SOUTHERN CROSS CARE BREAKFAST

Time: 7:30am – 9:00am
Date: Friday 12 June, 2015
Place: Adelaide Convention Centre, City Room
• Good morning

• My name is David Lloyd and I’m Vice Chancellor and President of the University of South Australia.

• This morning I want to talk with you about Baby Boomers:
  o Who wanted to make love, and not war, and so brought an end to the conflict in Vietnam;
  o Who wanted women to have minds and lives of their own;
  o Who wanted full employment, affordable housing and the freedom to retire rich and join motor cycle clubs.

• Now, to borrow from the poet Dylan Thomas, they refuse to go gently into that good night.

• And you, we, all of us in this room are devoting our considerable energies and resources to help them rage, rage against the dying of the light.
• That’s what happens when you are born in such great numbers that the rest of society moves aside to let you pass.

• Adelaide’s former thinker-in-residence, Alexandre Kalache coined the word – gerontoescence – which is a way of describing the baby boomers’ insistence on active ageing – or living well and ageing at a time and place of their own choosing.

• The World Health Organisation defines Active Ageing as the process of optimising the opportunities for health, participation, life-long learning and security in order to enhance the quality of life as individuals age.

• And it has fallen to all of us to make that possible.

• Now, I know the people in this room are doing some world leading work caring for older people and improving their lives.
I want to share with you this morning, some of the initiatives that we are concentrating on at the University of South Australia, to help you do the work that you’ve chosen to do.

You probably all know this: the first old age pension was instituted in 1881 by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and it was strictly for people aged 70 and over.

Only three percent of the population ever lived long enough to collect it.

It was based on a person’s then life course;

- From aged 0 to 10/11 was devoted to learning (they appeared to have not too much use for university education);
- Aged 11 to 60 was for working; and
60 to 70 was for retirement – after which, I think, you were expected to do the right thing by the state and die.

- If you survived retirement to reach past your 70th birthday, then a pension was available to help you rage against Dylan Thomas’s dying of the light.

- At the end of the 20th century, life expectancy for each person had increased by 35 years.

- By 2050 the number of people aged over 60 will double to more than 2 billion worldwide;

- 22 per cent of the global population will be entering gerontolescence and demanding services that keep them well and happy.

- And that so-called ‘grey vote’ will make sure they get them.
• In South Australia we have the highest proportion of older people on mainland Australia.

• Boys born in South Australia now will live on average until they’re around 80 years old;

• Girls will outlast them by four years.

• At the 2011 census, 22.3 per cent of South Australia’s total population of 1.66 million was aged 60 or over.

• The national average was 19.6 per cent.

• Almost one-third of all South Australians – nearly 560,000 people – were aged over 50.

• Within that group there are three distinct groups of people:
  o What they call The Greatest Generation – born between 1901-1925;
The Silent Generation born 1925 through to 1942-45; and
The Baby Boomers, brought to life post World War 11, were born between 1946 and 1964.
Then there’s the likes of me – watching to see what happens.

And South Australia – and everyone in this room – has made it their business to take good care of all of them, creating opportunities for older people to lead good lives and taking care of them when those good lives come to their inevitable close.

The State Government has made ageing a priority, focusing its considerable resources on ensuring the health, welfare and security of older people;
on improving their social and economic productivity;
and by building an all-ages friendly state.
• Not just for the benefit of the people living here, but to help create new businesses in the State and the nation.

• Accelerating the development and delivery of world-class healthcare, ageing and retirement products and services will not only provide better health outcomes for South Australians

• but will lead to the development of new industries, businesses and jobs which will include the participation of older people.

• This gives South Australian businesses an advantage in the development of assistive technologies, medical devices, smarter housing and retirement living options,

• as well as innovative goods and services that meet the needs and wants of older Australians.
• This growth of expertise offers all sorts of export opportunities to international markets, in particular the burgeoning middle classes of Asia and the Indian sub-Continent.

• The University of South Australia is using its considerable resources building partnerships to help provide the solutions the sector needs.

• And that often means thinking completely laterally and changing the expectations we have of ourselves.

• For instance, we’re able to develop cross-disciplinary expertise in areas that become very creative to contribute solutions for the aged care sector.

• In fact, we have some of the best minds in their fields researching across a range of areas, from lawyers and designers, to pharmaceutical and linguistics experts.
• UniSA’s Law School has focused on the rights of older people from a basic human rights perspective.

• Professor Wendy Lacey, Dean and Head of our School of Law, is a founding member and co-convenor of the Australian Research Network on Law and Ageing.

• She is also a member of the Minister for Health's Steering Committee for the Review of South Australia's 2007 Policy to Prevent the Abuse of Older South Australians.

