

# Hospital avoidance through to Smart Home environments – evaluation of two Australian projects.

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Ageing of populations and its attendant challenges is a phenomenon that is not confined to developed countries and will be a major international issue for the coming decades. It is not only the increasing numbers of people requiring care in the future but also social changes that will increase pressures on aged care and health services. Issues will include workforce participation of seniors themselves, family carers of the frail elderly as well as addressing the shortages of informal and professional carers. The demands of ageing Babyboomers are likely to be different to those of previous generations and there will be a need for social and policy changes to support independence and consumer-driven care.

There is particular interest in technology to assist active ageing and aged care. This will extend productive lives, enhance independence, reduce avoidable hospital admissions and facilitate care to be delivered according to consumer preferences for place and time, and increasingly in the home. In the USA, the UK and Europe governments are passing legislation and providing major incentives to facilitate the large scale adoption of telehealth assistive technologies. In the USA the Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) (<http://www.agingtech.org/index.aspx>) was established in 2003 to lead the national charge to develop and deploy emerging technologies that can improve the ageing experience in America.

Amongst the many projects and research underway around the world are systems to divert patients from hospital admission and the development of Smart Homes. This presentation will discuss an evaluation of a hospital avoidance project in Australia and an evaluation of the Queensland Smart Home Initiative.

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