

# Accessing and working with residential care providers. A methodological approach

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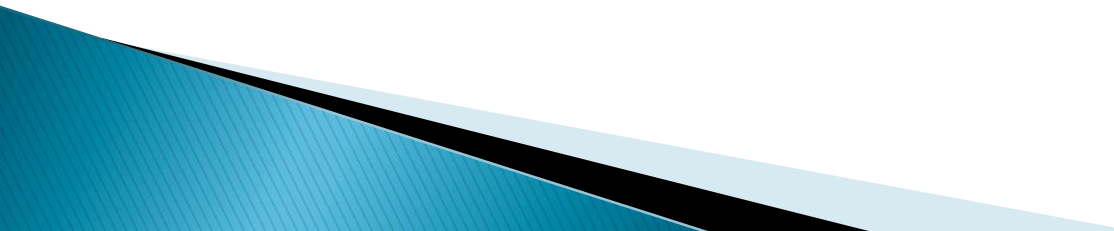
# Presentation will cover

- ▶ Experiences of conducting a state-wide survey with over 400 residential care facilities in Western Australia with aged care accommodation providers
  - ▶ A Lotterywest funded social research project to explore attitudes, policies and practices in relation to GLBTI (gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex) clients in order to develop best practice guidelines (reported elsewhere at this conference)
  - ▶ Look at challenges, research protocol followed and lessons learnt
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# The challenges

- ▶ Residential care provider sector can be difficult to access for research work
  - ▶ Does not mean they are unsupportive of the research
  - ▶ May feel unable to participate due to work burdens
  - ▶ May see no direct benefit for their organisation.
  - ▶ Research topic may not obviously affect them or is challenging – e.g. GLBTI issues
  - ▶ May feel could be opening organisation/facility to undue scrutiny (environment heavily regulated, perceive responses could have negative effect.
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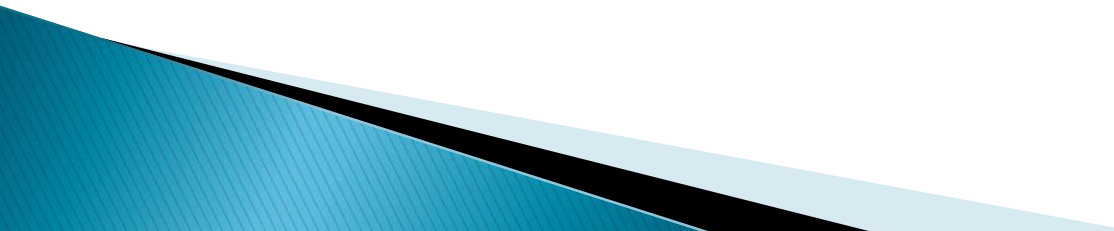
## Challenges continued

- ▶ Potentially sensitive topic area of GLBT and ageing, sexuality and ageing.
  - ▶ ‘Oh not another minority group’
  - ▶ Lack of comprehensive literature in area of GLBT issues in aged care facilities.
  - ▶ A lack of an inclusive data base of all WA facilities resulted in need to undertake in-depth cross checking of existing aged care facilities listings to arrive at a comprehensive sampling frame.
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# Methodology summary

- ▶ Descriptive cross-sectional design survey
- ▶ Qualitative and quantitative data collected principally through paper-based survey covering:
  - a) background information
  - b) general information about the person participating
  - c) experiences and attitudes at the operational level (research objective 1)
  - d) organisational policy (objective 2)
  - e) practices at the operational level (objective 1)
  - f) future directions (objective 1)
- ▶ Methodology aimed to fully inform upper management of each aged care facility being surveyed, and to ensure their support.
- ▶ Focus group with industry management and GLBT community members for feedback of draft guidelines

# Using a modified Dillman Protocol

- ▶ Results in robust study design
  - ▶ Maximises return rate
  - ▶ Makes for easy study replication
  - ▶ Used following steps:
    1. Survey design considerations
    2. Survey design process
    3. Sampling
    4. Implementation process
    5. Data collection process
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# 1. Survey design considerations

- ▶ Early decision to have separate CEO and facility survey – different information sought
- ▶ CEOs as access point for multiple site facilities (66% of sampling frame)
- ▶ CEOs to give consent for all their facilities
- ▶ Considerations in survey design:
  - industry liaison for content and design of survey
  - identify appropriate contact in organisation
  - mixed mode (i.e. qualitative and quantitative data)
  - Instructions in the survey rather than separate booklet

# 2. Survey design process

- ▶ Informed by:
  - literature review and theme identification
  - Project team feedback
  - Industry Advisory Group (IAG) feedback
- ▶ Survey pretesting
  - Pilot study – Swan Care Group – with departmental management team in the three areas of accommodation – i.e. community care, independent living and the low and high care centres.



