

**Caring for Older Australians
Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aged Care**

Public Submission by
The Greek Welfare Centre NSW



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PO Box 784 Newtown NSW 2042
E: greekwelfarecentre@bigpond.com

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Greek Welfare Centre is the welfare and community services arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. The Greek Welfare Centre was established in March 1975 following the Darwin cyclone in 1974 and the resulting urgency for a social welfare service to cater to the needs of the Greek speaking community. There are Greek Welfare Centres in each state of Australia.

The NSW office is the largest and is based in Newtown, Sydney, with regional offices in Parramatta (Harris Park), Liverpool and the Illawarra (Wollongong). Sessional services are provided from other locations across Sydney and in Newcastle.

The Centre is a community-managed, not for profit organisation, which is incorporated by an Act of Parliament (NSW Consolidated Trust Act No.65 1994). The members of the Administrative Committee are volunteers who are appointed by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to manage the Centre.

The main target group is the Greek speaking community but the Centre also provides a range of services to meet the needs of other Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, and the community at large.

Mission Statement

The NSW Greek Welfare Centre's mission is to provide services and programs that empower individuals and groups from the Greek community, and the community at large to participate in all aspects of Australia's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse society. This mission is underpinned by the values and principles espoused by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and, as such, recognises welfare and community service provision as a sacred task.

Aims

In the work carried out by the Greek Welfare Centre, the aims are to:

- Provide information and education to individuals and groups within the community to inform them of their rights and responsibilities in accessing services
- Promote community development and link the community to relevant service providers
- Ensure people feel secure and comfortable in accessing a service that is culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Ensure that services are provided according to relevant standards and criteria of funding bodies
- Ensure the Centre operates in an effective, efficient and accountable manner

Services and Programs

The Centre's services and programs are developed and implemented according to the philosophy and aims of the Centre, and in response to individual and community needs. The program areas include:

a. Aged and Community Care Unit: The Centre runs a CACP Program (80 packages); 5 NRCP respite services (CALD, and either dementia specific or frail aged); 12 HACC day cares (CALD, and either dementia specific or frail aged); 17 HACC Greek frail aged respite groups; Community Visitors Scheme; and the Community Partners Program.

b. Information, Referral and Counselling Unit: (mental health, family relationships, problem gambling, drug and alcohol).

c. Children's Services Unit: Before and After School Care; Vacation Care; and Playtime groups.

d. Community Education and Community Development: Palliative care project; Dementia education project; women's groups; men's group; marriage preparation seminars; and the volunteer training course. The Centre's services and programs are supported by an active team of volunteers (over 150) who receive training and on-going support as part of our volunteer program.

Our Aged and Community Care Experience

The Greek Welfare Centre's Aged and Community Care Unit represents more than sixty percent (60%) of the Centre's service provision. The needs in this area are acute, which is why it has been incorporated as a priority area in the Centre's strategic plan.

The Centre's CACP Program has been running for around 15 years and it currently operates 80 packages (75 Greek specific, 5 General) in Sydney's East, West, North and the Illawarra region.

The Centre provides CALD respite services to carers through the National Respite for Carers Program. It operates two CALD Dementia Day Care Respite services (Liverpool and Parramatta), a CALD Dementia Day Respite Service for working carers (Eastern suburbs), and two CALD Day Care Centres for the frail aged (Parramatta and the Illawarra).

Under the Centre's HACC Program, it operates three HACC funded CALD Dementia Day Care Centres (South West Sydney), and nine HACC funded CALD Centre Based Day Care Centres (Rockdale, Brighton, Harris Park, Blacktown, two at Matraville, Crows Nest, Thornleigh and Illawarra). All these operate with and provide group transport. The day care centres have been operating for about seven years and currently service clients from Spanish, Arabic, Italian, Chinese, Russian, Croatian and Greek backgrounds.

Furthermore, for over 20 years, the Centre has been running the HACC Greek frail aged respite groups (there are 17 groups with well over a thousand clients weekly) and a HACC funded Community Transport program.

Currently, the Greek Welfare Centre services 80 dementia clients in its DADHC and NRCP Dementia Centre Based Day Care Centres. Also, about 20% of the CACP clients have a diagnosis of dementia.

Under the Community Visitors Scheme, which has been operating for 17 years, trained volunteers are matched with Greek nursing home residents on a one to one basis. Currently, the Centre has 42 visitors who participate in this scheme throughout the Sydney Metropolitan area and in the Illawarra region. They visit over 70 residents in 30 different nursing homes.

Through our Community Partners Program, information and resources are given to mainstream service providers and to nursing homes about the needs of the Greek community to help increase access. Similarly, information and education is provided to the Greek community (the elderly and their carers) to help break down barriers when accessing aged care services.