• According to her, ridding the law of ageist and paternalistic attitudes towards older people is critical.

• Giving people the freedom to determine their own lives is a fundamental human right and one that can quickly disappear if paternalistic, yet well meaning, assumptions are made about what is in the best interest of an older person.
• One tangible step being taken is to develop age-friendly policies in local government.

• The University of South Australia is working in partnership with the City of Unley and the City of Salisbury to develop new Age-friendly Strategies for both cities, based on the World Health Organisation’s Global Age-friendly Cities initiative.

• This initiative has been adopted by communities in both the developed and the developing world as an innovative approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

• Using a collaborative research approach, the Age-friendly Cities program actively seeks to engage older people, their carer givers and service providers in identifying the features of the community that support, or hinder, age-friendliness across eight key domains:
  • outdoor spaces and buildings;
  • respect and social inclusion;
• transportation;
• civic participation and employment;
• housing;
• communication and information;
• social participation; and
• community support and health services.

• The Age Friendly City Strategy supports positive and active ageing in the city and enables residents to ‘age in place’.

• The Memorandum of Understanding we now have with the cities of Unley and Salisbury mean the Age Friendly Strategy can now be expanded to include student placements which underpin the strategy’s diverse aspects, including transport, housing, social inclusion and communication.

• But most importantly, it recognises that older people are a heterogeneous population.
• The phrase, *nothing about us without us*, though originating in Central European political traditions and forming the roots of democracy, is more apt now when applied to disability activism.

• And a reminder to those who legislate for older people, or who make decisions on their behalf that living, breathing human beings are at the heart of these decisions and have basic human rights to equity and respect.

• We’ve had some success exporting this idea to Hong Kong in a new project with Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
• ‘Sustainable Planning Criteria for Age-friendly Precincts (AFP) in the New Development Areas of Hong Kong’ is research that will identify a planning and design framework for new precincts that enable active and engaged ageing for Hong Kong residents, which will support urban policy formulation.

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• The aged care industry in Australia is facing unprecedented growth;

• not only is the population ageing, but the shortage of skilled personnel is driving recruitment overseas.

• That means a significant increase in the number of aged care workers for whom English is a second language.
• UniSA’s Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, our Asia-Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety along with Safework SA and Helping Hand collaborated on research into different linguistic and cultural practices among a diverse working group of carers.

• The findings revealed that it wasn’t just language differences that created barriers to understanding, but the combination of linguistic and cultural differences which led to assumptions that presented greater challenges.

• The research identifies ways in which diverse linguistic and cultural groups can work together to develop safe work practices and has led to a raft of recommendations for human resources management policies in aged care environments.
• And if you’re looking for a bespoke solution to your problems, we have a transdisciplinary team of researchers, artists, designers and architects who work with industry and service providers to develop environments, health facilities and products that enable health and wellbeing in our communities.

• The research cluster is supported by our matchstudio with whom many of you have worked, which is an interdisciplinary research and professional practice studio based in the School of Art, Architecture and Design at UniSA.

• Last year UniSA developed a partnership with Hills Industries to develop innovative product design and technology expertise for a wide range of industries, from aged care and health, to security and safety.
• Since then our Industrial Design staff and graduates have developed a new nurse call pendant for people in aged residential care.

• It’s designed for people with arthritis or similar medical conditions that affect their dexterity.

• Our Sansom Institute for Health Research has many different projects designed to promote active ageing.

• In a world first trial, special effects from the Australian Dance Theatre’s international hit show Proximity are being adapted to help in rehabilitation for people with stroke and brain injury.
• Associate Professor Susan Hillier joined with Australia’s leading contemporary dance company in ‘Proximity Clinical’ – a research project using Proximity’s video engineering system in a clinical setting.

• Evidence tells us that vision is the sense least likely to be impaired post-stroke.

• So, providing visual feedback to patients through this technology might provide a firmer possibility of positive neuroplastic changes,

• with the patient able to see clearly on screen how they currently move and what simple things they can do to improve their movement.

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• But, despite our best attempts at encouraging active ageing, people do end up in hospitals and nursing homes and their need for our support continues unabated.

• Almost one-third of those aged between 65 and 74 need help with personal and everyday activities;

• 86 per cent of those aged 85 and over need the same kind of help and they are much more likely to have chronic health problems.

• UniSA’s Sansom Institute is doing some outstanding work on improving nursing practice, led by Associate Professor Kay Price, to better the outcomes of people living in residential care.
• It has a lot to do with the concept of compressed morbidity, taking a person-centred approach to keeping people engaged and happy, entertained and connected and squeezing the time horizon between the onset of chronic illness and death.

