

Annual Report

2022/2023



OUR MISSION

We advance the rights, interests and futures of Australians as we age.

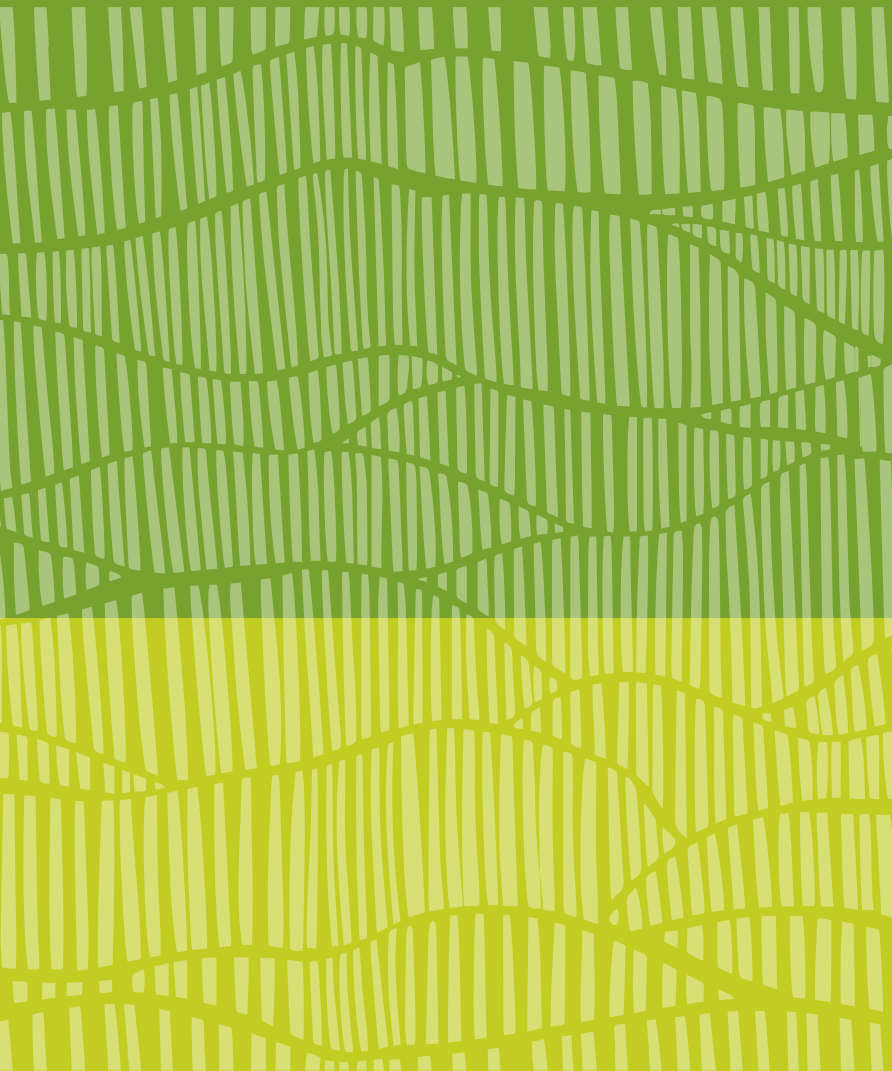
OUR VISION

Ageing in Australia is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence.

OUR VALUES

- Respect
- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Integrity





COTA Tasmania acknowledges with deep respect the resilience and knowledge of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, the traditional custodians of lutruwita, Tasmania.

We value the wisdom of Aboriginal elders past and present and the role they play in continuing to care for Country.

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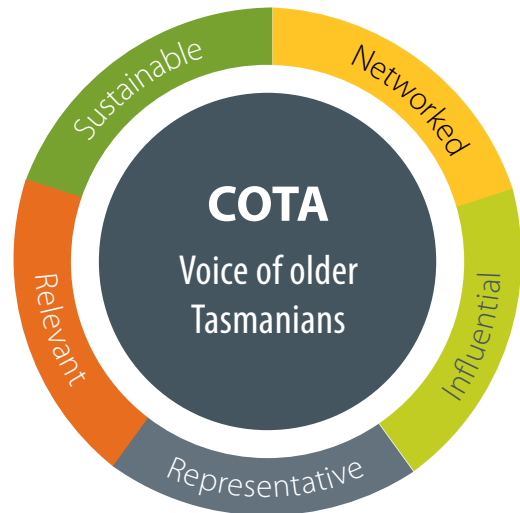
About COTA Tasmania

Who we are

COTA (Council on the Ageing) Tasmania is a small, not-for-profit organisation made up of a team of staff and volunteers who are passionate about advancing the rights and interests of Tasmanians as they age, particularly those aged over 50 years.

As the peak body representing older Tasmanians, we work with our community to ensure the rights of older Tasmanians are upheld. We promote a positive view of ageing and challenge age stereotypes, foster inclusion and participation, and support independence and choice.

COTA Tasmania is part of the COTA network that is represented in every Australian state and territory and at a Federal level through COTA Australia.



What we do

Systemic Advocacy

For all older Tasmanians, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Policy

Contributing to discussions at the highest level of government both locally and nationally.

Consultation

Seeking out and listening to the concerns of older Tasmanians from diverse backgrounds.

Aged Care Support

COTA Tasmania's Care Finder service supports eligible older Tasmanians to navigate the aged care system and find care services in their local area.

Events

Delivering Seniors Week, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and year-round workshops and events that benefit older Tasmanians.

Strategic Plan 2020–2025

Strategic goals

- 1** We are well known and valued.
- 2** We connect with, listen to and learn from our community.
- 3** We are effective and enduring in all we do.
- 4** We attract, value and retain passionate people.

Priority areas

- Making ageism a thing of the past.
- Positive reform in aged care.
- Claiming a space for mature age workers in the workforce.
- Increasing online access for older people.
- Prevention of elder abuse.

For further information about our strategic plan please see our website www.cotatas.org.au.

COTA Tasmania gratefully acknowledges funding support from:



Department
of **Health**



**Communities
Tasmania**



Department of
Premier and Cabinet

Our people

CRAIG CHADWICK

Chief Executive Officer



It is often said that change is the only constant in life, and for 2022/2023, change has been the only constant.

The growth and transition of the organisation was reported in the 2021/22 Annual Report and the subsequent

12 months has seen exponential change and growth over a relatively short period.

In early 2023 COTA Tasmania was successful in its tender submission for the Care Finder Program, a Commonwealth-funded program that assists older Australians to navigate the complexities of aged care services. COTA Tasmania was one of three COTA organisations, nationally, to be awarded the contract to deliver this program, and is the largest Care Finder provider in Tasmania, providing statewide coverage.

As a result, the organisation has grown by an additional six FTE, appointed to deliver the Care Finder Program. During the establishment phase of the program COTA Tasmania engaged the support of Resonance, a well-respected Tasmanian consultancy firm, to provide specialist project management support from April to September 2023.

Establishment of the program has required the leasing of new office facilities in Launceston and the review and upgrade of office

facilities in Hobart and Burnie. Additionally, we are progressively upgrading our systems, policies, and procedures to ensure that as an organisation, we provide contemporary business practices to support our staff, consumers, members, and funding stakeholders.

COTA Tasmania has engaged Assurance HR (AHR) to provide expert people and cultural advice and support as we endeavour to provide our valued staff and volunteers with the support they need.

Our organisation is committed to providing excellence to all internal and external stakeholders through the provision of transparent and accountable systems and practices. COTA is investing in program and systems improvements as we continue to transition to a sustainable organisation in a volatile, challenging, and competitive political and economic landscape.

