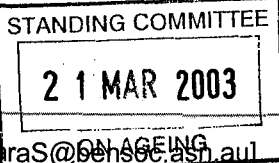


Irwin, Debbie (REPS)



Sub 143

**From:** Barbara Squires [BarbaraS@ONAGEING.au]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 16 March 2003 5:08 PM  
**To:** Committee, Ageing (REPS)  
**Cc:** Robertson, Anne (J. Hall, MP)  
**Subject:** Submission on behalf of the Australian Association of Gerontology

The Secretary of the Committee,

Standing Committee on Ageing

House of Representatives

I am responding to an invitation from Ms Jill Hall MP, Deputy Chair, who spoke to a meeting organised by Prof. Julie Byles at the Stanford Hotel in Sydney on Wed. 26 Feb. At that meeting Ms Hall was kind enough to say that if those present let her know we had put in submissions, she would make sure they were accepted.

I am therefore attaching a submission from the Australian Association of Gerontology, which I am making in my capacity as National President.

<<Hse of Repts sub 3.03.doc>>

Barbara Squires

President, Australian Association of Gerontology

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# AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY

16 March 2003

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Ageing  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**RE: INQUIRY INTO LONG TERM STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS  
THE AGEING OF THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION OVER THE NEXT 40  
YEARS**

The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) welcomes the opportunity to submit information to the Inquiry in relation to the importance of research in ageing in providing the foundation for the strategies needed to plan and provide for Australia's ageing population.

The AAG is a multi-disciplinary association of professionals involved in gerontology, which is the study of ageing. It was established in 1962, and is one of 55 member organisations of the International Association of Gerontology. The IAG was established in 1950.

The mission of the AAG is to expand knowledge of ageing, and its objective is to improve the experience of ageing.

Its primary activities are:

- promoting and supporting research
- disseminating information
- promoting and providing education
- promoting informed debate
- cooperating with other stakeholders
- providing leadership

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Tel. 08 8201 7552 Fax 08 8201 7551 Email aag.secre@flinders.edu.au**

The AAG has nearly 1,000 members across Australia. Each state has a Division of the AAG, which runs its own program of meetings, symposia etc. At the national level, we produce a quarterly newsletter, hold an annual national conference, and maintain a website ([www.aag.asn.au](http://www.aag.asn.au)).

The membership of the AAG is inclusive, both in professional background and representation of area of interest. It includes doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, social scientists etc, working in research, education, service provision and policy.

The AAG is one of the partners (along with ACOTA, ASGM and ACSA) in the Australasian Journal on Ageing. The AJA and our annual national conferences provide an opportunity for Australian research in ageing to be shared and debated with others interested in gerontology.

AAG members include the leading researchers in Australia. The AAG formed the successful consortium that is conducting the Scoping Study into Ageing Research for the NHMRC. The members of that consortium include the leading researchers across the whole field of ageing, from molecular biology to social aspects of healthy ageing.

A copy of the NHMRC Scoping Study on Ageing Research has been provided to the Committee by Prof David LeCouteur, of the Centre for Education & Research on Ageing (CERA), as an attachment to CERA's submission, which the AAG supports

### *The importance of research into ageing*

In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, the demographic imperative of the time meant that research into maternal and child health was vital. The complex social, medical, ethical and economic issues were explored and the global population has benefited.

We are now moving into a new era. The ageing of the population brings a fresh set of challenges, with a similar need for visionary leadership.

The AAG welcomes the emphasis on research that underpins the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia, and "the need to understand and reassess what is happening as the population ages".

### *The way forward for research into ageing*

The AAG welcomes the recognition in Australia of ageing as a priority for research, in the same way that it has been recognised internationally.

There is a great need to improve the infrastructure for research into ageing in Australia, while ensuring that scarce resources do not unnecessarily go into "bricks and mortar" structures. Models such as the U.S. National Institute on Ageing are unlikely to be achievable in Australia given our much smaller population.

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However, there is an urgent need to find a way of encouraging multi-disciplinary collaboration and improving the dissemination of research findings. This will help to promote a robust and continuous cycle of research informing education, policy and practice, with those areas in turn generating further issues for research.

The AAG supports the concept of a multidisciplinary ageing panel (or grants review committee) on the NHMRC. This would give expression to the importance of multi-disciplinary research into all facets of ageing and help to ensure that research into healthy ageing can take its place alongside research into biological ageing and clinical medicine.

The AAG welcomes the opportunity it has been given to contribute to the Building Ageing Research Capacity (BARC) project. BARC is a joint project between the Office for an Ageing Australia (OAA) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). It has the assistance of an expert Steering Committee, a number of whom are AAG members.

The BARC Project is looking at strategies to assist in providing the evidence base that is needed to support the decisions that must be made as the Australian population ages. Its activities, including an Expert Forum held on 9 December 2002, a National Symposium on Ageing Research planned for September 2003, and plans to set up an Ageing Research Online website, are all welcome initiatives that will help to develop a broader shared understanding across academic disciplines and between researchers and users of research.

However, while the AAG supports the need to make the best use of existing resources, we emphasise that there is still a need for a greater share of research funding to be directed towards research in ageing.

The AAG is willing to offer its expertise and the resource of its membership to assist with exploring the various options for improving the infrastructure to support research into ageing, and would welcome the opportunity to present further evidence to the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Barbara Squires  
**AAG National President**