

LASA CHAIRMAN GRAEME BLACKMAN AO CONGRESS SPEECH

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land upon which we stand.

INTRODUCTION

- It is a privilege to be back here on the Gold Coast to welcome you to LASA National Congress, the largest event for our industry this year.
- Many of you have travelled long distances to join us this week, taken time out from your own lives and businesses to be here.
- On behalf of LASA - I thank you all for your support of Leading Age Services Australia and your commitment to our industry.
- LASA National Congress 2017 will provide a thought provoking program and is another wonderful opportunity for our industry to move away from demanding daily cycles and to network and share insights with one another.

AHEAD OF THE GAME: AGE SERVICES – STRONG, BOLD, BRAVE

- It is fitting that we are here on the Gold Coast, the city that will be hosting the 2018 Commonwealth Games.
- This year's congress theme, Ahead of the Game: Age Services – Strong, Bold, Brave draws on the Commonwealth Games spirit.
- Being 'ahead of the game' is about accessing new ideas, business strategies and care models as they are developing.

- At Congress we will hear from industry leaders who will share insights into company led initiatives.
- Congress is a place where we can all come together, challenge the status quo and explore what's possible.
- By challenging ourselves we ensure our industry continues to raise the bar in pursuit of leadership and excellence.
- Over three days, the conference theme of *Ahead of the Game: Age Services – Strong, Bold, Brave*, will allow delegates to explore and discuss how our industry has been responding to systemic change underpinned by the principles of ageing in-place, consumer choice and market based competition.
- Importantly, it will be the first opportunity to hear from political and thought leaders about the implications of the Aged Care Legislated Review.
- In this changing environment, providers of age services are seeking to deliver sustainable, viable and consumer led services, with many driving business model innovation and change.
- It is essential that our industry is 'Ahead of the Game' – accessing new ideas, business strategies and innovative care models.

VIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Today will be a day not to be missed with Minister for Aged Care Ken Wyatt's opening address and a Q&A panel discussion including Shadow Assistant Minister for Ageing Helen Polley. You are both very welcome.
- Your presence demonstrates your commitment to our work and we are greatly appreciative.

- As a truly national Peak body, LASA continues to ensure that our parliamentarians are aware of and awake to the challenges faced by our industry, and we continue to work constructively with them on your behalf.

DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE

- Last year, LASA made a promise to Members across Australia that a unified national organisation would be best placed to serve your needs.
- This would be achieved by providing: stronger advocacy in a world of unprecedented change; access to support and services to all Members without any jurisdictional borders; and enhanced value for money in the way we provide advocacy, support and services.
- One year later, it is clear that a unified national LASA has made significant progress in delivering on this promise.
- As a LASA Member you have access to a strong and influential voice on issues of importance to you. That is, we actively seek your views on key policy issues; we engage you in designing solutions to policy and system issues, and we advocate your issues and solutions to Governments on your behalf.
- To achieve this LASA has increased our focus and expertise in our Policy and Advocacy capability, evidenced by the establishment of a dedicated, Canberra based, Policy and Advocacy Team and the appointment of three new senior principal advisors across Home Care, Residential Care and Retirement Living. These new staff complement and enhance our existing staff's industry expertise.
- We scaled up our Member Support and Services functions across the organisation. In practice, this sees Members in any state or territory receiving regular information on key issues, participating in a national

program of events where leading thinkers and practitioners share knowledge and insights via conferences, seminars, workshops, and webinars. We also convene Member only advisory and working groups to discuss and design policy responses and solutions.

- In addition, we also scaled up a range of other business support services such as: business consulting; employment relations; payroll and rostering; claims and billing; and a range of branded products/services that will be available to all Members at discounted rates.
- In providing both our advocacy and support services efficiently and effectively, LASA provides you with enhanced value for money - and this gives you a greater return on your Membership fee investment.
- With our new organisational structure in place and through the recruitment of new expertise and industry specialists we believe that LASA has been able to actively respond to the changing and growing needs of our Members as well as providing a strong leadership role on tackling the many complex policy, regulatory and political debates that have consumed the industry.
- There are indeed many complex issues before us and we will hear about many of them during our Congress. Those of you who attended our 2014 Congress in Adelaide may remember that, as your newly appointed Chairman, I expressed the hope that we might respond to a range of challenges as an industry:
 1. that we might take on the challenges facing our indigenous, LGBTI and CALD communities,
 2. that we might better recognize our incredible and valued staff and volunteers,

3. that we might have access to stable and predictable funding, to enable us to provide high quality care and appropriate returns to investors and funders, whether for profit or not for profit
4. that we might operate within an appropriate but rigorous quality framework,
5. that we might better recognize the amazing diversity of circumstances and backgrounds our clients come from,
6. that just as we might recognize the growing importance of new technologies in applications to aged care, we might also acknowledge the growing importance of spiritual and pastoral care for our clients.

Those challenges, and many others, are frankly still with us and I want to encourage us all to address these important and complex issues as we embark on our time together at our Congress and beyond.

SPONSORS AND CLOSING COMMENTS

- The success of these events would not be possible without the contributions and support from LASA's Affiliates, conference sponsors and exhibitors
- On behalf of LASA, I would like to thank our valued Members for their support this year and I look forward to working with you to enable a high performing respected, sustainable age services industry delivering affordable, accessible, quality care and services for older Australians.
- I wish to thank all our Sponsors for their generous support, and am delighted to announce that this year we have our largest display of Exhibitors in Congress history.
- I invite all of you to take a tour of our extensive trade exhibition representing the best in innovative products, services and technology.

- I want you all to leave this year's LASA National Congress feeling empowered, energised and inspired to tackle the challenges that lie ahead, and I am confident that this year's program and speaker line-up will deliver on its promise of being the best LASA Congress yet.