The Board and management continue to work diligently to ensure that moving forward, COTA Tasmania achieves financial stability and viability. This is a constant challenge in terms of the operational cost pressures associated with being a volunteer governed not-for-profit organisation. This requires us to ensure that we have the correct mix of sustainable and appropriately resourced programs.

An example of these pressures was personified by the disappointing outcomes of the 2023/2024 State Budget announcement, a feeling shared by the sector in terms of meeting the challenges of providing much-needed services and support to all Tasmanians.

“ As our lives progress it is important, for mind and body, that we remain active and able to enjoy the holistic benefits of regular exercise and social interaction.

While COTA Tasmania is grateful for the funding allocation for the 25th Seniors Week celebrations, greater consideration needs to be given to the appropriate funding of peak body resourcing, strengthening advocacy and inclusion, connection, and community, and tackling ageism.

During 2023 the Board began work reviewing the current 2022/2025 Strategic Plan, and efforts will continue throughout 2024 to develop an aspirational strategic plan for 2025 and beyond based on the evolving needs of the organisation and its community.

COTA Tasmania continues to develop and leverage from strong relationships within government at all levels, as well as cross sector and within the COTA Federation and COTA Australia as we seek to strengthen our position as the voice of Tasmanians aged 50+ years.

With the support of the Tasmanian government, the Healthy, Engaged and Resilient (HEAR) Consultation Report was launched. Older Tasmanians make substantial contributions to their families, organisations, industry, and the broader community, and with healthy longevity even more will do so in the future.

COTA Tasmania spent time with Tasmanian communities to listen and hear from individuals, groups, and organisations about what was important to them in staying safe, healthy, and connected as they age. Alongside that, we conducted a survey online and via postcards. This lived experience will shape the development of a new six-year Active Ageing strategy for Tasmania 2023/2029. Consultation activities were undertaken between January 30 and July 1 2022 with Tasmanians aged over 40 years invited to share their views.

We are now working closely with the Government to develop an inclusive and respectful strategy for Older Tasmanians which reflects the thoughts and experiences gathered from the consultation.

As the organisation advanced and grew, we welcomed many new members to the team, and sadly we also farewelled a number of highly respected and valued staff.

We welcomed the Care Finder Team members to COTA Tasmania, which include Shelley Freeman (Team Leader), Allison Ryland, Sue Hallam, Kristy Clements and Emma-Jean Jatan. In addition, the team was joined by the existing and experienced COTA team members including Alexis Martin, Margarita White-McColl, Soula Houndalas, Heather Ross and Glenda Daly.

We said farewell to the following staff as they embark on the next exciting chapter of their respective professional journeys: David Rose, Sue Newman and Luke Summers.

I would like to thank everyone involved in Seniors Week and the success of the annual Walk Against Elder Abuse held across the state during the year. These events assist COTA to raise awareness of important issues in our community and offer us a great opportunity to connect with and learn from older Tasmanians.

We welcomed Ingrid Harrison as President and Chair and acknowledged the leadership and commitment of David Strong who stood down from the position mid-June.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and Board of COTA Tasmania for their support during 2023. I look forward to a productive 2024.

INGRID HARRISON

President



I am privileged to represent COTA Tasmania as your President, and I thank Board Directors for having the confidence to elect me after the resignation earlier this year of David Strong. As we move forward, I am committed

to collaborating with my fellow Directors, as well as COTA staff and volunteers, to advance the vital work of our organisation as the peak body for older Tasmanians.

Undoubtedly, the major challenges we face at COTA Tasmania resonate with those encountered by all organisations operating within the not-for-profit (NFP) space. One of the most significant hurdles we confront is the uncertainty of funding across the board. Many NFPs like COTA, rely heavily on government grants, donations, and fundraising efforts for their financial stability. As the major contributor, fluctuations in funding levels or changes in government policies can significantly impact the operations of NFPs. And that is true in Tasmania. This past financial year we had asked the State Government for an additional amount above current funding as well as a commitment to appropriate indexation however our submission was unsuccessful. We have continued to put forward these imperatives in our 2024/25 submission which will be presented to the Government in November. We remain hopeful of a more favourable response in the 2024 budget.

With the challenges on financial support undeniably an issue, the road ahead may be even more challenging as we approach a Tasmanian state election within the next two years. The uncertainty that a potential new government might introduce to our communities adds another layer of complexity. The change in our Minister for Community Services and Development mid-year

also meant a recalibration of our engagement strategies and messaging to government. Our communications with government have become even more important with all these changes in mind. I can assure members we will continue to proactively engage with government and key stakeholders to ensure our voice is heard.

As highlighted by our CEO, Craig Chadwick, several of our ongoing programs either concluded due to completing their funding rounds, or because of economic viability concerns. This situation underscores the imperative for COTA to diversify its funding streams and explore innovative avenues for sustainability. The Board is acutely aware of this need as we make decisions that impact our present and future revenue streams, and our staffing levels.

In our pursuit of financial sustainability, the Board is also dedicated to providing a robust framework to support our team's efforts over the next three years. At the same time our role goes beyond just financial considerations; it encompasses fostering an environment within the organisation that is conducive to growth, impact, and positive change.

COTA Tasmania's evolution into a service-oriented organisation while retaining its advocacy role is marked by its appointment as a provider for the national Care Finder program. This significant shift signifies our commitment to helping older Tasmanians locate essential services in their local areas. Our Care Finders play a pivotal role in guiding older people through the intricacies of the care assessment process, connecting them with suitable community support mechanisms, and ensuring their ongoing needs are met. The development of this program led to a restructuring of our staffing framework, presenting many opportunities as we rolled out Care Finder across the state. We are confident of the program's worth and the vital service it offers senior Tasmanians. We are committed to work to retain funding for Care Finder when the program is up for renewal in 2025/26.

While we've moved to provide older Tasmanians access and information to key services, our core advocacy role remains unwavering. Along with COTA Australia and the states and territory branches, we continue to champion issues that impact our senior citizens, including health, homelessness, cost of living pressures, poverty, and improving community engagement. These are issues that require our sustained attention and collective action.

At a national level my colleagues in other states report they are facing many of the same issues that we confront in Tasmania. Our collective national focus is to communicate and continue to promote the interests of all Australians at the highest level of government and key national organisations.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my fellow Board members for their insightful deliberations on the pressing matters we have considered over the past year.

We bade farewell to former President David Strong, who brought invaluable experience and dedication to the organisation. David's advocacy for the well-being of older Tasmanians has been commendable, and we extend our thanks to him for his leadership.

I want to acknowledge and recognise the contribution of former Director Christina Holmdahl, who retired earlier this year. Christina's involvement in the arts, small business, and the community has been invaluable in her work on the Board, reflecting her long-standing support for local communities through her involvement in Tasmanian local government.

At this annual general meeting we will also farewell Deputy President Rob Hill, who completes his Board tenure and Deb Thurley. Rob's work as Deputy President and as a committee member over the past five years, is sincerely appreciated. We wish Rob all the best for the future. Deb is leaving to concentrate on

her involvement in other community groups, particularly as Tasmanian President of PCYC. We wish Deb well in those endeavours.

I also acknowledge and thank Lisa Free, former Board Director and more recently COTA's General Manager, who left to take on a new challenge in the NFP sector.

We were saddened by the sudden passing of former COTA Tasmania President and Chair, member of the COTA Tasmania Policy Council, Peer Educator, and volunteer Ian Fletcher. Ian was well respected and liked by the COTA community and beyond. We pass on our very sincere condolences to Ian's loved ones.

Lastly and importantly, I want to recognise and thank our CEO Craig Chadwick who came on board in October 2022 with the express remit of reviewing and determining the relevance of low value, low return, high-risk programs, not aligned with the strategic direction of COTA Tasmania. His priority is to ensure the future viability and sustainability of our organisation. It's been a baptism of fire, but Craig has met the challenges diligently and professionally.

