers' skills to 'market' their work and make findings more accessible to a range of parties. It was agreed that close attention needs to be paid to the formatting and tailoring of reports. Guidance may be required on how complex material can be translated into practice. Academic researchers have not conventionally disseminated their findings widely beyond the scientific community. There may be scope for more 'selling' of findings, either passively, such as via the Web, or more actively via media releases. Researchers need to be more visible, so that research findings are properly aired. Several funding bodies (such as the National Health and Medical Research Council) are seeking assurances that findings will be suitably disseminated: funds for this purpose need to be incorporated into grants. The role of the researcher as an independent, expert advocate is also under scrutiny in our current society.

Other barriers were identified, such as intellectual property. The right to publish is very important to academic researchers. In some cases, where the work is owned by the funder, there may be limitations to its external, public dissemination: sometimes reports are embargoed. Several delegates noted that funders may not always like the findings of commissioned research, with implications for its future dissemination and usage.

The assessment processes for Universities (such as the Research Quality Framework) focus on promoting research impact via scientific journals rather than other outlets. This can create a tension for the academic researcher who wishes to convey findings to end users. In making the case for the greater recognition of involvement in community relevant research, it would be

useful for researchers to receive feedback on where their work has been used by policymakers and providers.

Certain types of information, such as that from pilot or innovative demonstration community projects are often not widely available: valuable learnings are not transferred into new projects. Central collation of such information would be helpful. Research findings need to be readily accessible.

In 2005, on behalf of the ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well, the Centre for Research and Education in Ageing (CREA) developed a literature database of ageing research publications. The database contains publications that address one or more of the Network's priority theme areas:

- 1 Healthy ageing
- 2 Productivity and economic participation
- 3 Independent living and social participation; and
- 4 Population research strategies

The database contains over 2000 publications pertaining to Australians and is available online through the Australian Research Online (ARO) website

<http://www.aro.gov.au>

Ageing Research On-line is a networking initiative sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and developed in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. ARO is an interactive web-based directory of ageing related research projects, courses of study and research grants. It provides a range of research and information tools.

The further development and updating of such a clearing house would enable particular information to be held in the one place, with a suite of approaches for its use, tailored to the end user.

On occasions, findings may not be directly transferable into practice. Although there may be a political imperative to implement a service, findings may suggest that a particular model cannot be implemented cost effectively, or funding limits may not permit universal access, leading to resource allocation decisions such as rationing. Where accessible research does not meet the desired methodological quality criteria, there is scope for its targeted usage, so long as all parties are aware of the research's limitations.

Strategies

The following strategies were proposed to enable the dissemination of ageing well research:

- A sustainable clearing house process, as exemplified by the Cochrane Library, Ageing Research Online

- Incentives for broader dissemination
- Regular multidisciplinary forums to showcase research and policy activities
- More opportunities for networking between researchers and policymakers
- Discuss means to overcome intellectual property issues
- Training in media communications

Are researchers able to undertake a role in shaping public understanding and initiating policy debate at the community level?

Yes, but it will require a change in the contemporary activities of the respective parties. Strategic partnerships need to be forged to jointly assess emerging trends and to plan efforts in specific, relevant areas. Researchers should continue to address national research priority areas, whilst aligning their work more closely to policy and public interests. Several people noted that researchers spend a lot of time applying for competitive funding. This can limit the time available for pursuing other forms of funding. National measures and incentives to alter the balance are needed, such as a reappraisal of the outcomes criteria for academic career progression.

Researchers need to be more proactive in presenting their findings to governments, highlighting current and future issues. An altered focus to dissemination techniques is needed for the practical and policy implications of research findings to be appropriately conveyed to end users. The example was given of how the National Heart Foundation works with the researchers it funds to ensure that the research directly influences practice.

‘The capacity for a true statement to be heard relates to its (associated) value and gain’

Crucially, we need to engage effectively with older people and stimulate their interest and engagement in ageing well research. The consumers’ voice will be critical in lobbying for funding and their participation in research programs vital. Some delegates thought that the layperson was not necessarily interested in ageing well issues. The role of the media in disseminating research findings was discussed. The focus on sensationalism does not readily lend itself to topics about older people’s health.