Focus of this Submission

In this submission paper, prepared by the Greek Welfare Centre of NSW, we will be presenting the needs identified by our Greek speaking community with relation to community and residential care. This will be supported by evidence – quantitative statistics (2006 ABS Census data, CACP data, MDS data) and recently conducted qualitative studies (Community Questionnaires and Focus Groups) as well as past Needs Analyses of the Greek community (2008, 2004, and 2000).

Our submission will make recommendations and comment on several issues identified in the Productivity Commission's Terms of Reference and as expressed in its Issues Paper (May 2010) regarding the inquiry into "Caring for Older Australians."

These relate to the first Term of Reference (Service Delivery Framework) to: "Systematically examine the social, clinical and institutional aspects of aged care in Australia, building on the substantial base of existing reviews into this sector."

Our submission will look at the following particular aspects:

The Current System

The Commission invites comment and evidence on the main strengths and weaknesses of aged care services – community, residential, flexible and respite care – as they are currently configured.

Are the aged care services that older Australians require available and accessible?

Comments are also invited on the current system (and possible alternative arrangements) for providing services to people with special needs, including... those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds... (Issues Paper, p.13)

Objectives of the aged care system

Key themes running through the Aged Care Act 1997, the accompanying Aged Care Principles and the Home and Community Care Act are the need to... facilitate access to care regardless of economic and other circumstances...

How effective has the aged care system been in addressing these objectives? (Issues Paper, p.15)

ISSUES

The Greek Welfare Centre has conducted a number of Needs Analysis of the Greek speaking community over the last decade. These consistently reveal strong trends and issues. Those that are relevant to the current Productivity Inquiry are presented here.

The evidence from the Greek Welfare Centre's Needs Analyses is included in the second part of this submission. The page numbers in brackets in this "Issues" section below refer to where in this document the evidence is presented.

An ageing community

Analysis of demographic information shows that the Greek speaking community is an ageing community. Not only is it the second largest CALD community in NSW over 70 years of age [p.10], but also Greek people are significantly older, up to four times older, than the general community [pp.11-12].

These staggering figures undoubtedly have strong implications for current and future service provision and planning. They are particularly relevant for South East Sydney and the Inner West where nearly three quarters of NSW elderly Greek people live [pp.10-11].

An ageing community that is not proficient in English: Access to services

In the regions where the Needs Analyses were conducted, they showed that a quarter to a third of Greeks are *not* proficient English speakers [p.13]. The implications of this can be extrapolated from the qualitative findings where it proves to be a barrier to accessing community services. Only 30% had accessed a service in the last six months [pp.17-18]. The findings also show that a lack of English proficiency contributes to a sense of social isolation [pp.17-18].

Not being proficient in English, Greek speakers turn to their children/grandchildren or other Greek specific services to meet their needs and to ask for help. It also leads to the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate service provision when required [pp. 17-19].

Many Greek speakers acknowledged the reality that their children, although well-intentioned, may not be able to practically assist their elderly parents as they have responsibilities of their own [p.19]. This then leaves language specific service providers to meet their needs. It is an issue that is acknowledged in wider circles.

For example, the Newcastle City Council's *Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (2008-2011)* reports that one of the city's "key issues" is the ageing of certain CALD groups such as the Greek community. "These groups continue to face challenges such as a declining community base and resources. There is an ongoing advocacy role to ensure that culturally appropriate and flexible service models are available for these groups to maintain equitable access to services." (*Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (2008-2011)*, Newcastle City Council, pp. 5-6).

Greek Identity: Access to services

The demographic data shows that the number of people who identify their ancestry as Greek is closely aligned with the number of people who identify their religion as Greek Orthodox [p.11]. The qualitative studies also revealed how closely intertwined religious identity is with the Greek culture [pp. 17-18].

The figures also show that those who identify their ancestry as Greek is double the number of Greek speakers and quadruple the number of those born in Greece [p.11]. What this means is that the identity with Greek culture and religion is paramount, even when the Greek language is not spoken and even when the person has not been born in Greece.

As a consequence, it has significant ramifications for the provision of not only linguistically appropriate services but also culturally appropriate services. This is shown strongly in the results of the qualitative findings where people of Greek origin expressed their desire to access Greek providers in order to meet their needs [pp.17-19].

This is a finding that is consistent with the Greek Welfare Centre's CACP statistics. The long waiting time for prospective clients is due to the fact that Greek people are unwilling to access mainstream services because they want service provision from a Greek specific provider [p.14]. Furthermore, even when their needs increase, they are likely to remain with a Greek specific CACP package than transfer to a mainstream EACH package, as evidenced by the Centre's exit figures [p.15].