As to our sector, it's fact that both nationally and in the states and territories, NFPs continue to confront formidable challenges. We shoulder the responsibility of caring for our respective demographics with finite financial and human resources. The commitment and expertise of our dedicated and enthusiastic team of people remains essential to all our endeavours, and we are grateful to everyone who contributed to COTA Tasmania over the past year in whatever capacity, be it as a valued staff member, Board director, or event volunteer. Your tireless dedication to our organisation is truly valued and appreciated.

With my colleagues I look forward to a productive year ahead, defined by resilience, innovation, and positive impact.

CARL COOPER

Treasurer



This year has seen a number of COTA Tasmania's projects completed including *Aged Care System Navigator*, *Commonwealth Home Support Program*, *COTA Learning*, *Digital Literacy*, *Eat for Life*, *OPAN*, *Piecing it*

Together, *Staying Strong*, and *Tas Fire Service*. Many of these programs have relied on funding which is of a short-term nature, and each has been reassessed as to whether these programs can be supported. Above all, our primary objective is to ensure our financial sustainability by making sure we have the funding for current and future programs and resources. In order to be financially sustainable, we have had to consolidate our limited resources and make some hard decisions.

The Care Finder Service which COTA provides to eligible Tasmanians across the State has allowed our organisation to support our key demographic to connect with My Aged Care as well as support our finances this year.

The support services that Care Finder can connect an older person with are not limited to Aged Care Services but can be other appropriate support services. Care Finder also reaches into the community to find older people with a high need for support, who may not be aware of their support options or may not have someone who can help them find appropriate services.

Care Finder funding of \$518,476 has been requested to be carried forward to this coming year through the Commonwealth and Primary Health Tasmania due to the delayed timing and implementation of this program across the State. The impact of Care Finder is also reflected by increased annual expenses. Employee costs are the highest expense and show a significant increase from the previous year, purely due to the increased staff requirements associated with the grant-funded activities being progressed.

The organisation's net assets as of 30 June 2023 are \$212,555 showing an increase from the previous year. There has been some change in total assets and total liabilities, noting it is reflected in increased cash holdings with the funds received for these projects yet to be expended.

The Auditor's report for 2022/23 indicates no significant audit differences or issues to be addressed and the Board has endorsed management's assessment that COTA (Tas) is a going concern. We've provided assurance that COTA can continue to operate for the next 12 months.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Financial and Risk Management (FARM) Committee for their ongoing support as well as Natalie Lo in her role as Financial Officer for all her dedication and work in the finance area and for the support she provides the finance team.

The results for 2022/23 showed a surplus of \$71,369 compared with a deficit of \$62,966 last year, while income this year was \$1,572,401 million compared to \$1,145,762 million last year.

JOHN PAULEY

Chair, COTA Tasmania Policy Council



It has again been a busy year for the Tasmanian Policy Council (TPC). The year saw a number of our lobbying projects reach a successful conclusion. Most significant of these was final agreement to remove virtually all the age discriminatory

elements of the Tasmanian Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. With this change older workers in Tasmania have the same rights as younger workers if injured in the workplace. This has been a long-term lobbying effort and we are pleased to have had a successful outcome.

Similarly, with the most recent retail price determination for electricity the TPC is pleased to see the daily charge for Aurora+ removed giving all electricity consumers free access to their daily energy use. The TPC feels this is particularly important as energy costs escalate, and older Tasmanians seek to better manage their energy bills.

The Policy Council also initiated discussions between COTA Tasmania and the Electoral Commission to ensure all older Tasmanians, and in particular those living in residential facilities have better access to voting. During Covid there was a move towards postal voting, and we have sought that the Electoral Commission again give residents increased opportunities to vote in person. We have been pleased with the positive response from the Commission.

The Policy Council continued to provide input in a number of submissions during the year. These included consultations in Home Aged Care, policy statements prepared by COTA Australia, changes to dispensing arrangements for pharmacies where our particular focus was on regional and rural community pharmacies, changes to guardianship and administration arrangements in Tasmania, the Tasmanian Population Strategy, the Tasmanian Housing Strategy where the focus was on the particular housing needs of older Tasmanians, and changes to the aged pension income test to support older workers engaging more in the workforce where they wished to do so.

Members of the TPC maintained their engagement with the implementation process of Tasmania's Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation, the COTA Australia Energy Advocates' group and a range of energy-related consumer forums in Tasmania. The Council continues to explore issues in the housing space and has initiated discussions in relation to home sharing as an option not being adequately pursued. We see this as a cost-effective option to support both older Tasmanians to age at home and offer more secure housing for those in most need.

The members of the Council have all engaged actively with the issues before TPC and input from the COTA Tasmania Board members of the Council have ensured we remain aligned to COTA Tasmania's strategic directions.

The Council particularly thanks Craig Chadwick and Lisa Free for the significant support they have provided during the year.

Board of Directors

(as elected on Wednesday 23 November 2022)



Ingrid Harrison
President

Appointed to the President's role on June 28 2023



Robert Hill
Vice President

Acting President from June 16 to 28 2023



Carl Cooper
Treasurer



Rita Meaney



Erin Senz



Debra Thurley



James Versteegen



Alison Wiss

DEPARTING MEMBERS:

David Strong
President

November 2022 to June 15 2023

Christina Holmdahl

November 2022 to February 23 2023



Staff

Craig Chadwick

Chief Executive Officer

Lisa Free

General Manager

Natalie Lo

Administration & Finance Officer

Glenda Daly

Information Hub Project Officer
Aged Care System Navigator
Trial, North
Care Finder North

Shelley Freeman

Team Leader
Care Finder

Annette Horsler

Peer Education Coordinator

Soula Houndalas

Aged Care Know How
Diversity Educator

Alexis Martin

Specialist Support Worker
Aged Care System Navigator Trial
Care Finder Team Leader

Lyn McGaurr

Project Officer
Elder Abuse Prevention

Sue Newman

Project Officer
Commonwealth Home Support
Program
Sector Support & Development

Heather Ross

Information Hub Project Officer
Aged Care System Navigator Trial,
North West
Care Finder, North West

Luke Summers

Coordinator
Strength for Life and Staying
Strong
COTA Learning

Margarita White-McColl

Information Hub Project Officer
Aged Care System Navigator
Trial, South
Care Finder, South
Digital Literacy Support Officer

Brigid Wilkinson

Project Officer
Active Ageing

L to R: David Strong, Former COTA Tasmania President, Her Excellency Barbara Baker, Governor of Tasmania, Patricia Sparrow, CEO COTA Australia, Craig Chadwick, CEO COTA Tasmania.



Recognition of service

Sue Leitch

In late September 2022, we farewelled long-standing CEO Sue Leitch. Sue joined COTA in 2012 at a time when COTA was well respected but not widely known. Over the subsequent 10 years the organisation grew exponentially under Sue's tenure. Our income doubled, our workforce grew and demand for our services increased beyond our capacity at times. Sue will take time out to complete her Fine Arts studies, advance her creative arts business, and progress older persons' rights in her continuing role as a Board director of Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA).

David Rose

After 10 years of service, David Rose resigned from his position as Communications' Officer in March this year. Over the years David used his skills as a former journalist, broadcaster, and an MC to make guests at COTA events feel welcome. No doubt his many contacts contributed to COTA's increased media presence and helped to establish COTA as a trusted voice for older Tasmanians.

We thank Sue and David for their considerable contribution to COTA Tasmania and wish them well for the future.