# 3. Sampling

- ▶ Sample – all accommodation providers for older WA (retirement villages, hostels (low care), nursing homes (high care), community care, respite)
- ▶ Excluded – ageing-in-place services
- ▶ Sampling frame database from multiple sources
- ▶ Total target population relatively small (Dept Health and Ageing listing 397; CRA 199; total 596) every facility in the sampling frame was to be surveyed
- ▶ Good generalisability to the WA population, Australian population more limited
- ▶ Representativeness determined once the data collected based on: postcode (Q3), facility category of care (Q1), classifications (Q2), number of staff (Q5), single entity or multiple facilities (Q6)

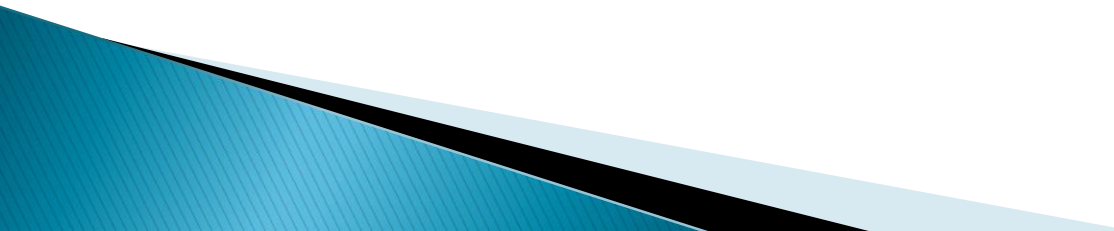
# 4. Implementation process

(at CEO level)

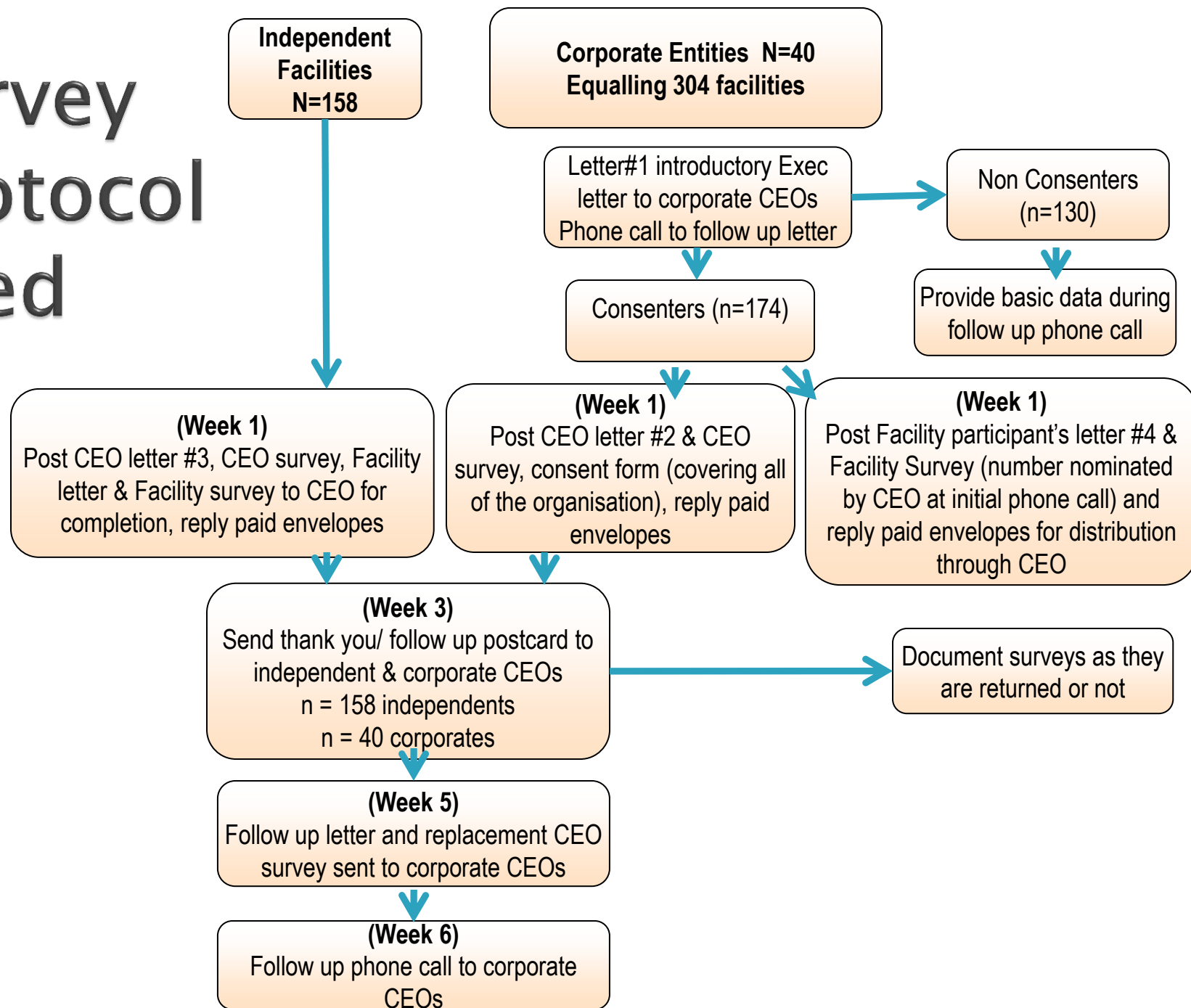
- ▶ Phone call to CEOs inviting them to participate in the survey followed by letter of invitation
- ▶ Survey packs to participating organisations with CEO and facility surveys