Greek clients with dementia: Access issues

As is well documented elderly people with a language other than English and with a diagnosis of dementia are likely to revert to their first language, even though they may have acquired a high level of proficiency in English. This makes the provision of a bilingual service essential in meeting their needs.

About a fifth of the Greek Welfare Centre's current CACP clients have a diagnosis of dementia. The Centre's Program provides a language specific and culturally appropriate service that is tailored to meet these clients' needs. Dementia clients also access the Centre's dementia day care groups that have bilingual workers.

The success of the Centre's CACP Program is attested to by the lengthy waiting list, but with limited ethnic specific community care places these people are having to wait lengthy periods of time before they can be catered to [p.14].

Greek community: Intricacies of access to residential facilities

The Greek Welfare Centre CACP figures (waiting list and exited clients) as well as the findings from the qualitative studies repeatedly reveal that Greek-speaking clients refuse to enter low care facilities; they want to remain living at home until they die. Entry to a high care facility is only considered or, more commonly imposed, when it is the last resort [pp.14-19].

Therefore, the underlying premise of the Department's planning ratios is invalid for the Greek speaking community. The planning ratios are 113 residential and community places for every 1 000 people over 70 years of age. This translates to 21 CACPs; 4 EACH; and 44 residential low care (and 44 residential high care). That is, 25 places for community care and 44 for low care.

Our evidence shows that this model is inappropriate for Greek speaking clients. Greeks will not access low care facilities at practically double the rate of community places. Rather, they prefer to struggle remaining at home with whatever help they can get and prefer to have a strained quality of life, until they die at home or are forced to enter a high care facility.

The consequent need for increased community care places for Greek speaking clients seems to be invalidated by planning ratios that cater more to mainstream society. In the Greek speaking community, there is a need for more community care packages rather than low care places.

However, repeated funding applications to the Department have not been successful in gaining a greater allocation of Greek specific community care packages.

The result has been that our waiting list for community care places gets longer – both in terms of the numbers of people waiting and the length of time they wait.

Centre Based Day Care: A good model

The MDS statistics and the qualitative findings demonstrate the success of centre based day cares for Greek clients [pp.16-18]. This cost-effective service is a good model to maintain the well-being of the elderly, to decrease their isolation and to promote a positive experience in their life as they age.

The elderly enjoy attending and meeting with others with which they interact and share common life experiences. Furthermore, they are provided with transport, outings, and have the opportunity to listen to talks and information sessions that are relevant to their needs.

It cannot be overlooked that the success of this model is largely due to the provision of a linguistically and culturally appropriate day care service, which is why the clients identify so closely with it and why they can “share” their “common life experiences.”

Community Partners Program: A good model

Despite years of living in Australia, Greek people are not accessing services. The qualitative findings reveal that only 30% of participants had accessed a service in the last six months [pp.17-18].

This remarkably low access rate shows the importance of the Community Partners Program in developing partnerships with mainstream services and in educating both the Greek speaking people about the services that are available, and the service providers about the needs of the Greek people.

Another vital component of the Community Partners Program is the cultural training it gives to mainstream service providers in the lack of ethnic specific service providers.

Case Management: An unfunded component

Although community care services have an allocation of funding for case management of clients, this is a component that is unfunded for many of the Greek Welfare Centre’s HACC and general clients.

With low levels of English language proficiency, Greek clients turn to their children for help but they are not always able to practically assist their parents [pp.17, 19]. Greek people, therefore, are relying on the services of Greek speaking providers, such as the Greek Welfare Centre, to coordinate their needs [pp.17-19].

With an increasing number of elderly Greek people [pp.10-12], case management is going to become a growing area of need and currently there is no funding source for general clients.

Recommendations to the Commission

The Greek community is a rapidly growing ageing community. Since family support is so important, this trend will place increasing pressure on children and grandchildren to assist their elderly (grand) parents. However, children have increasing responsibilities of their own and, sometimes, family members live far from their elderly parents, making the provision of daily support a difficult task.

Although the Greek speaking community is considered to be an “established community” and many of the initial settlement concerns have been overcome (e.g. employment, accommodation etc), it is now experiencing a different phase of need as it ages.

The impact of migration and the identification with the Greek culture is deeply embedded in the psyche of the Greek person.

As the qualitative analysis confirms, the ageing of Australia’s Greek population is provoking concern about their future. They are feeling isolated, lonely and a considerable amount of uncertainty. Their lack of English proficiency is increasing their sense of isolation and preventing them from accessing mainstream services.

They can see that they cannot rely on their children but want to remain living at home. They are going to need assistance to be able to do this. Placement in residential care remains a last resort.

