

# Foreword

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) is one of Australia's four government-recognised Learned Academies and consists of an elected fellowship of more than 550 of Australia's leading social science researchers. Disciplines represented by the Academy's Fellows include Accounting, Anthropology, Demography, Economic History, Economics, Education, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Management, Marketing, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Social Medicine, Sociology and Statistics.

ASSA promotes high-quality research and scholarly cooperation across the social science disciplines in Australia and our region. ASSA strongly supports cross-sectoral collaboration with the other three Learned Academies (The Australian Academy of the Humanities, The Australian Academy of Science, and The Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering).

ASSA is particularly concerned with providing social science knowledge and advice to government on issues of national importance. Social scientists have much to contribute to the evidence base for the development of sound public policy, and as a peak body ASSA is well-placed to make independent, expert recommendations to government.

Every November ASSA convenes its feature event, the ASSA Annual Symposium. In 2014, the Annual Symposium took up the questions and opportunities of 'Population Ageing and Australia's Future'. The symposium was convened in partnership with the ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR). CEPAR's strength lies in its integrated approach, and its high-level expertise drawn from social science disciplines. CEPAR brings together researchers, government and industry to address one of the major social challenges of the 21st century: an ageing population. CEPAR's mission is to

produce research of the highest quality that informs product and service development, and enlighten the public policy debate. The result is dedicated to improving people's wellbeing throughout the full course of their lives. CEPAR recognises the need to build a new generation of researchers in tune with the best of global standards through an appreciation of the multidisciplinary nature of the issue. The Centre is an Australian collaboration between the University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney and The Australian National University and receives important support from government, industry and international university partners.

This volume reflects the contributions to the 2014 ASSA Annual Symposium, updated through 2015 and 2016, which aimed to highlight the latest research and its implications for the long-term challenges and opportunities of an ageing Australia. Leading scholars were invited to present their multidisciplinary expertise and evidence bases for broader public scrutiny and debate on population ageing and the implications for public affairs and policy development. It summarised recent Australian and international research on demographic trends and their likely impact. The research was not just an update of earlier work, but presented new perspectives on the change that is occurring to life-spans and how individuals and societies may adjust to that change. The symposium emphasised the positive aspects involved in expanding life-spans, and the potential for enhancing individual and societal wellbeing. This volume brings together the symposium presentations with updates to 2016, and provides a coherent, scholarly analysis of the significant policy issues facing Australia.

Participation in the symposium extended beyond the ASSA to include policymakers, national peak bodies, and community representatives who added to the diversity of informed views. A subsequent invited Policy Roundtable reflected on the symposium papers and discussions in order to deepen policy engagement between the Academy and government practitioners. The roundtable focused on strategies and policy approaches to improve individual and societal wellbeing in the light of population ageing. The presentations and papers explored the scale and impact of societal ageing; global, regional and Australian perspectives; health and social wellbeing; and the responses required of government, families and individuals. Chapter authors were

encouraged to consider the symposium and roundtable discussions when finalising their contributions in order to communicate with wider public and policy audiences as well as academic researchers.

Contributors draw on research evidence and policy directions across the full range of the dimensions of individual and societal ageing including opportunities for enhancing capacities over the life-span and the wellbeing of future generations. Participants at the symposium and roundtable considered responses to the diversity and social inequalities that arise in terms of gender, socioeconomic resources, ethnicity and geographical location. They also considered national directions for action by individuals and families, governments, businesses and not-for-profit organisations. This includes strategies for increasing social engagement and health and wellbeing as well as achieving secure incomes, organising and financing health care, gaining suitable housing and managing intergenerational relations. Australian governments have a further focus on the fiscal implications of population ageing. The overall aim of the symposium and this volume is to stimulate and inform a deeper consideration of the impact of an ageing population and options for positive responses in the medium- to long-term for Australia's economy, social cohesion and security.

The primary contributors to this volume are, of course, the chapter authors. Each brought their own particular expertise to the symposium and the breadth of their combined contributions provide an impressive account of the current status and future prospects for our ageing population.

This volume would not have been possible without the redoubtable contributions of its three editors—ASSA Fellows Hal Kendig, John Piggott and Peter McDonald—with assistance from Murray Radcliffe. They convened the symposium, participated strongly in the roundtable, contributed chapters to the volume and, of course, edited it.

Through the efforts of the editors and their colleagues we see quite clearly how social science research can help to shape this nation. It draws together research from many disciplines—including Sociology, Demography, Economics and Psychology—to produce a rich assessment of the impact of population ageing in Australia and provide sound, practical evidence for future policy development.

I would particularly like to thank the Hon Susan Ryan for her keynote address to the symposium about older peoples views, attitudes and age rights.

In addition to the presenters and their teams, whose members are represented through the authorship of the individual chapters in this volume, the Chair of the Public Forums and Communications Committee of ASSA, Peter Spearritt, with support from the ASSA secretariat including the Executive Director Dr John Beaton and Ms Sunita Kumar, provided sage advice and oversight to the organisation of the symposium.

I would also like to thank the Social Sciences Editorial Board, in particular, Marian Sawyer and Francis Bongiorno, as well as copyeditor Freya Job for her invaluable assistance in bringing this manuscript to publication. The valuable intellectual input of all of these people to the symposium is gratefully acknowledged.

Professor Glenn Withers AO FASSA  
President  
The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

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