Volunteers

POLICY COUNCIL:

John Pauley (Chair)
Erica Altmann
Julie Andersson
Carl Cooper
Ian Fletcher
Rob Hill*
Rita Meaney
Kimbra Parker
Mary Sharpe
Debra Thurley

PEER EDUCATORS:

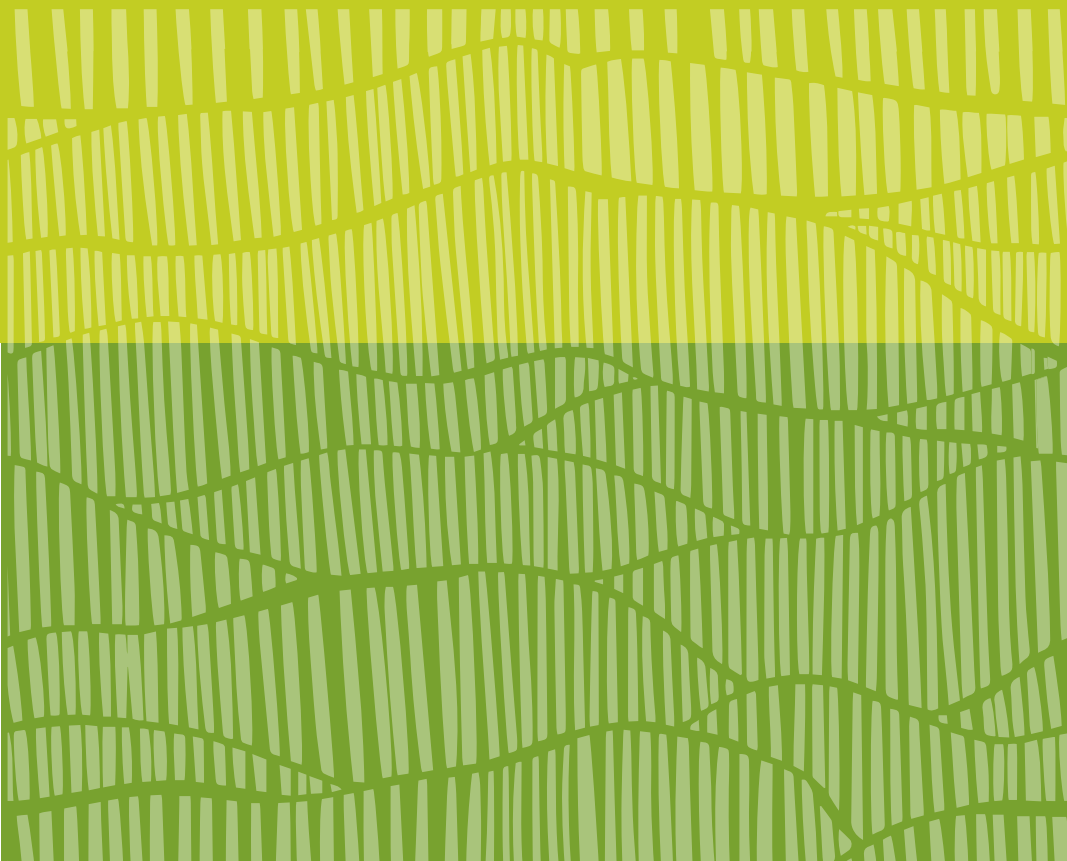
Susan Berry
Marion Cassidy
Michael Cassidy
Ian Fletcher
Barry Heather
David Henty
Annette Horsler
Peter Orpin

IT SUPPORT:

Peter Orpin
Rosa Walden

*July 2022 to November 2022

EVENTS & HIGHLIGHTS





Launch of the Healthy, Engaged and Resilient Consultation

More than 1,500 Tasmanians contributed to a statewide consultation process in 2022. The result of our consultation, the Healthy, Engaged and Resilient (HEAR) Active Ageing Consultation Outcome Report, was launched in November 2022 by the former Minister for Community Services and Development, the Honourable Nic Street MP.

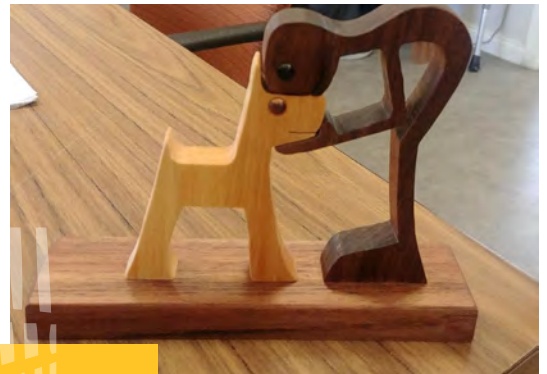
The launch event was held at Glenorchy's Golden Wattle Café, with community members joining COTA staff to talk about their experiences of ageing and the Report's recommendations.

The Golden Wattle Café, one of the community groups involved in the consultation process, is the first in southern Tasmania dedicated to those living with dementia and their caregivers, with music, craft and art activities on offer. Café patrons

were interested to hear how their experiences of ageing compared to other fellow Tasmanians.

Throughout the consultation, older Tasmanians identified good health, having enough money, having good relationships, and maintaining independence as both positively and negatively impacting on their quality of life and wellbeing.

This significant piece of work by COTA will directly influence the development of the State's next Active Ageing Strategy 2023-2029, a key policy that we hope will value the contributions and participation of older Tasmanians within our communities, workplaces, clubs and groups.



Men's Shed Sculpture Competition

This year saw an exciting project come to life in a creative way. We collaborated with the Tasmanian Men's Shed Association as part of the HEAR Consultation project, finding a way to connect with the sheds to discuss active ageing beyond promoting the traditional survey tools. Members of the sheds have so many skills and abilities to showcase and this was an ideal way to do so through a sculpture competition.

Creations were to resemble the themes for our consultation - Healthy, Engaged and Resilient. It could be an object previously created or crafted just for this competition and could be any size or shape – as long as it was made from recycled materials. Special thanks to Brendan and the team at Carbatec for providing the generous prize. Thank you to all the sheds that submitted entries to this inaugural sculpture. We had 10 entries that showcased the craftsmanship of six different sheds.

The three finalists were:

1. Channel Men's Shed - Table
2. Penguin Men's Shed – Lectern
3. Veterans and Community Wood Centre, Kings Meadows Shed – Man's Best Friend

The winning piece made us think about family, connection and sharing meals together, key things that support active ageing. The skill to create the piece was outstanding and the time planning and creating it as a team showcased great resilience and camaraderie.



Seniors Week 2022

After a challenging couple of years due to COVID, Seniors Week 2022 provided an important opportunity for older Tasmanians to reconnect with their community.

The theme for the year was 'Enrich'. We wanted to celebrate the ways that older people enrich our community and encourage older people to seek out new connections to enrich their own lives.

Thousands of people attended the 450 statewide events on offer, hosted by 138 separate event hosts. In stark comparison to the previous two years, all events were held in person. Events ranged from worm farms through to IT advice and virtual reality experiences. Outdoor activities were popular, as were the many entertainment options including concerts by former member of The Seekers, Keith Potger.

Our official launch event was held in Penguin. Guests were treated to musical entertainment, interactive displays, and a lovely morning tea at the local surf club.

Seniors Week continues to be an important initiative to encourage people to connect with their communities. Of event participants surveyed in 2022, 60% reported that they were trying a new activity and all event organisers surveyed believe that Seniors Week benefits their communities.

We gratefully acknowledge our major sponsors TasNetworks, Metro Tasmania, Australia Post and The Public Trustee.



Navigating a Journey 45+

COTA Tasmania and the Regional Jobs Hub, West North West Working, found a unique opportunity to address job shortages on the North West Coast, holding an expo in Burnie on April 27 with local industries in attendance.

The expo was held at the Burnie Bowls Club Cooe, providing a fun, informal environment to meet employers, course providers and volunteer organisations.