The evidence and the issues presented in this submission support the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate community care for the target community, which possesses poor English language skills and strongly identifies with its Greek background and culture. This is also important because those with dementia are likely to lose their knowledge of English and revert to Greek.

This is why the Greek Welfare Centre is recommending to the Commission:

- More Greek specific community care places (CACP, EACH, EACH-D) in all areas but the need is dire in Eastern Sydney
- A change in the Department’s current planning ratios to reflect Greek people’s refusal to access low care places (i.e. more community care than low care places)
- Greater allocation of funds for Greek specific Day Care Centres (frail aged and dementia)
- The continuation of the Community Partners Program and no eroding of real funding
- Allocation of funds for case management for non-community care clients

Finally, the Greek Welfare Centre is an organisation and a service provider that already has links with, and is part of, the Greek speaking community. It has developed 35 years of trust and goodwill with the community and people of Greek origin are prepared to turn to the Centre for assistance. Furthermore, the target community recognises and supports the Greek Welfare Centre in advocating on its behalf and extending its role in the provision of appropriate services and programs for elderly Greek speaking people.

EVIDENCE FOR THIS SUBMISSION

NEEDS ANALYSIS (July 2010)

A: Quantitative Studies

- 2006 Census
- CACP Statistics (Waiting List; Exited Clients)
- MDS Data

B: Qualitative Findings

- Community Questionnaires
- Focus Groups

PAST NEEDS ANALYSES

- 2008
- 2004
- 2000

EVIDENCE: Quantitative Studies and Qualitative Findings

NEEDS ANALYSIS (July 2010)

The Greek Welfare Centre has compiled a Needs Analysis of the Greek speaking community (July 2010) that incorporates both quantitative studies and qualitative findings. The needs analysis was put together to:

- Identify and document relevant demographic characteristics of the Greek speaking community
- Gauge community views and attitudes about the needs of the elderly and access to services
- Ascertain the level of accessibility by the Greek speaking elderly to aged care services and to identify gaps in service delivery
- Determine the role of the Greek Welfare Centre in addressing the needs of the Greek speaking elderly

The findings from this Needs Analysis are presented as evidence for this submission.

A. Quantitative Studies

The Needs Analysis obtained relevant statistical and demographic data from the following sources:

- 2006 Census (number of Greek people by country of birth, age breakdown, language spoken and English proficiency, labour force indicators, ancestry, and religious affiliation)
- Greek Welfare Centre statistics from its CACP Program (waiting list – Needs Analysis 2008; and exited clients)
- Greek Welfare Centre MDS data (respite hours and transport trips)

B. Qualitative Findings

Qualitative information was gathered from community consultations, which included:

- The administration of a Community Questionnaire to 475 elderly Greek speaking people of the Centre's Seniors/Day Care groups (in Eastern Sydney, St George area, Northern Sydney, Western Sydney, South West Sydney, Inner West Sydney, the Illawarra and Newcastle). The participants are a representative sample (in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and residency) of the target community. The questionnaires looked at proficiency in English, dwelling arrangements, types and adequacy of services used, the needs of the elderly, and what role the Greek Welfare Centre can play in meeting these needs.
- Focus Groups were held with participants of the above groups. These sessions delved into the positive and negative aspects of the target community's feelings and attitudes as they age, their current and prospective needs, and where they would go to meet their needs.

PAST NEEDS ANALYSES

The Greek Welfare Centre has analysed various regions in the past and has compiled a number of Needs Analyses of the Greek community. For example:

- 2008 (Eastern Sydney; Northern Sydney; Western Sydney; the Hunter; and Illawarra regions)
- 2004 (Eastern Sydney; Northern Sydney; Western Sydney; and the Illawarra)
- 2000 (Eastern Sydney)

Where it was considered relevant, additional information from these Needs Analyses has been incorporated in this submission.

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES – 2006 Census

Figures from the ABS Census (2006) presented here have been collated by the Greek Welfare Centre in its past Needs Analysis (2008).

Over 70 year olds – CALD and Greeks

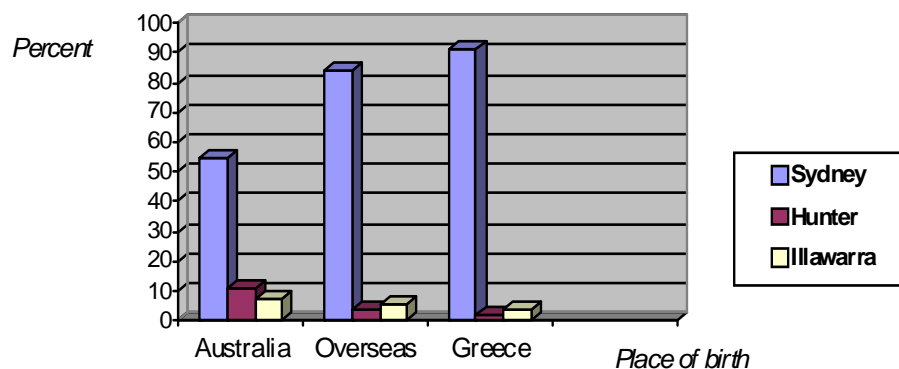
According to the 2006 ABS Census figures, Greek is the second largest CALD Community in NSW among those over 70 years of age. There are 12 582 Greek speaking people in NSW over 70 years of age. Greek is second only to Italian. The trend is the same for Australia as a whole. There are 41 284 Greek speaking people (70+) in Australia. Greek is second to Italian (83 930).

