

A Growing and Ageing Population

A growing and ageing population will impact the health system and services, increase demand on health service workforce and result in a decrease in the number of carers of the elderly and volunteer organisations.

The health system and health services basically needs an over hall as it is not meeting increased demands from an ageing and growing population. The number of people aged over 70 is expected to increase 11% in the next 40 years and people aged over 80 years will increase approximately 6%. Also, with an ageing population, there is an increased number of people living with disabilities or chronic illnesses that need constant care. This means that there will not be enough young people to work for these elderly in means mostly of caring. Instead of 2.5 carers: 1 patient in 2002 we are looking at 1 carer: 1 patient in 2040. It also means less hospital and nursing help for these people.

The demand for health and aged care has risen. The government has proposed a number of initiatives to meet the needs of older Australians. These include; more nurses in emergency departments and other high demand areas; expansion of the roles of nurses; increased community care such as home help services. The elderly cannot contribute to the workforce so the government has introduced compulsory 9% superannuation, aged pension and voluntary private superannuation so they don't rely so much on the workforce when they do retire.

Carers and volunteers are ageing with the rest of the population and there isn't enough of the upcoming generation to fill their places. Australians over 55yrs contribute to \$75 billion per annum in volunteering. Over 50% of these are over 65yrs. These volunteering activities are obviously beneficial to the economy. Of volunteers aged over 65yrs there are among half a million. It is projected that there will be little growth in the number of carers but an increasing rise in demand for needed care resulting in a shortage.

It has become a major priority of the government to promote healthy ageing to enable people to contribute to the workforce for as long as possible. As can be seen, a growing and ageing population WILL impact our health system and services, health service workforce, carers of the elderly and volunteers organisations.