As we face employee shortages across the State, we have an opportunity to support people of all ages into employment and training options, including those at mid-career or people wanting greater flexibility in the work they undertake towards retirement age. Older workers can offer experience, skills and loyalty as well as adding to the age diversity of organisations more generally.

Addressing the need to support our community through the current employment landscape, COTA Tasmania and West North West Working collaborated on the Expo, tailored specifically for those over 45 years of age.

Bill* arrived at the expo after having cared for his parents for 10 years and given up working to do so. He felt he was unsure about the process of job searching and lacked confidence to market himself well. He said he had no resume and had come to meet people and learn what steps to take. Bill spent time meeting employers and left with a one-on-one resume appointment the following week. Importantly – his networks and confidence were lifted. Bill is now working with a local employer, identified from his contact at the Expo.

Plans for another Expo on the North West Coast are in progress for mid-November 2023.

COTA will continue to work with Jobs Tasmania to have broader discussions about how Regional Jobs Hubs across the state can link with us around workforce, training and recruitment issues facing older job seekers, including future place-based events and activities as well as recommending broader awareness of and usage of our Work 45+ website resources.



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2023

More than 150 people across Tasmania donned purple and held their banners high in COTA Tasmania's annual Walks Against Elder Abuse on June 15 and 16. Dressed in purple, members of the community came together to raise awareness and to support an end to abuse and ageism.

At the Hobart walk, the Tasmanian Minister for Community Services and Development, The Honourable Nic Street MP, launched *Lifelong Respect: Tasmania's Strategy to end the abuse of older people (Elder Abuse) 2023-2029*. COTA Tasmania provided input into the development of this strategy and is particularly pleased to see the inclusion of cultural abuse and coercive control as forms of elder abuse named within the strategy.

We would like to thank the Tasmanian Government for its support for COTA Tasmania's Elder Abuse Prevention Program, including the Walks Against Elder Abuse. We also thank the City of Hobart, City of Launceston and Burnie Library for hosting the reception events following the walks.



“ The training was good for me, it helped with validating my experiences and moving on.



Older voices for change

The Older Voices for Change trial was a collaboration between COTA Tasmania and Engender Equality that designed and delivered media training for victim-survivors of elder abuse.

While COTA Tasmania has long recognised that journalists prefer to speak directly to people who have first-hand experience of elder abuse, in previous years we have been unable to identify elder abuse survivors willing to speak publicly. This year, however, following training and support delivered through the Older Voices for Change trial, survivor-advocates aged in their 80s felt confident to be interviewed.

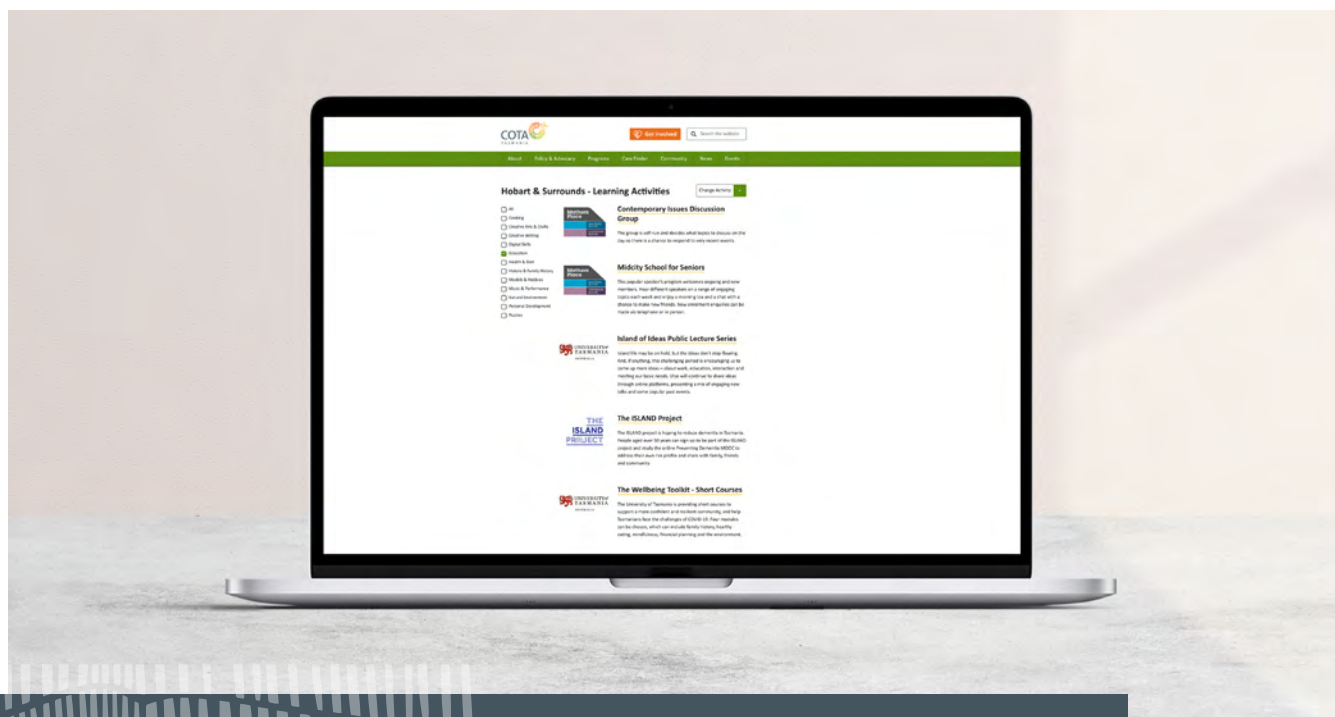
On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, on June 15, advocates were supported to speak about their experiences and were interviewed by several media outlets. A week later, Older Voices for Change survivor-advocates were interviewed for an ABC online news article responding to concerns about elder abuse raised by Australia's Age Discrimination Commissioner.

“ Getting people to see they are in an abusive relationship is hard. Education is key.

This confirms the value of lived experience in attracting media attention. Within five weeks of finishing their training, Older Voices for Change elder abuse survivor-advocates had raised awareness of elder abuse and related services.

The trained advocates are now part of an ongoing Older Voices for Change program that will alert them to future public-speaking opportunities and support them if they decide to proceed. Importantly, COTA Tasmania staff will also continue to liaise with journalists to help ensure they respect the advocates' right to tell only as much of their story as they wish, to be anonymous if that is their choice, and to promote services for older people experiencing abuse.

“ It is so nice to be able to think back and have had someone to rely on for support...rather than be on your own again.



