



Aged care delegates call for industry reform

BY ANELIA BLACKIE

A RESOLUTION was passed at the tri-state aged care conference in Mount Gambier this week to urgently call for an industry reform agenda.

The resolution seeks to ensure choice for seniors in how they receive aged care and the sustainability of the industry to meet ever-increasing consumer needs and expectations.

About 380 aged care industry delegates from South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales attended the three-day "Changing the Faces of Aged Care" conference, during which the resolution was passed.

Aged and Community Services Australia, Aged Care Association Australia and Catholic Health Australia have committed their support to the Campaign for the Care of Older

Australians in the lead-up to the federal election later this year.

As part of the campaign, the industry has pledged to work together with government to create solutions and implement reform.

Conference host Alan Graham said future planning had to start now to ensure a sustainable aged care system able to guarantee access and choice for older people.

"Our federal and state governments are aware of the constant struggle facing aged care providers who are under enormous financial pressure today," he said.

"The industry has stressed the need for change right now to meet current demands for services and to provide a strong footing for the industry's future.

"Reform of the aged care sector is an urgent matter for

governments today, not just a long-term issue for a far off date like 2050."

Conference organiser Aged and Community Care Victoria's business developer Greg Knox welcomed the \$9.5m nursing scholarship funding announcement Ageing Minister Justine Elliot made at the conference.

The funding will be made available to train and upskill up to 680 people in the aged care workforce, particularly in regional and rural areas.

"Ita Buttrose's presentation gained a lot of support and was definitely a highlight of the conference," Mr Knox said.

The respected media personality and opinion leader on aged care said the serious shortage of employees in the aged care industry could not be addressed while community carers received a low income and were undervalued.