‘Challenge the social responsibility of the media’

Balanced reporting will be necessary to temper expectations. Other social marketing techniques will also need to be assessed.

C/ How can researchers and practitioners extend the reach of their programs to meet policy makers' population level goals?

The groups reflected on the following questions

1. What will assist the transference of evidence based interventions into everyday practice?
2. What is needed to monitor the roll-out of strategies to enable access and independence?
3. What is needed to maintain robust access and independence programs?

Planning

A fundamental question was 'who is setting the research agenda'? Research programs are initiated at various levels, from the individual to state and national organisations. There is an advocacy role for stakeholders in contributing to debate on research priorities.

Delegates called for projects to be better scoped and devised, to optimise their long-term impact. Such an approach could overcome the preponderance of short-term, politically motivated, reactive projects. Research needs to be relevant. The move to capture social impact findings in research was noted and applauded.

Resource usage

There is scope for greater sharing of research activity, using the varied skills and expertise of people from the relevant sectors at all levels, from the ground up. For example, practitioners will be able to provide key input about the feasibility of conducting a particular intervention in 'their patch'. Collaboration allows the combining of human, financial and infrastructure resources. There are some funding initiatives that promote collaboration and resource sharing between academia and the business sector, such as the Australian Research Council's Linkages scheme.

The ethics of under-resourced projects was discussed. There is a need for more distinct allocation of funds for research and development activity. In particular, the importance of evaluation needs to be more widely acknowledged, to counter it being viewed as an 'optional extra'.

Strategies

The following strategies were proposed to provide the infrastructure support needed to enable future ageing well research:

- Incentives to support collaborative working
- Incentives for collaborative funding
- Development of structures and processes to assist collaboration
- Allocation of specific budgets to R & D activity
- Training for researchers in understanding the political environment
- Targeted research to support pre-determined policy positions

Conclusions

In summary, cooperation between policymakers, practitioners and researchers is vital. We must build upon the willingness to engage with each other on ageing well issues and develop a greater understanding of our respective needs. There remains a need for longer term planning, beyond current political and funding cycles. We can continue to work within the existing systems whilst considering means to modify them to make them more amenable to the translation of research into routine practice.

The planning group will reconsider the 'Framework for an Australian Ageing Research Agenda' document from a Victorian perspective and seek to work with relevant stakeholders to progress some of the strategies suggested in the workshops.

References

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Appendix: POLICY AND RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP FROM A GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE
Department of Human Services; Department of Infrastructure and Department of Victorian Communities.

ARC/NHMRC RESEARCH NETWORK IN AGEING WELL

Inaugural Forum ‘Enabling Access and Independence - Translating Ageing Research Evidence to Practice and Policy’
 Thursday 17 August 1.00p.m. – 4.30p.m.

- Aim:**
- To bring together stakeholders from all sectors whose business can influence the process of healthy ageing.
 - To initiate and promote dialogue on how current research evidence can be translated into policy and practice.

- Theme:**
- Access and independence:
 - addressing social and environmental issues that can enable or hinder healthy ageing.
 - focusing upon examples related to service access and transport.

DEPARTMENT OF VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
1. RESEARCH	
Funding an Index on Locational advantage/disadvantage for seniors	Sociology of impact of structural ageing and longevity on culture – impacts on intergenerational, health, housing choice, lifestyle
Fund mainly program evaluation related (HALS, positive Ageing) or market related (information needs/behaviours of seniors).	Economics of retirement on disadvantaged as well as advantaged (need research to measure consumption/investment and savings behaviour of self funded retirees on the economy).
Use as part of the policy development and review process a wide variety of local research on ageing and - the labour market, elder abuse, housing, lifelong learning, the economy, financial literacy, transition planning, mobility/transport	Urban and transport planning from an ageing perspective. Impact of ageing on CALD communities.
	Nationally Australia would benefit from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a similar exercise as the growing older program in the UK • longitudinal research on the 4th age (BASE)
2. POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	
Positive ageing – age friendly communities and workplaces.	International research is widely used in the ‘evidence gathering’ business.

