1. CONTEXT
This program of research commenced in 2002 when LGBTI ageing was just beginning to be recognised as needing attention by researchers, service providers, and policy makers. Very little research had been published on this topic in Australia, although lesbian and gay gerontology had been emerging as a field of research in the US since the late 1970s. The research occurred in the context of wider reforms in relation to LGBTI rights – including the removal of legal barriers to those in same-sex relationships by the Rudd–Gillard Labor governments. It also occurred in the context of reforms to the aged care system with its increasing emphasis on consumerism, personalisation and choice.

2. SUMMARY OF IMPACT
Increased community awareness: Throughout the 2000s and 2010s this program of research occurred alongside the formation of – and was able to influence – working groups on LGBTI ageing, initiated by LGBTI community organisations and other bodies such as the NSW Anti–Discrimination Board, Uniting Care, and the Australian Association of Gerontology.

Changes to policy and legislation: The research was cited in submissions to public inquiries (e.g. Productivity Commission Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians), informed the development of the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy (National Strategy), and influenced the reform of the Sex Discrimination Act.

Impact on service delivery: The development of the National Strategy and the reform of the Sex Discrimination Act set new standards for service providers for older lesbians and gay people in the ageing/ aged care and health fields to provide: inclusive, LGBTI–friendly services, and to restrict use of discriminatory practices.

3. RESEARCH UNDERPINNING IMPACT
1: Older gay men and social workers talking about sexual identity (2002). This was an initial pilot project on how older gay men want social workers to talk with them about their sexual identity in assessment processes and social workers’ response to these views. It involved focus groups and identified differing perspectives on the extent to which sexual identity should be discussed openly, with older gay men highlighting need for privacy and trust in their relationships with professionals.

2: Sexual identity in health and aged care (2004–2006). This involved qualitative narrative research on the experiences of 14 older lesbian and gay people accessing health and aged care services, as well as expectations for the future. Concerns were identified about heteronormativity, direct and indirect discrimination, and lack of options for future care. The findings were drawn upon in training programs and information resources.

3: Diversity and older people’s care networks (2008–2009). The project sought to examine older lesbian and gay people’s care networks, drawing on concept of communities of practice. It involved in-depth interviews with older lesbian and gay people, although not all interviews were completed due to staffing issues.

4: LGBTI people’s experience and expectations of ageing and aged care (2008–2010). The Queensland Association for Health Communities (now QuAC) surveyed 443 LGBT Queenslanders on their experience with aged care services and expectations for their own ageing. Prof Hughes conducted the analysis, drafted the report, conducted further secondary analysis of 371 lesbians and gay men and published from the research, which identified that most were concerned that gender identity and sexuality would affect service delivery and many expected to be discriminated against. Concerns about social isolation and lack of appropriate accommodation were also identified. Findings informed QAHC training material and have been used widely in other training material, and the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy.

5: LGBTI people and end of life care (2012–2014). Focus groups were held with older LGBTI people and community workers, followed by a survey of 305 LGBT people in NSW on attitudes towards end of life care and advance care planning. The research demonstrated limited knowledge of legal rights and relatively low take up of end of life legal options. Information resources for LGBTI community organisations were generated.

6: Health and wellbeing of LGBTI older people (2012–2014). A survey of health and wellbeing of 312 LGBTI older people (aged 50+) across NSW, funded jointly by Evergreen Life Care and Southern Cross University, was undertaken. Findings revealed higher levels of psychological distress and loneliness than is typically found in the general population. Older lesbians were found to have lower physical health status than typical for women. Barriers to health and other services were identified. The findings informed the work of Evergreen Life Care and led to development of personal training programs for LGBTI older people.

7: Representations of LGBT ageing in Australia and UK (SCU, University of Surrey 2015). This was a small study that examined cultural representations of LGBTI ageing and LGBTI older people in 40 UK and Australian websites. Using membership categorisation analysis, it revealed constraint and celebration narratives and highlighted the limitations of framing LGBTI ageing and older people in homogenous ways.

8: Reducing health disparities for older LGBTI Australians (La Trobe University, UNE, University of Washington, COTA Australia, National LGBTI Health Alliance, Carers Australia, SANE Australia 2016–2020) This involved a national survey of health and wellbeing of older LGBTI Australians (aged 60+), followed by qualitative interviews with older LGBTI people, and focus groups with service providers. Resources will be produced for policy makers and service providers. In progress.

