

Media Release
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Aged care Director says Productive Ageing Package heads in the right direction

The Director of a leading aged care services provider has applauded the Federal Government's announced tax concessions for older workers; saying that it was about time the government recognised its role in enabling older people to retain their independence and embrace healthy ageing.

Gillian McFee, Director, UnitingCare Ageing, continued, expressing that it was important to view the announcement in the wider context of healthy ageing and the need to focus more on facilitating people to engage in activities of their choice for as long as they were able – whether it be hobbies, volunteering or paid work.

Tax breaks as an incentive to keep older workers employed was outlined in the Productive Ageing Package, launched earlier this week in response to the challenge of an increasingly ageing population outlined in the Treasury's Third Intergeneration Report.

The \$43.4 million Package encourages older people to remain in the workforce to share skills.

Gillian says that the Package is a wonderful opportunity to ensure that older people are able to remain an active, vital part of the workforce for so long as they wish. "This also makes sense for consumers because mature age workers are often in a better position, because of their experience, to relate to older people as consumers of services".

"This is a refreshing change in public policy because in the past, the primary focus of policies on ageing have been about health and aged care where services tend to focus more on illness, disability and end of life".

“Older people have contributed for many years to the community and can continue to enhance and progress their skills and knowledge in so many areas so that they continue to be productive.”

UnitingCare Ageing has adopted a new Service Approach which gives priority to supporting wellness and healthy ageing.

Gillian said that people are living much longer and healthy lives usually well into their 80's and 90's so traditional views about retirement at 55 or 60 need to be challenged.

“What is important is that people know that they can have the choice rather than feeling when they reach a certain age they are on the slippery slide of ageing.

“It's really important that we don't dismiss or generalise about the wishes of older people. Certainly, there are some who like to retire early and partake in other activities but there are also many who love their job and the skills and social interactions it requires.

“This Package is a way for older people who to maintain the lifestyle they desire and retain their independence and identity through their role in the workforce”, Gillian explained.

Increasing workforce participation rates for Australians aged between 50 and 69 years of age has been estimated to raise Gross Domestic Productivity by 2.4% and relieve pressures on the economy.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with Gillian McFee, Director, UnitingCare Ageing, please contact Ingrid Hoff, Public Relations Assistant, UnitingCare NSW.ACT on 02 8267 4374 or email ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au.