DEPARTMENT OF VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
Healthy and active living for seniors	
Information provision	
Internet access	
Social inclusion	
Lifelong learning	
3. PRACTICE	
Age friendly communities project with COTA and MAV	
Age friendly workplaces project with VECCI	
Elder abuse initiatives	
Financial literacy	
CALD internet take up	

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
1. RESEARCH	
	Minimal Victorian based research (in relation to older people and transport) has been found to support policy formulation.
Conference on Transport, Social Disadvantage and Well-being. As part of this conference issues relating to older people, transport and social disadvantage were examined (involved State, Local Government, Universities, NGOs, transport operators, service providers etc).	Better understanding is needed within the wider community about the transport needs and the benefits of transport provision for older people (particularly in addressing social disadvantage).
'Maintaining Mobility' – the transition from driver to non-driver project undertook an extensive literature review; audit of what's being done in Victoria and focus groups research to help develop a policy for older people who are no longer able to drive. This project involves a range of Government and non-government representatives.	Specific Victorian research available would inform this project. There appears to be a lack of understanding that providing access to services through transport may not always solve the problems faced by older people.

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
Public Transport Division [PTD] Market Segmentation project. PTD is putting together an information base on users and non-users of public transport to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the travel market and of particular user groups needs.	There is not a good understanding of the needs of specific groups of people. Very little local research has been done about the types of activities that older people want to access and how they want to access these activities.
Multi Agency Policy Team on Access and Mobility in Rural and Regional Victoria. The Flexible and Innovative Transport Module undertook research into the issues facing people in rural and regional Victoria, research into best practice transport, regulatory and policy examples from interstate (project involved DOI, DHS, DVC, DSE, DPC, & DET).	
Understanding Travel By Older People, 2001 (VicRoads).	
2. POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	
'Maintaining Mobility' – the transition from driver to non-driver project. Developing a policy to assist older people going through the transition from driving to non-driving. Project involves a range of Government and non-government representatives.	see above
Multi Agency Policy Team on Access and Mobility in Rural and Regional Victoria. This project focussed on developing cost-effective options to improve access and mobility in low-density areas where demand for transport services is low (project involved DOI, DHS, DVC, DSE, DPC, & DET).	
Social Inclusion: Consideration is being given to the applicability of the UK approach to Victoria.	
Access and Mobility: Guidelines are being prepared on Integrated Transport Planning for major developments to give priority to walking, cycling and public transport.	Lack of an understanding of the role of the community transport sector and the role that it can play in providing transport. Little research on community transport.
Information Provision	Limited information available about the type of transport information that older people want or would find useful.
<i>Melbourne 2030</i> the metropolitan strategy, seeks to encourage a framework of “local” mixed activity centres convenient to where people live.	Planning for transport and land-use often does not consider the special needs of an ageing society.

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
3. PRACTICE	
	Generally, there is little follow up research available on whether interventions that are put in place really do benefit older people.
	There may be issues with the effectiveness of interventions that are developed with limited understanding of the needs, of older people.
The Seniors Sunday Pass entitles a Victorian Seniors Card holder to free travel on metropolitan trains, trams and buses in Zones 1+2+3 on Sundays. It is also valid for free travel on the town bus networks of major regional cities.	
Victorian Seniors will be provided with 2 free travel vouchers each year providing free travel on off-peak V/Line and Metcard services.	
Victorian Older Drivers Handbook (VicRoads)	
Guide for choosing and using motorised mobility devices (VicRoads).	
The Victorian Transport Connections Program (TCP) is used to pilot innovative approaches to coordinating and developing local transport arrangements in nine pilot locations across the State. Transport Connections established 2003 is a joint initiative between Department of Human Services, Department of Infrastructure, Department for Victorian Communities and Department of Education and Training. Through TCP the Victorian Government works in partnership with local communities to develop connections between existing modes of transport. Transport Connections aims to make better use of existing transport resources in a local area and to develop innovative responses to strengthen links between public transport, taxis and community transport providers, to better meet the needs of transport disadvantaged individuals /communities, including Victorians with permanent and severe disabilities. Program has recently been extended.	
The Disability Discrimination Act, Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, 2002, sets milestones for accessibility compliance for all public transport nationally. All Victorian public transport operators are working towards making public transport accessible for people with disabilities. This includes any new stock purchased, signage, and accessibility to platforms and stations. Public transport must be 20% DDA compliant by 2007, 50% by 2012 and 100% by 2032.	Will take a lot of resources and a long time to for the system to be made fully compliant.
TravelSmart encourages environmentally friendly travel such as using public transport, walking, cycling and car-pooling. It supports voluntary change in the behaviour of	