The elderly Greek community is growing rapidly. There has been a 52% increase in the number of Greek speaking people aged over 70 in Australia since the last census (2001). The increase in the number of elderly Italians for the same period was in the order of 24%.

Demographic projections developed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that by 2026, Greek speakers will remain an elderly community and maintain their ranking of second after Italians.

According to figures from the ABS 2006 Census, compiled by the Central Sydney Area Health Service (General, Geriatric and Rehabilitation Medicine), just over 90% (91%) of NSW Greek speaking people, who are over 70 years of age, live in the Planning Regions of Sydney. A further 6% live in the Illawarra and Hunter Planning Regions. This leaves only three per cent who live in rural and regional areas of NSW.

Proportion of NSW Population in selected SLAs



In 13 of the 16 planning regions of NSW, Greek ranks in the top five CALD communities among those over 70 years of age. The only exceptions are in Western Sydney and Central West where it ranks sixth and in the Mid North Coast where it ranks seventh.

South East Sydney has the most (4 651 or 38%) of the state's Greek speakers aged over 70 years, followed by the Inner West (3 963 or 33%). In fact, nearly three quarters (71%) of NSW elderly Greek speakers are in either South East Sydney or the Inner West.

The table below shows the percentage of elderly Greek speakers (70+) in each planning region.

Distribution of elderly Greeks by planning region

Language Ranking	Planning Region	Number	% of NSW Greek speakers 70+
1	South East Sydney	4651	38%
2	Inner West	3963	33%
5	South West Sydney	1180	9%
6	Western Sydney	789	6%
5	Northern Sydney	652	5%
4	Illawarra	505	4%
4	Hunter	271	2%
5	Nepean	169	1%
4	Central Coast	118	1%
4	Southern Highlands	91	1%
4	Riverina-Murray	48	-
7	Mid North Coast	35	-
5	Far North Coast	29	-
4	Orana Far West	26	-
6	Central West	25	-
4	New England	23	-

Person 70+ speaking Greek at home per Aged Care Planning in NSW (Source: ABS 2006)

Further analysis of 2006 Census figures have found:

