




# Aged Care IT Council Launches Vision for Aged Care

After nearly two years in the making the Aged Care Industry IT Council's (ACIITC) Information and communications technology vision for the industry was recently launched by Minister for Social Services Kevin Andrews. The event was very well attended with close to 90 representatives from industry, bureaucracy and federal parliamentarians.

A video presentation and the document can be found on the ACIITC website [www.aciitc.com.au](http://www.aciitc.com.au)

It is important to note that this is a vision developed by the industry for the industry. Its messages are clear.

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a key enabler for age services
- A small investment has the capacity to reap considerable cost savings, particularly in maintaining the health of older Australians and assisting them to live in their homes longer
- Enhanced ICT will greatly assist age services providers when contending when complying with red tape. Age services are well known for burdensome administration that does not enhance quality. Many forms are in excess of 30 pages and largely hand-written. Reducing red tape and utilising technology to assist with compliance is an essential measure to give staff greater time caring for older Australians.
- The consequences of not meeting demand now and supporting industry with increased future demand is intergenerational pain, where families and communities grapple with an increasing number of frail older Australians with complex health needs.
- The industry is looking to partner with government to place itself in a similar position to GPs and Pharmacists who have already received support to enhance their ICT capability
- The benefits to small providers, particularly those in regional and rural Australia or those providing services to special needs groups is considerable
- With the highest growth area in home care ICT enhancement will enable staff to maximise efficiency, providing services to more clients each day or spending greater time with clients, reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and reducing precious health funding.



We need to start  
**TODAY**, by Thinking  
**BIG**, Starting **SMALL**  
and scaling **RAPIDLY**

“ A simple and cost effective solution is for government to support the age services industry to enhance productivity without compromising care quality; with enhanced ICT capacity an essential component.”

PATRICK REID

Kenn Wheatland from Kiama, NSW attended the launch. Kenn receives services from the NBN Telehealth Pilot Program, delivered by IRT. At 82 years of age Kenn looks a picture of health. He is however a type 1 diabetic, who lost a family member at age 50 to the disease. Kenn's knowledge and interest in his own health (and that of his wife) has peaked since becoming part of the trial. He is able to monitor and understand what can impact his health.

Ken said he suffers from a range of health problems and as part of this program he has been given equipment which allows him to monitor his own health. He continued by saying, “If there's anything out of the ordinary then I get a phone call and we can explore the options.”

Kenn's support of greater government investment in ICT solutions for older people is clear and was a motivator in his decision to come to Canberra to show Minister Kevin Andrews first hand.

Minister Kevin Andrews made reference to the ACIITC NBN enabled telehealth project (a joint LASA project) and said he 'looked forward to seeing the results'. He certainly saw a positive life size result in Kenn Wheatland.

Minister Andrews continued to say: “Empowering the industry is best achieved in working with the industry to develop an approach that is centred on enhancing care quality and productivity whilst ensuring high quality services.”

LASA looks forward to working with both Minister Andrews' and Fifield to implement the ICT vision. This is a key area where a relatively small amount of government funding will assist members in reducing red tape and developing enhanced services (especially in regional and rural Australia). LASA will continue its advocacy to meet that end; and in doing so put age service providers on par with other health providers like Pharmacists and General Practitioners who have both been supported through enhanced information and communications technology.

The Abbott Government, through the Commission of Audit and recent budget has clearly signalled the way of the future regarding business operation and service delivery. LASA acknowledges the need for fiscal responsibility and is prepared to continue to lead the industry to work smarter and reduce red tape. In doing this we seek a firm commitment from the Abbott Government that our most vulnerable, older Australians will be protected and receive the care and services they need to live well. A simple and cost effective solution is for government to support the age services industry to enhance productivity without compromising care quality; with enhanced ICT capacity an essential component.

LASA will also recommend ICT enhancement as a critical priority for discussion at the newly formed Aged Care Sector Committee, chaired by Dr Peter Shergold AC with LASA represented by CEO, Patrick Reid. The launch was positive and successful; forming a springboard to practical action to enable providers to enhance productivity and care quality. At our inaugural policy forum LASA members (from a wide cross-section) agreed that an ICT policy was essential. LASA has developed this for member approval and endorsement.




 Kenn Wheatland




 Patrick Reid

Patrick Reid is the CEO of Leading Age Services Australia.

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 SCAN to see the video presentation  
<http://bit.ly/1p83fAK>



**LEADING AGE SERVICES**  
AUSTRALIA

*Helping older Australians to live well*