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
<p>individuals and organisations by improving access to information, opportunities and motivation to use environmentally friendly transport. TravelSmart Communities works directly with households and local Government to support changes in travel behaviour across a whole community.</p>	
<p>The Local Area Access Demonstration Program will fund local councils to develop and implement small-scale demonstration projects that improve access to local facilities and services and support the use of sustainable transport alternatives such as walking and cycling. Demonstration projects will improve minor infrastructure works to overcome local obstacles that prevent people from using public transport or walking or cycling around their local communities. Projects improve access to railway stations, transport interchanges and community services including works such as building better connections between walking and cycling routes, improved signage, lighting & seating & the provision of information.</p>	
<p>My Connected Community aims to ensure that community based, free or affordable, public internet access continues to be provided to disadvantaged Victorians that would not otherwise have access. It is a virtual meeting place and provides training and online resources to enable community groups to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish websites - Publish online - Network with members - Extend group membership and activities - Communicate with other communities of interest 	

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
RESEARCH	
<p>DHS Aged Care funded Research: <i>Literature Review on predictive factors of successful ageing</i> – contracted by DHS to Latrobe University currently moving to Monash University - Colette Browning</p>	<p>Connecting with relevant aged care industry components; progress updates for sector information</p>
<p>Needs of people who are older living in single dwelling household without a carer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National & International literature search 	

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grey literature search - Identification of any best or good practice models - Analysis 	
POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	
<p>Well for Life Program – an innovative program that aims to improve nutrition and physical activity for frail older people by focusing on change in policies and practices in providers of Home and Community Care Planned Activity Groups [PAGs] and among Public Sector Residential Aged Care [PSRAC] agencies. Through its emphasis on nutrition and physical activity Well for Life upholds the principles of the <i>go for your life</i> campaign.</p> <p>Key message: Staying active and looking after your health are important to maintain wellbeing and independence in older age.</p> <p>Two streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residents of public sector aged care services. b) Physical activity advice for older people & their carers living in the community. 	<p>Based on basic understanding that good health and active involvement in physical activity of some type on a regular basis will assist overall fitness and health.</p>
<p>The Ambulatory Care Policy and Planning Framework (ACF) ACF pulls together current policy directions to provide a coherent framework for planning and creating the future of health care in Victoria. Key policy direction underpinning this framework is that health care will be community based, where possible, and will only be provided in an in-patient setting where necessary for reasons of safety, quality of care and efficiency.</p> <p>The ACF is aligned with the development of the Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) into HARP Chronic Disease Management.</p> <p>A final Ambulatory Care Policy and Planning Framework (ACF) document, entitled Care in your community: A planning framework for integrated ambulatory health care was released in February 2006.</p>	<p>The ACF derives its impetus from a number of major DHS health policy documents that call for health system reform and the need to focus future growth on building capacity in the community as a means of improving equity and access to health care, providing more patient centred care, improving efficiency and managing future system demand.</p>
<p>Active Service Model</p> <p>This project will introduce new models of service delivery to support people who are frail or disabled to maintain their independence at home for as long as possible. These projects aim to restore people’s functional capacity so that they can safely continue to manage housework and other tasks of daily living. Strategies include advice on how to conserve physical energy, trialing the use of lighter and easier to use cleaning equipment, building low</p>	<p>Based on work undertaken by the Research Unit of Silver Chain, a large provider of community based services in Western Australia. Silver Chain tested some service model pilots, providing strong documentation and evaluation.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
<p>maintenance gardens, introducing aides and equipment, strength building and joining social support groups. Results of this model to this point in time are compelling.</p> <p>This work will incorporate a review of Aids and Equipment, and the next stage of the HACC Food Services Review.</p>	<p>Silver Chain based their model testing from research undertaken by the University of Birmingham in the UK.</p>
<p>Planning for adequate public housing in rural, regional and metropolitan Victoria.</p>	
<p>Continual mindfulness around changing service and growth needs of rural and regional Victoria, redefining terms such as access in the context of local topography and service availability.</p>	
<p>Appropriate program and service model design to better met the needs of people who are older from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.</p>	
<p>Supported Residential Services (SRS): Supporting Accommodation for Vulnerable Victorians Initiative [SAVVI]</p> <p>SRS SAVVI is based on the successful results of the piloting of cost relief at seven (7) SRS during the period 2004-2006. Allocation 2006/2007 budget \$29.4 million over four years to provide support for the needs of 2000 people with a psychiatric disability [60%], frail older people and other vulnerable Victorians with little or no social support [30% with no family or carer supply]. Assistance is to support the viability and sustainability of pension-level Supported Residential Services.</p> <p>SRS SAVVI is a modest strategic investment to improve the viability of a privately owned and operated sector that, if it were necessary to replace, would require significant public investment (estimated \$244m capital and \$35m recurrent).</p> <p>SRS SAVVI will assist in slowing the rate of closures of pension-level SRS (1,513 pension beds lost 1997 to 2005) and reduce risk of homelessness and deteriorating health for displaced residents, whilst also reducing disadvantage and social isolation for residents. SAVVI is targeted to SRS offering at least 80% of their beds at pension rates to ensure Government investment is directed to those SRS with greatest financial risk and disadvantage.</p> <p>SRS SAVVI will deliver indirect facility cost relief; resident health and social needs assessment; targeted service coordination and support to improve access to services and participation in the community – from 2007-08; improve building fabric/residents' physical living environment.</p>	