People born in Greece are significantly older than the Australian average

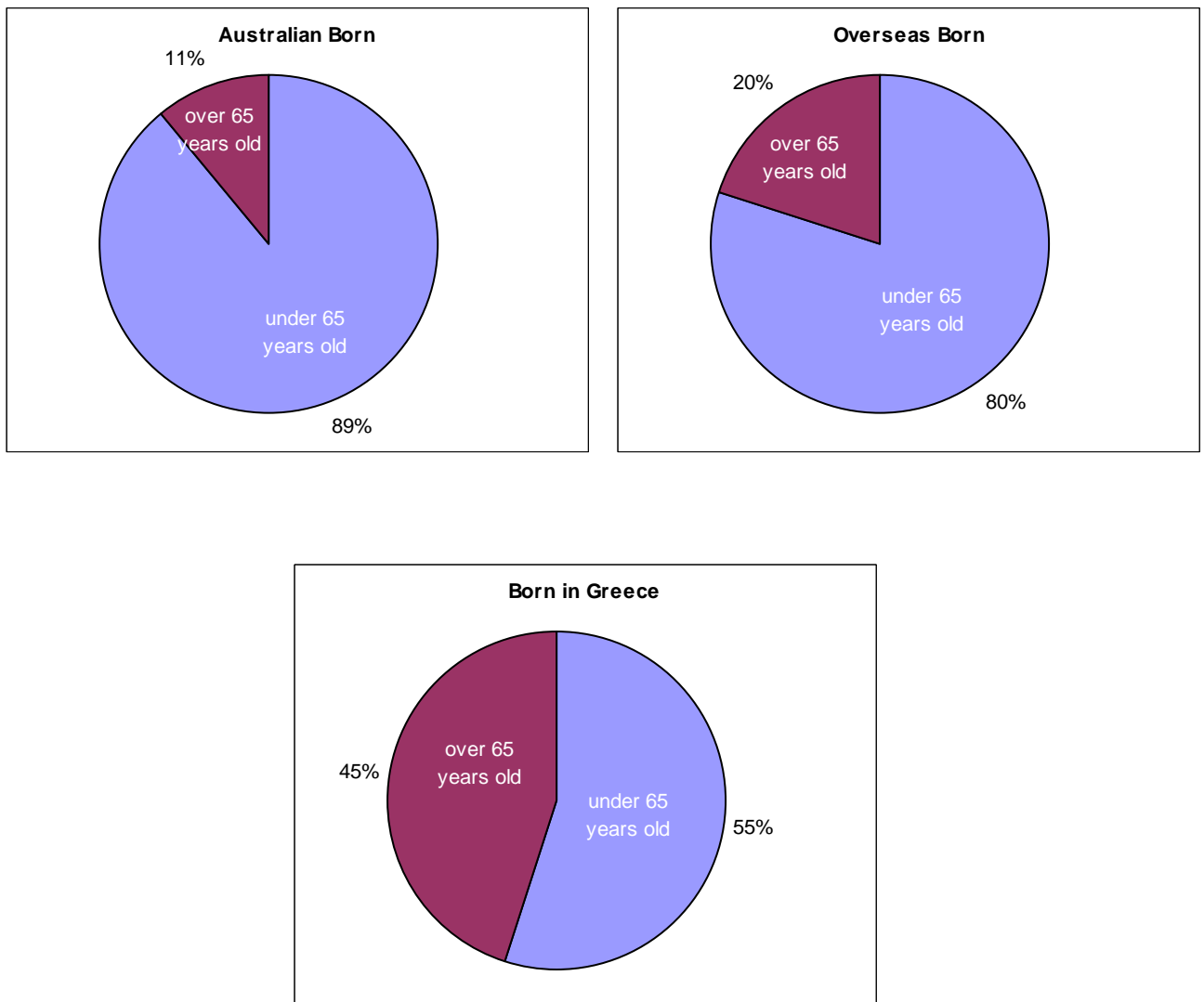
- Whereas 11% of the Australian born population is over 65 years of age (in Australia and in NSW) 45% of people born in Greece are over 65 years of age.
In some areas, the figure is even higher. For example in Eastern Sydney, 57% of people born in Greece are over 65 years of age; and in Wollongong LGA, 55% of Greeks are over 65 years.
- Whereas 6% of the Australian born population is over 75 years of age (in Australia and in NSW) the number of Greeks over 75 years of age is 15%.
- Those who speak Greek are usually double the number of people born in Greece. Figures for Greek ancestry, and religious affiliation as Greek Orthodox, show a further doubling of the number of Greek speakers. The age breakdown of the Greek Orthodox confirms an ageing Greek population compared to the Australian average.

The overwhelming majority of the people born in Greece are no longer in the labour force, which is double the average of the general population.

- Australia and NSW: A third to half (33-50%) of the general population is not in the labour force but two thirds of people born in Greece (65%) are not in the labour force.

Proportion of over 65 year olds in Australia and NSW

(NB: figures are the same for both the national and state average)



General statistics for the Greek community (ABS Census 2006)

- There are 109 988 people born in Greece in Australia and 252 226 Greek speakers.
- Half the Greeks in Australia live in Victoria (54 325 born in Greece; 117 876 speak Greek).
- A third live in NSW (i.e. 35 050 people born in Greece; 86 157 Greek speakers).
- A quarter of people in Australia are born overseas; 16% of people in Australia speak a language other than English (LOTE).
- Greek ranks 2nd in languages other than English spoken at home in Australia (after Italian) and fourth in NSW (after the Chinese languages, Arabic and Italian).
- 90% of Greeks in NSW live in Sydney; and only 2-4% live in the Illawarra or Hunter SLAs.

Distribution of Greeks

- Of the Greeks in Sydney, (all ages), 14% are in Eastern Sydney, 9% are in Western Sydney, and 6% in Northern Sydney.
- Almost half the Greeks (45%) in Eastern Sydney live in the LGA of Randwick and a further 20% each in the Botany and Sydney LGAs.
- Among the overseas born, those born in Greece rank 2nd and 4th in Botany and Randwick LGAs respectively.
- A third of Greeks in Western Sydney live in Blacktown; a further 20% live in each LGA of Holroyd and Parramatta.
- Half the people born in Greece in the Northern Sydney region live in either Ryde or Willoughby LGAs.
- 70% of Illawarra's Greeks live in the Wollongong LGA.
- Approximately 60% of Greeks in the Hunter live in the Newcastle LGA. A further 24% live in the Lake Macquarie LGA.