Community Activities Webpage upgrade

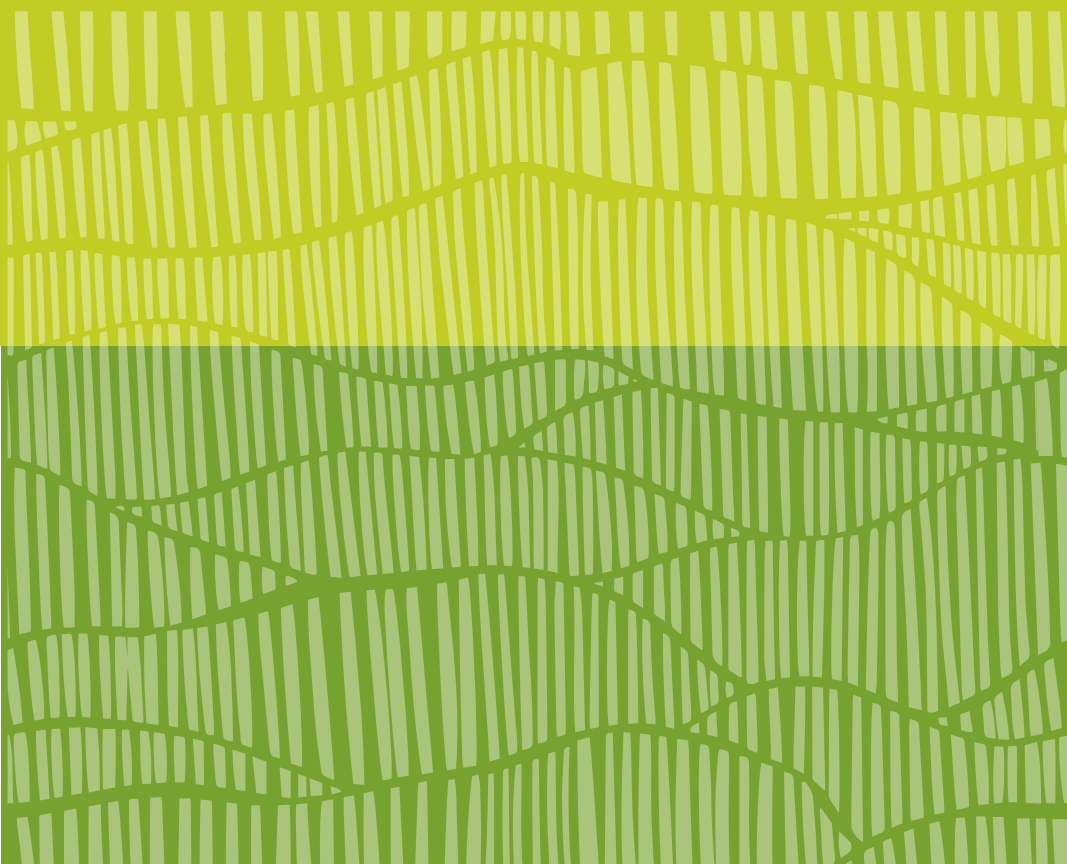
The COTA Community Activities page aims to assist Tasmanians to connect with their communities, keep active and try new activities. Since launching in 2018, the page now has more than 900 activity listings to keep people active – socially, mentally, physically and psychologically.

We have been working hard behind the scenes to upgrade the functionality of this important resource tool, so that organisations and groups can make and update their own listings. By doing so, the activities listed will be more accurate and up to date for community members searching it.

This project has seen us working closely with IT professionals and a small group of valuable 'testers' who have been checking the new processes for us. We look forward to more people being aware of and using this webpage to find ways to connect with local activities, including community service workers, friends and families of older Tasmanians.



PROGRAMS & PROJECTS



Aged Care System Navigator Trial

FUNDING PARTNER: COTA AUSTRALIA

COTA Tasmania participated in the Aged Care System Navigator Trial from early 2019 until late December 2022. This pilot project focused on providing needs-based aged care system navigation assistance to older Tasmanians and others (eg family members and friends, carers) who were looking to apply for aged care services or transition between different types of home-based and residential aged care services.

COTA Tasmania's project was initially focused in the South and North, and it was extended to include a North West office and staff member in mid-2020. Our services were very popular, and referral numbers increased steadily over the course of the trial project.

From July 1 to November 30 2022, we provided aged care system navigation assistance to approximately 285 new clients, and we supported an average of 58 ongoing clients per month. We also delivered 13 aged care information sessions to groups, with an audience in total of 277 people.

"Thank you so much for your amazingly professional, detailed, and empathic assistance for my parents. Without your support my parents would not have requested any further assistance [...]. The complexity of the system and my parents' reluctance to ask for help would have been insurmountable hurdles to them receiving the assistance they need to safely remain in their home without your guidance and advocacy. I am very grateful for your assistance and hope this service continues to be available to other families."

The Aged Care System Navigator trial concluded on December 31 2022.

Care Finder Program

FUNDING PARTNER: PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK TASMANIA

In February 2023, COTA Tasmania was delighted to receive the news that our tender application for the new Care Finder program was successful. Care Finder is a nationwide program that offers ongoing navigation assistance to a target group of older people who are eligible (or likely to be eligible) for aged care services but need intensive support to access these and other options. Care Finder is being managed by Primary Health Network agencies across Australia. The other Care Finder organisations in Tasmania are Salvation Army, CatholicCare Tasmania, and Wintringham Community Housing and Support – Southern Tasmania.

COTA Tasmania commenced Care Finder services in mid-February 2023. We engaged a small Project Management team in April 2023, with view to upscaling our operations to full-capacity levels as smoothly and as efficiently as possible. New Care Finder staff (including Team Leader, Intake Officers, and Care Finders) were recruited in May-June 2023.

We are pleased to welcome new and returning staff to our exciting program.



Diversity Education

FUNDING PARTNER: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

PROGRAM PARTNER: OLDER PERSONS ADVOCACY NETWORK

COTA Tasmania partnered with the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) to deliver the *Who's missing? Planning for diversity* learning series to aged care providers.

COTA Tasmania participated in OPAN's early stakeholder engagement, resource development and testing of workshop content prior to its official launch in 2023.

The core goal of the *Who's missing? Planning for diversity* learning series is to support aged care managers responsible for service planning and/or compliance and, to embed diversity actions/plans into their quality improvement planning and accreditation processes.

Managers who attended the workshops, worked with Diversity Educators to explore the Aged Care Diversity Framework, which refers to 12 diversity groups, and possible service planning pathways to better support diverse aged care participants.

More than 30 Tasmanian staff members from a range of aged care providers participated in six workshops held in 2023 in Hobart, Launceston and online.

A national community of practice was also launched in June 2023 to support eligible Queensland and Tasmanian aged care providers who had gained their certificate of course completion.

This important collaboration between the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and COTA Tasmania had overwhelmingly positive feedback with providers indicating they had greatly enhanced their understanding of the 12 diversity groups and increased their confidence in planning for diversity. As a result, providers felt motivated to review current practices to better accommodate the diverse needs of aged care participants.

While face-to-face training has concluded in Tasmania, this exciting project continues to be rolled out across other states. OPAN's Diversity Education program will soon launch an abridged full online training series.



Elder Abuse Prevention

FUNDING PARTNER: DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET

In June, COTA Tasmania's elder abuse prevention funding from the Tasmanian Government was extended until 30 June 2024.

In 2022/2023, partnerships continued to be the foundation of COTA Tasmania's ongoing work to prevent elder abuse:

- COTA Tasmania delivered a comprehensive series of online and in-person information sessions about elder abuse to staff working for the Older Persons Mental Health Service, the broader Statewide Mental Health Service, adult day care services and other Tasmanian health services. Where possible, a member of Tasmania Legal Aid's Senior Assist (Senior Assist) joined the sessions at COTA Tasmania's invitation to introduce its service and respond to any questions about legal matters.
- With the support and encouragement of respective local councils, COTA Tasmania again coordinated and delivered annual Walks Against Elder Abuse in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie.
- COTA Tasmania hosted free monthly Hobart and Launceston legal clinics by Senior Assist for older Tasmanians.
- To learn how elder abuse is understood and experienced in diverse communities, COTA Tasmania completed qualitative research with members of the LGBTIQ+ community and drafted a report, in partnership with Working It Out.
- In collaboration with Engender Equality, COTA Tasmania designed and delivered a trial elder abuse survivor advocates program called Older Voices for Change. COTA Tasmania subsequently provided support to its alumni when they were interviewed by the media in their capacity as 'experts by experience'.