4. DETAILS OF IMPACT
Approach to impact: This program of research aimed from the start to influence service delivery and professional practice, with the ultimate goal of improving the social, cultural and material conditions of LGBTI older people. As a gay man, Prof Hughes had a personal stake in improving these conditions and both personal and professional connections with the communities and people the research sought to benefit. The approach to impact was to build and maintain relationships with community organisations and service providers so that their perspectives can inform the development of the research projects and so they can make use of the research findings. This has not always been straightforward, with some of the challenges including rapid turnover of staff in the community sector, lack of resources available to partner on research grant applications, and difficulties committing to a project that may take years to deliver outcomes. Impact mainly relates to 1) service provision, 2) policy and legislation, 3) public awareness.

Impact on public policy and legislation: Over the past 15 years there has been substantial change in Australia in each of these three areas regarding the recognition of LGBTI ageing and the needs of LGBTI older people. The chapter, “Towards the inquiry into aged care and beyond: the promise and challenge of a new era in LGBTI ageing”, traces these developments and notes the increasing institutionalisation of service and policy responses to LGBTI ageing. That is, what was once a primary concern of activists and researchers has moved to the centre-ground of aged care policy making and service delivery. This is evidenced by the recognition given to LGBTI ageing in the Productivity
Commission Report on Caring for Older Australians (2011), the subsequent Government response, the development of the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy, the national roll-out of LGBTI senstivity training to aged care providers, the inclusion of LGBTI seniors as a special needs group under the Aged Care Act, the funding of targeted services (e.g., community visitors programs, home-care packages) for LGBTI older people, and the current development of a new National LGBTI Aged Care Action Plan.

Submissions to public inquiries to influence policy and legislative reform
Submissions to a range of public inquiries have cited the research, including:
- Productivity Commission Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians – Submission 1, Submission 2, Submission 3, Submission 4
- National Safety and Quality Framework in Australian Health
- Senate Inquiry into the Consolidation of Anti-discrimination Laws – Submission 1, Submission 2,
- Human Rights Commission Consultation on Protection of Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation – Submission 1, Submission 2
- Inquiry into Palliative Care in Australia
- Inquiry into Planning Options and Services For People Ageding with a Disability
- Senate Inquiry into Suicide in Australia
- Inquiry into the Opportunities for Participation of Victorian Seniors

Findings re: discrimination and homophobia experienced by LGBTI older people (Project 1, 2) cited by Justice Michael Kirby in speech to Second World Congress on Adult Guardianship, 15 October 2012.

Findings re: impact of fear of discrimination on LGBTI older people’s preparedness to access services (Project 3) cited in: South Australian Strategy for the Inclusion of LGBTIQ People 2014–16; Australian Aged Care Quality Agency Newsletter May 2015,

Submission and evidence on discrimination faced by LGBTI older people and risks posed by current anti-discrimination legislation exemptions given to religious organisations providing aged care services – cited 5 times, including lengthy quotes, in Report by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee on Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-discrimination Bill 2012; full evidence included in Hansard 24 January 2013.

While not cited directly, the Report by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee on the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill 2013 referred generally to the evidence provided in the Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-discrimination Bill regarding the impact of exemptions for religious providers of aged care on LGBTI older people – this Amendment Bill removed these exemptions.

Four articles (from Projects 1, 2, 3, 4) were included in the key reading list in Australian Government’s National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy (2012).

Impact on service delivery: It is difficult to draw a straight line between the research and engagement activities and the changes in policy and practice. The research contributed to many of the seminars, forums, consultations and meetings that led to these developments. Most outputs identified implications for professional practice, service provision and policy reform, and most of the chapters were written with a focus on improving service delivery. For example, articles highlighted the need for training programs on LGBTI issues for aged care workers – this was a key outcome of the government’s response to the Productivity Commission Inquiry. As indicated below, findings from the research (and citations to it) have been included in reports by service providers, training material, professional associations’ position statements, and strategic planning documents.

Findings re: challenges of LGBTI older people meeting their health needs outside of metropolitan areas (Project 2) cited in: Marrickville Council GLBTIQ Open Forum, 17 March 2012.