Ranking – Greek Language

- Greek ranks in the top five languages spoken at home other than English in Eastern Sydney, the Illawarra, and Hunter regions, and in the top ten languages in the Northern Sydney and Western Sydney regions.
- Greek ranks first in languages spoken (other than English) in Botany LGA, where almost half the people speak a language other than English.
- 7% of LOTE speakers in the Hunter speak Greek.

Proficiency in English of Greeks

- In Botany, Randwick and Sydney LGAs, about a third (31-39%) of those born in Greece are *not proficient* in English.
 - In Ryde and Willoughby (where the majority of Greeks in Northern Sydney live) almost a quarter of those born in Greece (23%) are *NOT* proficient English speakers.
 - In all the Western Sydney LGAs (except Baulkham Hills) 25-35% of people born in Greece are not proficient in English.
 - Almost a third (30%) of the people born in Greece in the Wollongong LGA are NOT proficient English speakers.
 - In the Newcastle LGA, 26% of Greek people are not proficient in English.
- In the regions analysed (Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney, Western Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle), a quarter to a third of Greek speakers are not proficient in English.

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES – Findings from CACP Waiting Lists

(Excerpts from *Analysis of Findings of the Greek Aged Population*, Greek Welfare Centre, May 2008)

“The findings show that Greek specific CACP packages are effective in maintaining people at home and in meeting the program standards.”

The long waiting times for placement of referrals is because prospective clients are unwilling to access mainstream service providers and prefer to wait for a Greek specific package to become available.

“The long waiting times [for prospective clients] is further compounded because of the security of tenure of CACP clients. Once a client is on the program, they are likely to stay on for a very long time. With no additional Greek specific places being available, those waiting are waiting for longer and longer.

“In addition, Greek-speaking clients are reluctant to enter low care facilities and will remain living at home until they die or until entry to a high care facility is the only option. This makes it more difficult for a CACP place to become available and adds to a lengthy wait on the waiting list.

“A significant number of clients (approx 20%) have a diagnosis of dementia and these are the ones who are likely to enter a high care facility when the family, even with the assistance of community care, is no longer able to accommodate the increasing and complex needs of the client.” (p.3)

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES – Findings from CACP Exited Clients

These figures confirm the qualitative findings that Greek speaking people will only enter a residential facility as a last resort; they do not want to enter a low care facility and will persevere at home for as long as possible.

Furthermore, these figures confirm the findings that Greek people are unwilling to access mainstream service providers. Because there are no Greek specific EACH or EACH-D packages, Greek clients choose to remain on a Greek specific CACP package although they may reach a higher level of need.

While attesting to the success of the community care program (low exit rate) it is placing increasing pressure on limited Greek specific community care places as elderly Greek people wait for a vacancy from a linguistically and culturally appropriate service provider such as the Greek Welfare Centre.

QUANTITATIVE STUDIES – Findings from MDS Data

These figures are overwhelming support for the success of ethno-specific centre based day care as a form of respite.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS – Community Questionnaires

The figures below come from questionnaires answered by 475 Greek people across six Sydney regions (West, North, Inner West, South West, St George, East), the Illawarra and Hunter.

Nearly three quarters of the participants (74%) were over 70 years of age. Most of the participants were female (64%). The majority (90%) were born in either Greece or Cyprus before migrating to Australia. Others were born in Egypt, Turkey, Russia, or Albania. Twelve were Australian born.

As expected, the patterns of migration reveal that a majority (81%) of people arrived in Australia in the post-war period (1945-1969). Most of the others (13%) arrived after 1970.

Almost all (82%) the participants spoke only Greek at home, and an additional 14% spoke English as well. Sixty four percent said they spoke “a little English” or “not at all” while 36% stated their English as being either “good” or “very good”.

Nearly all the people mentioned that they reside in either a house or unit (98%); the others were in housing commission.

Nearly half (42%) the participants live alone. The remaining people live with either their spouse or other family members.

When asked whether they had utilised any services in the past six months, 70% said they had not. Of those who utilised a service it was Home Care, CACP, podiatry, or interpreting. The overwhelming majority of those who used a service (86%) said they found it to be “adequate.”

In answer to the question: “What is the role of the Greek Welfare Centre in helping the elderly,” many reiterated the question stating simply that the Greek Welfare Centre “should help the elderly” and this was because it was considered to be a linguistically and culturally appropriate service provider. Therefore, some mentioned the advocacy role they perceived of the Greek Welfare Centre in promoting the needs of the elderly and in accessing government services on their behalf.

They were generally pleased with the services of the Centre to elderly Greeks “who do not know English.” They also said they liked the “company” provided by attending the day care groups and that the groups put them in contact with others who speak the same language and with which they can share “common issues” because of their ethnic affiliation. In addition, they mentioned that they would go to the Centre to seek assistance if their children could not help them because the Greek Welfare Centre was a place with which they could identify because of their language and culture.