Following are several key examples of the many other activities undertaken by COTA Tasmania to help prevent and respond to elder abuse in 2022/2023:

- COTA Tasmania's peer educators delivered elder abuse information sessions across the State to 470 people, again stimulating discussion and receiving praise from community groups.
- As well as attending routine meetings of the Statewide Elder Abuse Advisory Committee, COTA Tasmania provided feedback on a draft of the new Tasmanian elder abuse prevention strategy, *Lifelong Respect: Tasmania's Strategy to end the abuse of older people (Elder Abuse) 2023-2029*. COTA Tasmania's submission benefited significantly from input by our Tasmanian Policy Council and discussions with TasCOSS.
- In recognition that ageism is a key driver of elder abuse, COTA Tasmania created and distributed a flyer about the links between ageism and elder abuse.
- As a member of the Statewide Older Persons Mental Health Service Review Control Group, COTA Tasmania advocated at a systems level for older people who are or may become clients of this service.



Organisational Funding

FUNDING PARTNER: DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET

POLICY, CONSULTATION AND ADVOCACY

To effectively operate as a peak body representing older Tasmanians, we regularly participate in consultation and stakeholder engagement across a broad policy remit. The Healthy, Engaged and Resilient (HEAR) Active Ageing Consultation was a large project this year, with participants lived experience to guide the next Tasmanian Strategy for Older Tasmanians.

A key component of COTA Tasmania's engagement framework is the Tasmanian Policy Council, whose members meet bi monthly to discuss and contribute towards policy areas impacting older Tasmanians.

REPRESENTATION

COTA attends regular community stakeholder meetings in the following areas:

- TasCOSS Community Services Workforce Coalition
- Hobart Airport Accessibility Advisory Group
- Aged Care Collaborative – Consumer Choice and Advocacy Working Group
- Aged Care Collaborative - Collaborative Care Planning Working Group
- Partners in Palliative Care
- Home and Community Care Forums
- Tasmanian Public Trustee Stakeholder Reference Group
- TasCOSS Community Home Support Program Sector Development Steering Group
- Tasmanian Health Promotion network meetings
- Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Network
- Primary Health Network Tasmania – Care Finder implementation
- Mental Wellbeing Literacy Project Steering Committee
- The State-wide Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee (SEAPAC)
- Central Connect Leadership Roundtable

- Older Persons Mental Health Services Review – Control Group
- Healthy Tasmania Planning and Implementation Advisory Group
- Public Health Service Delivery Group
- COTA Energy Advocates
- Marinus Link Revenue Proposal
- Tas Networks - Pricing and Regulatory Working Group
- Tasmanian Health Senate
- Tasmanian Active Living Coalition
- Tas Water
- Prejudice Related Violence Working Group
- Aurora Energy Charter Community Consultation Forum

This year, we maintained collaborative relationships and formed projects with:

- The Network of Tasmanian Peaks
- Working it Out
- Searson Buck
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- Carers Tasmania/Care2Serve
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – Community Partnerships and Priorities
- Clubs Tasmania
- Tasmanian Men's Shed Association
- Good Shepherd Financial Independence Hub
- St Lukes Health
- Libraries Tasmania and 26TEN
- National Jobs Link
- TAFE Tasmania
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Engendered Equality
- Metro Tasmania
- Australian Post Office
- Tas Networks
- Poco People
- Tasmanian Legal Aid
- Advocacy Tasmania
- Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT)

- Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre
- Tasmanian Burns Unit, Royal Hobart Hospital
- Mercury Walch
- The Senior
- The Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania

ACTIVE AGEING – AGEISM AWARENESS

An important focus within the Active Ageing project space this year has been raising awareness of ageism and its impacts more broadly within our communities. COTA Tasmania promotes this in all programs and policy work, and we have now been working more closely in this space by designing and delivering workshops to TAFE students, community organisations, business networks and the community club's sector.

“Ageism is stereotyping, discrimination and mistreatment based solely upon age. When directed towards older people, it comes from negative attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be older.”

— EveryAGE Counts

Ageism can be as simple as excluding older people in conversations, making assumptions about their abilities, or using patronising language. It impacts access to services and people's sense of belonging.

People aged over 50 years now account for 40% of Tasmania's population (2021 Census). As more people live longer, the number of people who could be affected by ageism and elder abuse will increase, so it's more important than ever that we raise awareness and challenge negative attitudes towards ageing.

Ageism awareness workshops enable us to collaborate with diverse groups across the community, to enhance people's awareness of their own bias, dispel negative perceptions about ageing, and to work together to build age friendly communities that ensure Tasmanians can live a full life as they age.

MATURE-AGED WORKFORCE

A recent report by the Australian Human Resources Institute and the Human Rights Commission shows that workplace age discrimination is still high in Australia – both in recruitment and retention.

Only 25% of respondents stated they were open to hiring people aged 65 and over 'to a large extent', and just over half (56%) were open to hiring people in the next age group down (50-64 years). Disappointingly, 18% reported not being open to hiring people aged 65 and over 'at all'.

This research provides a wake-up call to organisations to consider older workers more carefully when developing diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies.

Alongside the Navigating a Journey 45+ Job Expo, work in this space has seen us collaborate with the Career Assistance Transition Program, recruiters and Regional Jobs Hubs. We have been meeting with mature aged workers to talk about their rights, ensuring they are aware of age discrimination and that they are aware of our Work 45+ resource to support their job search and career journeys.



Peer Education

FUNDING PARTNER: TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE

The year 2022/2023 has been a year of transition for the Peer Education Program. The program began more than 11 years ago as part of an Australia wide project, funded and resourced by Beyond Blue. The value of having volunteer Peer Educators engage directly with members of community groups was embraced by COTA Tasmania and extended to other topics.

COTA Tasmania's volunteers have been delivering sessions on the five current topics for a number of years. One topic, Home Fire Safety is funded by a direct grant from the Tasmania Fire Service. The other four topics were added to the Peer Education Program in alignment with other projects delivered by COTA Tasmania.

Unfortunately, COTA Tasmania does not receive core funding to deliver its Peer Education Program. Over time, project budgets have become strained and project funding less certain. COTA Tasmania's request in its State Budget Submission, for ongoing core funding for peer education, was not granted.

In this difficult funding climate, the Peer Education Program delivered 51 sessions over the course of the year. Session delivery was heavily skewed towards the first six months of the year ending in December 2022.

Topic	Number of sessions delivered
Home Fire Safety	13
Understanding Elder Abuse	4
Protecting your Finances from Abuse	16
Eat for Life	13
Getting Your House in Order	5

In the second part of the year, the Peer Education Co-ordinator was heavily involved in undertaking a review of the resource booklet entitled *End-of-Life Planning* by COTA Tasmania and Bill Godfrey. The revised booklet will be called *Estate*

and Advance Care Planning. It will be published early in the 2023/2024 financial year and will be an invaluable resource for members of the community. This project was facilitated by a grant received from Primary Health Tasmania.

In view of the difficulty involved in sustaining the funding for the Peer Education Program, a decision was taken to place the program into recess at the end of June 2023. While the program is in recess, a review will be undertaken to explore what options are available to enable COTA Tasmania to achieve direct community engagement using a sustainable funding model.

COTA Tasmania thanks all the volunteer Peer Educators who have contributed to the program over the years since its inception.

Staying Strong

FUNDING PARTNER: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TASMANIA

The Staying Strong program has been delivered by COTA Tasmania since 2021 to increase the health and wellbeing of older Tasmanians through engagement in regular, affordable fitness programs that are accessible at home or through local groups.

Through this program, COTA Tasmania produced the *Staying Strong at Home* booklet, of which more than 3,500 copies are being distributed to older Tasmanians. The booklet contains an exercise program that can be undertaken at home with little or no equipment, developed by a fitness professional specifically for older people.