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	RESEARCH ISSUES/GAPS
PRACTICE	
<p>Workforce issues: appropriate numbers in desired disciplines; ongoing training and development; succession planning; recruitment; access/demand/need in rural and regional Victoria.</p>	
<p>Elder Abuse Prevention Initiative - the Victorian Government has allocation \$5.9 million over four years to ensure senior Victorians stay safe and enjoy healthy, active and independent lives. This initiative spans three government departments - Dept. of Human Services; Dept. of Justice and Dept of Vic. Communities, with the latter taking the lead role of coordination.</p> <p>DHS will specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review the guideline <i>With Respect to Age, A Guide for Health Services and Community Agencies Dealing with Elder Abuse, 1995.</i> - develop sample model protocols and pathways for funded organisations to apply at a local level. - instigate opportunity for local area network protocol development that will assist with the prevention of elder abuse and improved management of suspect and actual incidents of elder abuse. 	<p>Leaning predominately on overseas evidenced based data with regard to approaches based on empowerment model. Canada and USA. UK has some. Values based on United Nations and World Health Authority definitions.</p> <p>There is now opportunity to gather Victorian data on a range of elder abuse prevention matters.</p>
<p>Personal Alert Victoria (PAV) - \$0.5 million (\$2.0 million over four years). To provide for an additional 1200 personal alarms to meet the rapidly growing demand for this service that enables frail older people to feel safer at home.</p>	<p>How else can technology assist with independent living? When and how do we/can we more strategically incorporate science and technology into people's homes no matter what age, to assist with safe, healthy and independent lifestyles?</p>

Key questions to consider from Government and researcher perspectives:

1. What would/does 'evidence based research' mean in practice for researchers and governments alike – is that model a reliable and meaningful premise? Are there other models in use – just as reliable?
 - Four models – rational/knowledge driven, problem solving model, interactive, enlightenment model (*Walker, A; Jnl Soc.Pol 35,3,437-454*)
2. What research framework/paradigm does the research sector use when planning for an ageing population?
3. How can we improve engagement between researchers/policy makers/practitioners in the formative stages of research? Are there inhibitive barriers and if so how can these barriers be minimised?

4. Where respective research timeframes and drivers are quite different, how can research findings be provided to policy makers in a timelier manner?
5. Are researchers able to undertake a role in shaping public understanding/initiating policy debate at the community level?
6. How can research outcomes be presented to policy makers in language and formats that are understandable/relevant to Government, policy makers and service providers?
7. How can researchers better promote and present the practical implications of their findings to target audiences.