When asked what services they needed from the Greek Welfare Centre, the most common recurring and consistent theme was the need for more activities to reduce their isolation and, in particular, they wanted transport to and from the groups and to be taken on excursions (even week-long excursions).

Another prominent theme was to be helped at home with activities of daily living – housework, help with shopping, transport to doctors’ appointments, and gardening. They also spoke about the importance of religion and wanted assistance with transport to the cemetery and church.

The need for assistance with interpreting was often mentioned as was access to lawyers (e.g. to make their wills). The issue of the difficult economic climate was brought up and the consequent financial hardship they were experiencing.

In summary, “I will stay in my home with the help from the Greek Welfare Centre,” “I am happy you exist,” “thank you very much.”

Key Findings

- The majority of the Greek speaking people surveyed were over 70 years of age, female, born in Greece or Cyprus, and migrated to Australia in the post-war years.
- The majority lives in their own home (house or unit) but nearly half live alone.
- There was an obvious lack of access to services. Only 30% of participants had accessed a service in the past six months, which they described as “adequate.”
- Nearly two thirds have poor English language proficiency. This significantly contributed to their sense of isolation.
- They repeatedly reiterated the importance of the day care centres provided by the Greek Welfare Centre in alleviating their loneliness and wanted even more such services.
- Their religious identity was intertwined with their culture.
- Community transport emerged as a significant need.
- There was a need for assistance with activities of daily living to enable them to remain at home. Generally, these fell within the range of services provided by Community Aged Care Packages.
- The Greek Welfare Centre was seen as playing an important role in meeting their needs because it is a linguistically and culturally appropriate service provider. Consequently, they also wanted the Greek Welfare Centre to advocate to government departments on their behalf.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS – Focus Groups

The focus groups were conducted with the same 475 participants that participated in answering the questionnaires across the six Sydney regions, the Illawarra and Newcastle.

When the focus groups participants were asked how they feel about ageing, they expressed an inner sense of contentment at having lived “a full and happy life” and having “children and grandchildren.” However, there was also a significant amount of concern saying ageing was “hard”, “difficult”, and they were “scared of being alone.” One person summed it up as feeling “unsure with what the future held now that they were losing their independence and mobility.” Their difficulties were due to their frailty, isolation, language barriers, feeling old and depressed, not having contact with others, and losing people around them.

Responses to where they would like to live as they age were consistently the same across all the groups and regions. They expressed the desire to remain in their own home as they grew older. They said they would be able to achieve this through the help of their family and the “Government” by providing community services to assist them to remain in their own home.

Others, realising that remaining in their own home may not be possible, said they would like to live with their children or other family members instead of going to a nursing home. However, they realised that their children were busy with their own lives and this concerned them. Discussion about nursing homes led to strong emotions and many said they would do everything in their power to avoid going to a nursing home. “I would rather die than be placed in a nursing home” was a typical response. Only a few participants conceded that they would go to a nursing home if their children could not look after them.

When asked what kind of help they will need as they age, many said assistance with activities of daily living such as help with shopping, cleaning, cooking, transportation to doctors, and generally “home help.” Many mentioned that they would like a personal care worker to assist them with their daily care needs and that the Government would provide this assistance. The Greek Welfare Centre was mentioned as a preferred provider for these services as it could provide Greek speaking carers.

When asked where they would go if they needed help, there were a variety of responses including the local Greek priest, the Greek Welfare Centre, doctor, the hospital or Centrelink. Others said they did not know where to go and they would turn to their children for help. In responding to this question, many mentioned the added difficulty of not being able to speak English.

Key Findings

- Greek speaking elderly are deeply concerned about their future as they age. This concern has to do with issues of frailty, isolation, loneliness and loss and grief.
- They expressed the desire to remain living in their own home as they age and acknowledged the need for community care services to achieve this (by assisting with tasks of daily living).
- Residential placement (high care) was seen as a last resort; low care was not even mentioned.
- While children and grandchildren are their pride and joy, it was uncertain if they would be able to care for them as they grew old. If children could not help, many would turn to Greek service providers for assistance such as their local Greek priest, or the Greek Welfare Centre. Others mentioned going to their doctor (who is likely to be Greek), the hospital, or Centrelink.
- Many participants were concerned at their lack of English language proficiency and wanted Greek speaking workers to assist them. The Greek Welfare Centre was acknowledged as an appropriate provider because of its Greek carers.
- The role of the Greek Welfare Centre included the need to advocate to government for increased funding for culturally appropriate services and to provide direct service provision to the frail aged to enable them to remain living in their homes.