

# CONGRESS REVIEW



## OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

*“A triumph!” UK ... “Excellent Congress” USA ... “Perfect organisation” France ... “Wonderful event” Vic ... “Great opportunity to network” SA ... “Inspiring” UK ... “Great to unpack the advantages of Homeshare” Aus*

Response to the 4<sup>th</sup> World Homeshare Congress has been overwhelmingly positive. HANZA organisers thank everyone who participated so enthusiastically over the three amazing days to achieve this great outcome.

**Re-live the event! Presentations, video links and papers can be read and downloaded [here](#).**



The lively and engaged audience praised the “stimulating speakers”, “well-paced schedule”, “great opportunity for sharing information, learning and networking”, and “application of theory to practice well balanced”.

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## WHO WAS THERE AND HOW DID IT GO?

Alexis Hughes – HANZA note-taker

Who came to the 4<sup>th</sup> World Homeshare Congress in Melbourne? Lots of people did: 105 to be precise. They came from England, Scotland, France, Belgium, Spain, Japan, the United States of America and several States of Australia. They represented Homeshare, aged care and disability service providers, government bodies, consultants, federating agencies, assessment services, homesharers, householders or just themselves. Which goes to show the pulling power that Homeshare has. And what a show it was! There was something for everyone. Feedback has told us that.

Existing practitioners were reminded of how far the program has come since its inception and why international evaluation is necessary to ascertain what works and what doesn't. Presentations described the different models of the program around the world to accommodate an expanding range of consumers. On this, there was strong interest in extending Homeshare to those living with a disability. Varied funding and cost sharing elements aroused interest in strategies aimed at financial viability. A bold approach to funding bodies buoyed future plans.



Vic Minister  
Martin Foley



Rhian Bradley &  
Malcolm Johnson HI



Kirby Dunn HS  
Vermont



Rod Campbell The  
Australia Institute



Hiroyuki Kubato  
Nihon Uni Japan



Elizabeth Mills HI

## WHAT WE LEARNED

The Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing(Australia), Martin Foley, opened the proceedings on Day 1 and announced a significant new project to trial Homeshare in public housing in Victoria, which was good news indeed for local programs. The speakers who followed did not disappoint, without exception their messages were informative, interesting and easy to listen to. The exception to 'easy-listening' was the Japanese presentation, only because of the extraordinary bravery of Kazuyo Sonohara in her determination to deliver a speech in English, a language she has never learnt. We all applauded loudly her delight at her achievement.

The audience was entertained and informed on Day 2 by a panel of leading Australian demographers and commentators who gave their response to Homeshare from a personal, social or demographic perspective.

From experienced Homeshare practitioners, potential providers learned the benefits and pitfalls of introducing a program. The time and effort involved in making a compatible Householder/Homesharer match featured heavily. In this capacity, the example of the HomeShare Vermont use of 'staff' volunteers from professional backgrounds made an indelible impression and inspired many.



Care Connect/Spectrum



Heart Warming House  
Japan



Shared Lives Plus UK



HomeShare Vermont



Community  
Connections ACT

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## NETWORKING AND SOCIALISING



### Welcome reception, Queen's Hall, Parliament House

A grand introduction to Melbourne for our international and interstate guests. Long-time Homeshare supporter, John Thwaites, warmly welcomed our visitors to Parliament House and Melbourne.

◀ HANZA President Shirley Anderson, former Deputy Premier John Thwaites, HI Hon Director Elizabeth Mills.



The grand but comfortable setting of Queen's Hall and the relaxed mood of the function provided a great start for meeting each other and preparing for the intense but rewarding two days ahead.

◀ Anna McEwen, UK, Carmel Hurst HANZA, Carlos Miguélez, Spain and Barbara Liedtke, USA getting to know each other.



The Japanese delegation were an absolute delight to have at the Congress. This was Congress number 3 for Kazuyo Sonohara. The Japanese value enormously the opportunity to study the development of Homeshare and make contacts in so many countries.

◀ Kazuyo Sonohara, Mizuho Manabe, Hiroyuki Kubota



◀ Belgians Claire and Régis de Keratem, HI's Elizabeth Mills and French Homeshare champions Alain & Typhaine de Penfentenyo are all Congress faithfuls and add a European touch of elegance to proceedings!



◀ Interstaters Jackie Youngblutt, Queensland and Gelinda Kock, WA, were brand new to Homeshare.



**Right:** HI Trustees line up with HANZA Congress Planning Team to celebrate actually getting there!

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## PEOPLE WATCHING AT THE CONGRESS

*Reflections and impressions by Geri Colson - HANZA note-taker*

In the main room, chairs were lined up to form a square in front of a screen and lectern. The room itself was very large, L-shaped, high-ceilinged and of some magnificence, with multi-hued, heavy drapes on very large windows, and silver-gilt frames on mirrors almost as big as the windows. Outside the humidity closed in and grey clouds gathered, Melbourne was in for a storm.