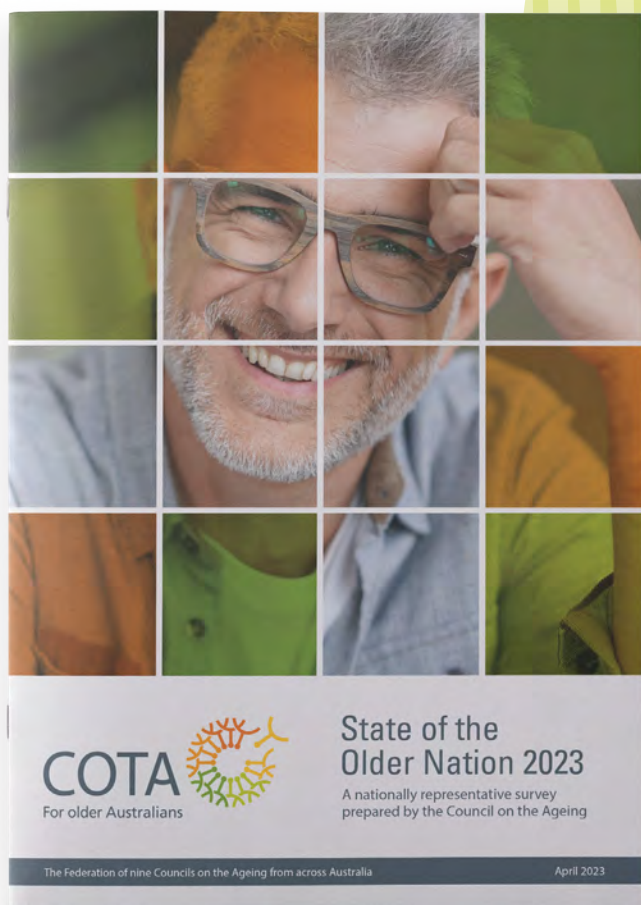
Through the Staying Strong program, fitness instructors are provided with age inclusive fitness training skills which results in a nationally recognised accreditation. More than 30 instructors have undertaken the course in Tasmania.

Unfortunately, COTA Tasmania has not been funded to deliver the Staying Strong program beyond 30 June 2023.

State of the Older Nation 2023

This landmark report on the experiences and views of Older Australians is the third of the COTA Federation's *State Of The Older Nation* (SOTON) reports. The report is a nationally representative survey prepared by the Federation of nine Councils on the Ageing from across Australia.

After another year living with COVID-19, combined with natural disasters at home, conflict overseas and cost of-living pressures, it is perhaps unsurprising that COTA's 2023 report tells the story of a cohort who aren't feeling as good about the future as they used to.



Over 1 in 5 (22%) Older Australians surveyed are renting, with many vulnerable groups significantly more likely. Renting is more prevalent among Older Australians who:

- Worry about their **risk of homelessness** in the next 12 months: **67% are renters**
- Identify as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**: **55%[^]**
- Are **not in paid employment**: **47%**
- Have a **disability**: **38%**
- Identify as **LGBTQ+**: **38%**
- Are **single**: **37%**
- Their primary source of income is a **government pension**: **34%**



59%

of Older Australians with financial stress feel like things are getting worse.



25%

of Older Australians don't think they'll ever retire.



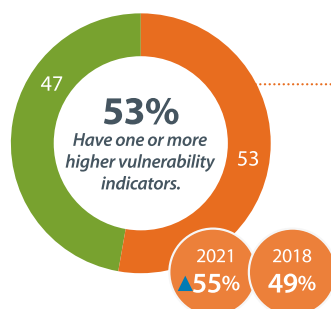
35%

of Older Australians have experienced aged discrimination.



More than one in two Australians aged 50+ are vulnerable – remaining steady since the 2021 study.

■ Lower vulnerability ■ Higher vulnerability



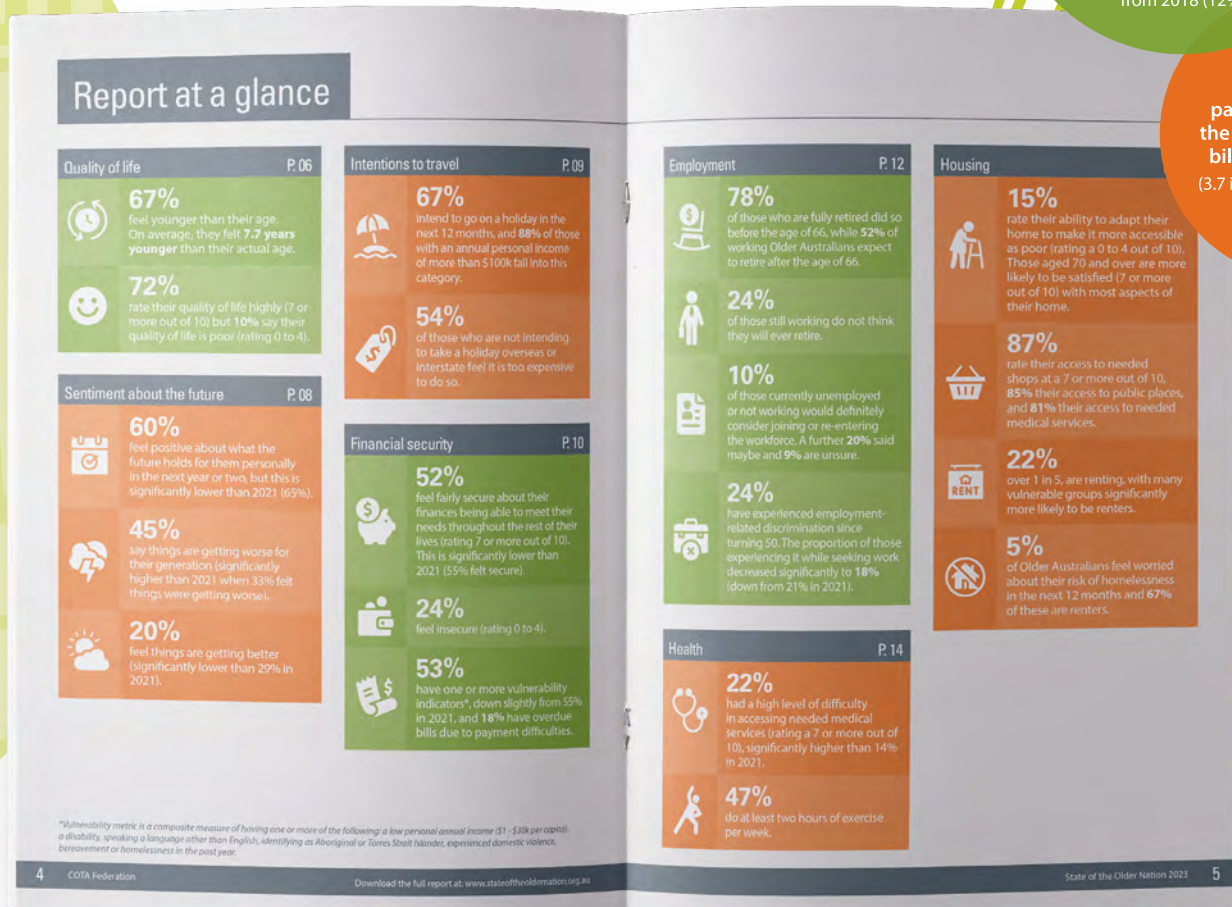
● **Indicators used to identify vulnerability and incidence:**

- Have a low personal annual income (\$1 - \$30k per capita): **36%**
- Living with disability: **22%**
- Prefer to speak a language other than English at home: **7%**
- Bereaved in the last year: **3%**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: **1%**
- Experienced domestic violence in the past year: **3%**
- Experienced homelessness in the last year: **1%**



18% have overdue bills due to payment difficulties. This is slightly higher than 2021 (16%), although the difference is not significant, following a significant increase from 2018 (12%).

Among those who had payment difficulties, the average number of bills overdue was 3.5 (3.7 in 2021, up significantly from 3.0 in 2018)



www.stateoftheoldernation.org.au



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