Preface

An ageing population gives rise to some of the most important issues for law and policy-makers across the globe. Worldwide, the number of people aged 65 years and over is growing faster than any other age group,¹ and this is reflected in growth rates in this age group in Australia. Australia's population, like that of most developed countries, is ageing as a result of sustained low fertility and increasing life expectancy.² In the two decades prior to 2010, while the proportion of Australia's population aged 15-64 years remained relatively stable, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over increased from 11.1 per cent to 13.6 per cent.³ The proportion of the population aged 85 years and over has more than doubled.⁴ Population ageing is predicted to have significant economic, legal and societal implications for Australia, particularly in relation to health, housing and labour force participation.⁵

Australia's ageing population presents challenges to policy and law makers for decision-making and action that will advance the rights, financial security, autonomy and general wellbeing of ageing Australians. This Special Issue of *Law in Context* brings together a collection of articles that address three particular areas of concern: health, wealth and home. The Special Issue has its origins in a multi-disciplinary forum entitled *Perspectives on an Ageing Australia: Health, Wealth and Hearth* held at the University of Western Australia on 13-14 February 2013. The Forum was attended by academics, policy advisers, NGO officers and practitioners from a range of disciplines including law, medicine, social

1 The world's 65-and-older population is projected to triple by mid-century, from 506 million in 2008 to 1.3 billion in 2040: Kinsella, Kevin and Wan He US Census Bureau, International Population Reports, *An Aging World: 2008*, 7, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2009 <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p95-09-1.pdf>> accessed 24 September 2015.

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 3201.0 – Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2010 <<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3201.0>> accessed 24 September 2015.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid. The proportion of persons 85 years and over has increased from 0.9 per cent of the population at 30 June 1990 to 1.8 per cent of the total population at 30 June 2010. The number of centenarians increased during these two decades by 185 per cent, compared with the total population growth of 30.9 per cent over the same period.

5 Attorney-General's Department Australia to 2050: Future Challenges, January 2010 (Intergenerational Report 2010), <http://archive.treasury.gov.au/igr/igr2010/report/pdf/IGR_2010.pdf> accessed 24 September 2015.

work and economics. The articles published in this Special Issue have been developed from a number of law focused papers presented at the Forum or have been contributed by invitation. The Special Editors, who organised the 2013 Forum, would like to acknowledge the contributions made to the Forum by all of the participants and to thank the University of Western Australia Institute of Advanced Studies and the Law School for their financial support of the Forum.

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7 December 2015