<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post out surveys with replied paid envelopes</li></ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop postcard thank you/reminder</li><li>• Send to all participants</li></ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter and replacement CEO survey</li><li>• To participants who have not responded</li></ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Telephone follow up to non respondents only</li><li>• Opportunity to talk about survey again and to reassure will not be contacted again if indicate no involvement</li></ul>

# 5. Data collection process

- ▶ Qualitative data analysis Nvivo
  - ▶ Quantitative data analysis SPSS
  - ▶ Pilot data used for preliminary coding
  - ▶ Identification of themes
  - ▶ Description of relationship between qualitative and quantitative data collected
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# Survey protocol used



# Survey returns

Facility surveys	N =
Total sent	332
Not returned	179
Total returned	153
Excess surveys❖	12
Total unusable⦿	34
Non participants	24
<b>Total usable</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Return rate</b>	<b><math>83 / (332 - 12)</math> <b>= 26%</b></b>

❖ Excess sent to CEOs

⦿ Incomplete consent, not meet eligibility, not completed enough to use

**NB**

- 36/40 useable executive surveys, although no guarantee that all their facilities then completed


- Predicted non response/attrition as per Dillman (2007) is 70%

# Discussion

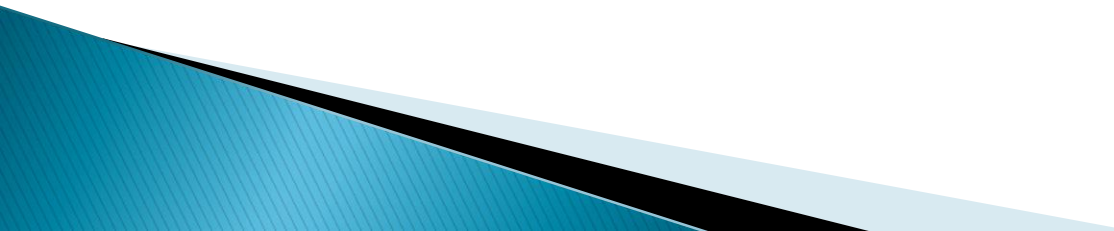
- ▶ Despite systematic approach still **HARD** work recruiting.
- ▶ Management/industry approach increased returns.
- ▶ Challenges:
  - Time intensive phone calling
  - Hard to get through gate keepers to CEO sometimes
  - Topic area too confronting for some
  - Just seen as one more survey
  - Difficulty of eliciting information on organisational practice in an area not covered by policy
  - Difficulty separating individual attitudes from organisational practice
  - Multiple follow up tactics required

# Getting industry support

Need to build foundation for research. Done through three key strategies:

1. Research informed by an Industry Advisory Group (IAG) involved throughout the research process.
  2. Thorough survey pre testing and feedback at large multi site, multi type organisation to fine tune survey tool.
  3. Every CEO of multi site organisation personally phoned by Research Officer to seek support and to allow checking of database. NB 66% of sampling frame of aged care accommodation.
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# Lessons

- ▶ Need to make research relevant to the industry
  - ▶ Need to show tangible outcomes
  - ▶ Need to make as easy and non threatening as possible for facilities to participate
  - ▶ Need to get CEOs onside early in the process
  - ▶ Research can lead social change both through the process and the outcome
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# Acknowledgements:

- Members of the Industry Advisory Group
- CEOs and facility managers who did participate in survey

For more information

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