

# Introduction

This publication is part of an annual series of statistics about aspects of residential aged care in Australia. Australia's aged care system is structured around two main forms of formal care delivery: residential and community care. Both forms of care continue to expand in absolute terms as the population of older people who require assistance grows.

The number of residential aged care places has increased, but there is a continuing strong emphasis on the provision and evaluation of innovative and flexible community care to help people stay in their own homes. There are two community care programs which aim to deliver the equivalent of care provided in the residential aged care sector to people living in the community.

Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) provide care for frail or disabled older people whose dependency and complex care needs would qualify them for entry to an aged care home at least for low level care. The Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) program aims to deliver care at home that is equivalent to high level residential care. This program began as a pilot in 2000, but is now established as an ongoing program.

This publication is primarily concerned with residential aged care. The section on provision of aged care places, however, also includes data on CACPs and EACH packages. Places and packages through all three programs are included in the Australian Government's provision ratio targets for aged care. Access to assistance from each program requires a recommendation from an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).

Chapter 1 of the report presents data on the provision of places and packages, including data on allocated places for recent financial years. Chapter 2 reports data on the number, size and location of residential aged care services, while Chapter 3 examines patterns of service use by residents, including admissions and separations. Chapter 4 describes characteristics of residents as at 30 June 2005, and characteristics of newly admitted and separated residents during 2004–05. Three appendixes provide additional time series data, population data and notes on the data and their limitations.

Cases where data are unknown or not reported have been excluded in relevant calculations presented in the text.