Inside, the atmosphere grew in noise and momentum as delegates took their seats, choosing to be seen in the front rows, close to the action, or to wander to the back, the more to survey the room for people they knew, or to spot the delegate who is a surprise to find, the unexpected bureaucrat from another discipline, or a former colleague, and to speculate on 'whyfor' the interest they are showing in Homeshare by paying registration for a seat at the Congress. So, the foregone conclusion, the universal truth, was clear for all to see. It is the people who made the Congress, and their shared values frankly 'glowed'.

Everyone was intent on the prevailing paradigm, inter-generational connections, barter in terms of exchange of assets for support, of practical help in the form of accommodation paid for in kind by practical help in the home and companionship, of the exchange of wisdom and affection, and the possibility of new beginnings. In plain words, Homeshare is a matching and bringing together of someone with something to offer and someone else with something to offer – not rocket science, but a social norm which needs reinforcement in times when over-complication of issues and the complexities of modern life obscure normality and our needs as human beings.

Over the two days the Congress constantly reinforced, explicitly and inherently, that the basic Homeshare values are incredibly strong and maintained across so many cultures, becoming clearer all the time as each delegate talked about their programs. These shared value systems ensured that the energy levels remained extremely high for the entire time, that each speaker was greeted with renewed enthusiasm and loudly exclaimed as they finished their contributions, and the goodwill effectively gained momentum and even built up towards the close of the proceedings. A fine thing, and rare in conferences.

Challenging questions from the audience:



Jeremy Picknell – *lifeAssist* (Australia)



Jane Miller – HANZA (Australia)



Carlos Miguélez Monroy –  
Solidarios(Spain)

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## HOMESHARE'S TIME HAS COME

On Day 1 California's Affordable Living for Aging (ALA) told us:

"The boomer generation is very interesting because we were the first to re-define every milestone and what it meant to be that age. As a consequence because we have consistently redefined what it means to age, we'll just do the same thing now that we are actually aging - we'll just re-define the model and I think that's a terrific thing." **Lenore** – ALA video shown at Congress.

Americans look at Homeshare as a preventative service rather than a part of care services as we have so far in Australia.

Congress Panel discussion – *Homeshare's time has come* – extracts from the discussion

**Patricia Edgar** – Most important thing is attitude to life and social engagement. Homeshare is a sensible and important idea but how to become expert match makers for a whole variety of people, finding and making compatible matches is the real challenge for Homeshare programs.



Panel Facilitator: Lyn Allison. Panel members: Dr Patricia Edgar, Barbara Mountjouris, Dr Bob Birrell, Prof. Malcolm Johnson, Dr Don Edgar.

**Don Edgar** – Enormous change in 'family' in the new millennium – the revolving door with families may inhibit availability of the spare room for Homeshare. Homesharing may need to be spasmodic or not permanent. There could be diversity in homesharing arrangements.

**Bob Birrell** – Research shows 50% of free standing houses are occupied by the over 50s. But older people don't necessarily want to 'down-size' for all sorts of reasons and shouldn't have to.

**Malcolm Johnson** – Sharing where you live in an organised and intelligent, mutually beneficial way is an important additional contribution to the new patterns of later life. We have to persuade the wider populace that this can work. From what we have heard at the Congress we are getting better at this – reaching more people, being more effective.

Later life is changing a lot – we work longer, stay engaged meaningfully – ageing is changing demographically, socially, economically

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## AN INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE – IMPRESSIONS FROM A YOUNG WRITER

Izzy Roberts-Orr<sup>1</sup>



Shared living space is closer to the rule than the exception for my generation, however Homeshare is not something that gets much of a look-in when speaking to my peers about the housing issues we face. There is much talk about an aging population, housing shortages and an expectation that a great deal more people my age are unlikely to be able to buy a house. Conversations around housing are riddled with confusing economics and a prevailing sense that the future is expensive at best and bordering hopeless at worst.

Riding over from the large sharehouse I share with four others, I wondered what the Congress would hold. Homeshare is a relatively new concept to me, which I heard about earlier in the year through an article in *The Age*, and I was keen to meet people who were living in Homeshare arrangements and involved with the running of programs. The sky cleared as I pulled up to the Treacy Centre, glittering with sunlight and fresh rain.

Over the next two days I found myself engaged in some of the most empathetic and innovative conversations about housing solutions and alternatives, and the trepidation and fear about the future of housing that I had so long experienced through the media's message began to lift. Intergenerational housing, programs that provide support for people living with disability and sharing between older people provide more than just an economic benefit – they improve people's quality of life.

The prevailing message of the World Homeshare Congress was that Homeshare is economically viable, and ultimately it's about people. Recognising that there is no Band-Aid solution and that housing arrangements do need to be tailored to individuals feels like an important first step to ensuring that the quality of life for Australians of all ages, economic means and abilities can live independently and well.

## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH HANZA AND HOMESHARE IN AUSTRALIA



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READ MORE ABOUT THE CONGRESS ON [WWW.WORLDMESHARECONGRESS2015.ORG.AU](http://WWW.WORLDMESHARECONGRESS2015.ORG.AU)

<sup>1</sup> Izzy Roberts-Orr - an emerging, young writer, editor and radio producer from Melbourne was the Writer in Residence for the 4<sup>th</sup> World Homeshare Congress.