Findings on the challenges facing LGBTI older people and service providers in negotiating privacy and sexuality (Project 1, 2) reported in GLBTI Retirement Association Inc Report on “Retirement Accommodation and Aged Care Issues for Non-heterosexual Populations” (2010).

Two articles on LGBTI people and end of life care planning (Project 5) listed as resources in VicHealth guidance on advance care planning, as well as on Psychiatry Advisor and Clinical Advisor websites.

Findings re: LGBTI older people’s difficulties accessing end of life care support and advance care planning (Project 5) were also cited in: Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Position Statement on “Recognising and Addressing the Mental Health Needs of the LGBTI Population” (2016).

Findings on health and wellbeing of LGBTI people aged 50+ (Project 6), including barriers to accessing services, reported in: South Eastern Sydney Local Health District advice on Caring for LGBTIQ People; ACON’s Health Outcome Strategy 2017–21 – Ageing, Carers South Australia Report on LGBTI Carers (2017), NCOSS Report on Poverty, Disadvantage and LGBTI People in NSW (2015).

Also reported in ACON’s Health Outcome Strategy 2017–21 – Ageing were findings on LGBTI people’s concerns about ageing, including lack of suitable accommodation, maintaining social networks and connections to community (Project 4).


Also reported in this Alzheimer’s Australia report were findings relating to the challenges facing transgender people in disclosing their gender history when in contact with end of life and aged care services from Project 5.

Project 5 referred to in ACON Training for Service Providers, and Projects 3 and 6 referred to in Carers Australia training material.

Impact on public awareness: While the change has not been measured, it seems likely that general public awareness of LGBTI ageing has increased over this period, probably reflecting increased awareness of the rights of LGBTI people generally, although the focus on marriage equality may have detracted from other critical issues facing LGBTI people, such as aged care service delivery.

Impact on quality of life for community members: Quality of life improvements from the research for LGBTI older community members are difficult to measure in the short term, and have not been directly explored in this program of research. It is noteworthy that high profile cultural positive changes have been occurring in recent years that recognise the rights of LGBTI people in Australia. The cumulative impact of this research and the broader cultural change has created unprecedented public awareness of the rights and experiences of LGBTI community members. Evidence beyond this research indicates that with the increasing inclusion and recognition, well-being for the LGBTI community members is enhanced.

5. ENGAGEMENT

Professional development and training

National

NSW
Hughes, M. (2003/2004) LGBTI Ageing and Community Services Delivery. Presented at: Lawson Community Health (27/09/04), Kingswood Community Centre (12/08/04), Penrith HACC Forum (05/08/04), Western Sydney Men’s Health Forum (16/08/04), ACON Roundtable on Ageing (27/03/03).


Queensland


Media and public awareness

Reports on the projects have been included in a range of blogs, newsletters, websites targeting the general public, including:

- Alzheimers Australia Newsletter, Summer 2009
- European Association of Palliative Care blog, July 2015
- Chisholm Health Ethics Bulletin, Autumn 2015
- Psychiatry Adviser, April 2017
- Organisation Intersex International Australia blog, January 2013
- COTA Qld blog on Marriage Equality, September 2017
- Carers NSW – LGBTI website
- Rainbow Tasmania GLBTI Equity and Inclusion website
- PallAged website on LGBTI individuals
- Aged Care Guide website
- Agility Communication website
- Aging Optimised Blog, February 2017
- Starts at 60 website, 2014
- Out in Perth magazine, February 2013
- We Are Gold Coast website.

Reports on Prof Hughes’ LGBTI ageing research and related commentary in media, including:

- Northern Star, November 2017
- Gizmodo, November 2017
- Business Insider Australia, November 2017
- Cosmos magazine, August 2017
- The Age, June 2017
- Brisbane Times, June 2017
- The Bay Area Reporter (US), June 2017
- ABC News, October 2015
- The Chronicle and associated papers, Nov 2014
- The Australian and associated papers, Nov 2014
- Sydney Morning Herald and associated papers, January 2013
- ABC News, Jan 2013
- The Age, May 2008


Reports for Industry

Industry research reports enhance access to research for policy makers and practitioners:


National engagement activities and industry partnerships: Prof Hughes has been actively engaged with the National LGBTI Health Alliance since its formation in 2007, and has been a member since individual members were allowed in 2009. Prof Hughes contributed to developing their programs on LGBTI ageing through involvement on the Ageing and Aged Care Reference Group (2011–2015) and through frequent interactions with Alliance Staff. Prof Hughes was involved in preparing the Alliance’s submissions to public inquiries, including drafting the submission on the Government’s Response to the Productivity Commission Inquiry, and actively participating in Alliance-led forums leading to the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy. Prof Hughes collaborated with the Alliance as a partner in Projects 6 and 8. As a member and fellow of the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Prof Hughes contributed to the Special Interest Group on LGBTI Ageing since it was formed in 2012. As part of this group the research contributed to developing the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy, preparing a special issue of the Australasian Journal on Ageing on LGBTI ageing, surveying LGBTI ageing researchers on their work, and preparing an AAG position paper on LGBTI ageing (in development). Prof Hughes also made submissions to public inquiries, such as the Review of the Accreditation Process for Residential Care Homes. In 2013 Prof Hughes gave evidence to the Senate Committee Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti–discrimination Bill.

New South Wales engagement activities and industry partnerships: From beginning this program of research at UNSW in 2002, Prof Hughes has consistently sought to engage with community organisations, service providers and government to develop the research questions and design, disseminate the findings, and generate awareness of the issues facing LGBTI older people. Project 1 was conducted in collaboration with ACON and the Mature Age Gays (MAG) group that they auspice. This included attending and presenting at MAG meetings. He maintained a relationship with ACON through membership of their Ageing Working Group (2006–08), contributions to developing their Healthy Ageing Strategy, assisting MAG survey its members, and attending and presenting at various ACON events. He also collaborated with ACON in Projects 2, 5, 6 and 8 (ACON is a partner organisation on this ARC Linkage project). Since moving to SCU (in 2010) Prof Hughes became involved in LGBTI ageing activities in the Northern Rivers region. This included membership in the LGBTI ageing interdisciplinary group (led by ACON) and the LGBTI Dementia Project Group (led by Alzheimers Association). Through membership of these groups he assisted in development of local material related to LGBTI ageing. In 2012 a grant of $10,000 was awarded from Evergreen Life Care (Gosford, NSW), which was matched by Southern Cross University, to investigate the health and wellbeing of LGBTI seniors in NSW (Project 6).

Queensland engagement activities and industry partnerships: After moving to UQ in 2008 Prof Hughes collaborated on Projects 3 and 4 with the Queensland AIDS Council (then known as Queensland Association for Healthy Communities), with whom he had volunteered earlier in his career. One of these projects involved analysing and preparing a report on a survey they had completed just prior to Prof Hughes’ return to Queensland. He presented on this survey to the Association and was a member of the LGBT Ageing Action
Group (2008–10), which included assistance developing training resources, practice guidance and health promotion material related to LGBTI ageing, as well as assisting in organising events for LGBTI older people. While at UQ Prof Hughes also presented on LGBTI ageing to professional and community groups (e.g. Queensland Health social workers). Memberships include:

- ACON Ageing Working Group, 2006–08
- Queensland Association for Healthy Communities, LGBT Ageing Action Group, 2008–10
- Northern Rivers LGBTI Dementia Project Group, 2011–12
- Northern Rivers LGBTI Interdisciplinary Group, 2013+
- Dementia Australia, Working Group on LGBTI resources, 2018+
- Australian Association of Gerontology, Special Interest Group on LGBTI Ageing, 2012+
- National LGBTI Health Alliance, Aged Care and Ageing Reference Group, 2011–15

6. RESEARCH INCOME

Category 1 (international and national competitive)


Category 3 (Other industry)


Other funding

3. Hughes, M. Representations of LGBT ageing in Australia and UK, 2015. SCU (funded Study Leave) and University of Surrey.

7. RESEARCH OUTPUTS

From 2003 to 2018, there were 26 research outputs pertaining to this program of research (1 monograph, 8 chapters, 17 peer reviewed journal articles). Selected publications are:


Case study produced with permission of researcher for ARC DP170102142 Advancing the production, use and impact of Australian social work research Research team: Clare Tilbury, Christine Bigby, Mark Hughes, Mike Fisher October 2018