• Libby Roughead is a Research Professor at the Sansom.

• Her research focuses on quantifying the extent of problems with medicines use, identifying the extent of adverse reactions to medicines, testing solutions for solving problems with medicines use and evaluating improvements in health care.

• She’s the Queen of Big Data. And she’s used it to discover that life was so much simpler during the 1980s.

• Then, people only had one chronic illness and it was treated with one medicine.
o 45 per cent of people had no illness at all;
o 45 per cent of people had only one or two illnesses; and
o Only 10 per cent of people suffered with three or more.

• What a difference 30 years makes.

• The prevalence of multiple chronic illnesses – co-morbidities - in Australia has risen four-fold.
  o Now, 25 per cent of people have no illness;
  o 36 per cent have one or two illnesses; and
  o 39 percent have three or more.

• The fact that we’re getting better at diagnosis has compounded our need to manage intervention.
• We have started using multiple medicines and we are increasingly focused on using medicines to prevent illness.

• So we’re using more medicines,

• We’re using them for longer; and

• We’re using multiple medicines together.

• What could possibly go wrong?

• Libby’s research focuses on quantifying the extent of problems with medicines use,

• identifying the extent of adverse reactions to medicines,

• testing solutions for solving problems with medicines use and

• evaluating improvements in health care.
• But the good news is that other researchers at UniSA have made a groundbreaking molecular discovery that could have a major impact on the search for a cure for Alzheimer’s Disease.

• This disease, as you would all know, accounts for nearly 70 per cent of all dementia cases which affects a staggering 44 million people around the world.

• More than 340,000 Australians are living with dementia and that figure is expected to rise to 900,000 by 2050.

• But, scientists from the University of South Australia, along with colleagues from Third Military Medical University in Chongqing, China, have discovered the drug Edaravone can alleviate the progressive cognitive deficits of Alzheimer’s Disease.
• According to Professor Xin-Fu Zhou (SHIN-FU JOO), UniSA’s Research Chair in Neurosciences, the discovery of one of the mechanisms of Alzheimer’s Disease opens the door to further research into potential treatments.

• And this for a disease that has no cure. Yet.

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• While I was still at Trinity College in Dublin I was on two boards that had a big impact on understanding the aged sector and developing products and services to suit it.

• First there was TILDA – the Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing - a large-scale, nationally representative, longitudinal study on ageing in Ireland, the overarching aim of which is to make Ireland the best place in the world to grow old.
• TILDA collects information on all aspects of health, economic and social circumstances from people aged 50 and over in a series of data collection waves once every two years.

• I was also on the board of TRIL, an offshoot of Trinity Research and Innovation,

• it was a strategic partnership with Intel and developed novel sensing technologies to support increased independent living for the elderly and infirm.

• The TRIL Centre focused on three areas of clinical research with the greatest impact on older people’s ability to live independently:
  
  o Falls prevention;
  o Cognitive function; and
  o Social connection.
• That’s where I believe the greatest opportunities lie for the South Australian economy.

• They lie in technological innovation.

• With the highest proportion of older people in mainland Australia we have a ready-made market for the development of assistive technologies that will improve the independence of frail older people and help them to remain safely in their homes for as long as possible.

• Robotics have been ubiquitous for decades in home services such as lawn mowing and vacuuming.

• Now the Japanese have developed a robotic dog that acts as a companion animal that offers company, responds to love and doesn’t drop hair on the carpet;
- GPS tracking devices that will help dementia patients who become disoriented and confused and wander off looking for home;

- Smart toilets that can measure blood pressure, body fat percentage, heart rate and urine sugar;

- Medication reminders that will store drugs and give verbal prompts when they need to be taken;

- Along with all the other technologies that promote independence such as screen readers, voice recognition software, talking timers, eye control systems and strobe light smoke alarms which are amongst the 25,000 assistive technology devices currently available.

- Every single one of you in this room is working hard to create an environment where your clients’ needs, whether for active ageing or end-of-life care, are balanced with their needs for personal freedom.
• You have the expertise within the market.

• The care you give is amongst the best in the world;

• It is you, all of you, who know the products and services that your clients need most.

• And we want to partner with all of you to bring these products and services to life, not just to improve the lives on the people you care for, but to build a sustainable innovative, manufacturing base with a ready-made market not just in South Australia but throughout the nation and the world.

• It would be nice to say of South Australia that it, like Ireland, is the best place to grow old in the world.
• I’m looking forward to working more closely with you to make sure that The Greatest Generation, The Silent Generation and all those Baby Boomers live independently, in dignity and still connected to their communities.

• Until they do go gently into the good night that Dylan Thomas wrote about.

• Thank you.