

SUBMISSION TO  
CARING FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS  
Productivity Commission Issues Paper

PREAMBLE

This submission is presented on behalf of HANZA – Homeshare Australia & New Zealand Alliance.

The HANZA Alliance was formed to further the development of a unified approach to Homeshare throughout Australia.

Homeshare is a new concept in this country and its services are very much in tune with the aims of the Caring for Older Australians issues paper.

HOMESHARE

This program matches older people and people with a disability, who are looking for companionship and some help around the home, with people of integrity who are able to provide this assistance and contribute to household expenses in return for free accommodation.

The Householder provides a bedroom and shared facilities. In exchange, the Homesharer provides approximately 10 hours per week of practical assistance such as cooking, cleaning, shopping etc. See Appendix 1

The most important feature of the arrangement is security at night for the Householder, a service not provided by any other government program.

HANZA

Evolved from the Wesley Homeshare Program, which is the only well established program in the country. It has been in operation for ten years and is remarkably successful.

It became evident over time that other organizations throughout the country were eager to develop their own program, having recognized the benefits of this initiative. Wesley Homeshare assists these aspiring programs with documentation, research results, practical help and ongoing support. This assistance has now been formalized by the creation of HANZA, which provides a newsletter and telephone support.

HANZA now has nine members throughout the country and in New Zealand. Some programs are in actual operation and some are organizations trying to establish their own Homeshare program.

At this time, none of the programs are adequately funded. Most have no funding of any kind. They are operating as a burden on existing programs – usually on a trial basis.

All are within not-for-profit, well recognized organizations. See Appendix 2

All have signed a “Working together “ document that aims to fulfill our aims and objectives.

The objectives of HANZA are to work in a cooperative way:

To achieve recognition and acceptance of the Homeshare Program as a valid service in the aged care and disability service systems.

To achieve a long term sustainable financial model

To promote the Homeshare Program Model

To facilitate the establishment throughout Australia and New Zealand of Homeshare Programs, auspiced by non-profit organizations with close ties to their local communities.

See Appendix 3

## DISCUSSION

The Homeshare program fills a gap in services to older people and people with a disability in this country. While it is not for everyone, it is a cost effective, efficient professional service for which there is no substitute.

Benefits for older people are innumerable: low costs, security, choices, flexibility, social connectedness.

For government there are also many benefits: low costs, lower consumption of scarce resources and, we would argue, health benefits for the community.

Benefits to Homesharers are also considerable, but not an issue for this report.

Homeshare is an example of the barriers to innovation posed by inflexible funding guidelines. Here is a program that ticks all the boxes for new aged care design with which government has been challenging industry. We were asked for innovation. When presented with Homeshare the cry went up’ “But it doesn’t fit our program”.

## RECOMMENDATION

We believe that there should be funding for HANZA, (as well as for all viable Homeshare programs) to promote a national profile that will maintain standards and encourage development of Homeshare.

This funding would enable the establishment of a national secretariat, the role of which would further the objectives noted above.

Carmel Hurst

Member, Wesley Homeshare Advisory Committee