

Mayor and Councillors
City of Clarence
38 Bligh Street
Rosny Park Tasmania 7018

Via email: yoursay@ccc.tas.gov.au

Dear Councillors

COTA Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to comment on the **City of Clarence Revised Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035**.

We support Council's emphasis on community wellbeing, sustainability, and inclusive service delivery, and we particularly welcome the Plan's focus on an "inclusive and connected" Clarence across all ages.

Clarence is entering a period of significant demographic change. Independent Tasmanian local government projections indicate Clarence has been "hyper-ageing" since 2019, with strong projected growth in residents aged 65+ and 85+ over coming years. This makes it essential that the Strategic Plan explicitly embeds age-friendly design, accessible services, and inclusive engagement—so older people can remain connected, safe, and active contributors to community life.

COTA Tasmania's submission focuses on practical refinements to strengthen the Plan for older residents and, by extension, improve liveability for everyone.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these comments further, and to contribute to implementation work (including indicators, structure plan guidance, and engagement processes).

Yours sincerely,



Brigid Wilkinson
Chief Executive Officer

23 January 2026

Submission to the City of Clarence Revised Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035

1. Overview

COTA Tasmania supports the principles in the Strategic Plan, namely:

- The vision of Clarence as “a vibrant, prosperous, sustainable city,” and the emphasis on community wellbeing.
- The four-pillar structure, particularly Wellbeing and Belonging, and the commitment to inclusive engagement and clear information.
- The recognition of sustainability and climate action as core to future planning.

While we support the Plan’s overall direction, we recommend a stronger and more explicit age-friendly lens across all pillars. This will ensure Council’s strategic intent translates into practical, measurable improvements that support older residents to remain connected, safe, and active in the community which benefits people of all ages.

COTA Tasmania recommends that Council:

- Maintain and refresh its commitment to the World Health Organisation principles of age-friendly cities, and continue to report progress using the WHO age-friendly domains (transport, housing, outdoor spaces, social participation, communication, inclusion, civic participation, and community supports).
- Introduce a simple Age Impact Statement requirement for major strategies and projects (including footpaths, parks, transport, digital services, and planning decisions).
- Commit to and apply universal design and accessibility standards in public realm upgrades (including seating, shade, toilets, crossings, lighting, and wayfinding).
- Strengthen transport and walkability outcomes, including safe crossings, continuous footpaths, more seating, and “last-mile” access to key services.
- Support greater housing diversity and more adaptable housing options, including downsizing choices near activity centres, universal design principles, and planning pathways that enable ageing in place.
- Embed digital inclusion by ensuring online services are accessible and complemented by non-digital alternatives, supported by community-based digital help where needed.
- Integrate climate and emergency resilience planning that recognises heightened risks for older residents (heatwaves, smoke events, coastal impacts), including clear communications and local check-in/support pathways.
- Strengthen inclusive engagement by setting expectations for plain language and multi-channel consultation (online, paper, phone, and in-person), with deliberate outreach to older people, including those who are not online.

2. About COTA Tasmania

COTA Tasmania (Council on the Ageing Tasmania) is Tasmania's peak body representing older Tasmanians. For more than 60 years, we have been a trusted voice for older people, promoting positive attitudes to ageing, advancing social inclusion, and championing the rights, interests, and value of people as they age.

We provide independent, evidence-based policy and advocacy informed by the lived experience of older people and engagement with stakeholders across government, community services, and industry. Our focus is on improving outcomes for older Tasmanians and supporting ageing as a time of opportunity, contribution, and security.

We collaborate with other peak bodies, national COTA colleagues, and sector partners to challenge ageism and support practical reforms that enable people to age with dignity, independence, and connection in the communities they choose.

3. Why the Strategic Plan is important for older Tasmanians

Tasmania has Australia's oldest population profile, which makes older Tasmanians a particularly significant cohort in policy design and service planning.

At the 2021 Census, Tasmania's median age was 42 years, around four years older than the national median, reflecting a comparatively larger share of older residents.

Nationally, Tasmania has had the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over among the states (around one in five), and the population is projected to continue ageing, with the strongest growth in the 75+ age group and a rising share of Tasmanians over 65 in coming decades.

4. Suggested refinements by Strategic Pillar

4.1 Pillar 1 – Strategy and Delivery

(A council that plans strategically, delivers effectively, and works for its community.)

What we support

The emphasis on accessible, reliable services and improved customer experience is strongly aligned with older people's needs.

Suggested additions / emphasis

- Plan outcome 1.3: Responsive and high-quality services
Explicitly include “equitable access for people with disability and older people,” and ensure essential services remain accessible through in-person/phone/paper options as well as online.
- Plan outcome 1.4: Effective policy and planning
Add an Age Impact Statement for major initiatives (planning scheme work, major capital projects, service redesign).
- Plan outcome 1.6: Responsible and resilient management
Include a commitment to measure progress using a small set of publicly reported indicators relevant to ageing (footpath condition/accessibility, seating density in centres, participation rates, customer satisfaction for older residents, etc).

Practical actions

- Publish an annual Age-Friendly Implementation Snapshot (1–2 pages) showing what changed on the ground.
- Ensure Council communications meet accessibility expectations: plain language, readable fonts, captions, and printable formats.

4.2 Pillar 2 – Sustainable Growth

(Balancing smart development with a thriving, inclusive, and resilient future.)

What we support

We strongly support the Plan’s sustainability and resilience framing, including climate-ready planning and “accessible and future-ready” outcomes.

Suggested additions / emphasis

- Plan outcome 2.3:
Well-considered land use planning: Strengthen language on ensuring growth includes walkable neighbourhoods with local access to services (health, groceries, community spaces), reducing car dependency for people who no longer drive.
- Plan outcome 2.4: Asset management and investment
Prioritise upgrades that improve daily independence—footpaths, kerb ramps, lighting, benches, toilets, safe crossings.
- Plan outcome 2.6: Accessible and future-ready city
Explicitly reference the WHO age-friendly domains (transport, housing, outdoor spaces, communication).

Practical actions

- Adopt minimum standards for “everyday access” in key centres (e.g., continuous accessible paths, seating every X metres, shade, toilets, safe crossings).
- Plan for climate-related risks that disproportionately affect older people (heatwaves, smoke, flooding, and coastal impacts) and incorporate community support pathways.

4.3 Pillar 3 – Culture and Place

(Honouring our diverse stories, people, and our natural and built environment.)

What we support

We support Council’s focus on safe, welcoming places, First Nations partnership, and a thriving creative community.

Suggested additions / emphasis

- Ensure cultural programming, events, and venues are accessible: transport options, hearing support, seating, toilets, clear signage, and daytime scheduling where possible.
- In “safe, vibrant and distinctive places” (Plan Outcome 3.4), include “age-friendly public realm design” explicitly.

Practical actions

- Continue to partner with community groups (including seniors groups) on intergenerational programs that reduce isolation and strengthen belonging. Examples of successful community engagement include Council's Positive Ageing Group, Youth Working Group, Disability Access and Inclusion Working Group, and Active Living Advisory Committee.

4.4 Pillar 4 – Wellbeing and Belonging

(Building a healthy, inclusive, resilient community where people feel connected and supported.)

What we support

This pillar aligns strongly with age-friendly goals, particularly outcomes on inclusive connection, resilience, and accessible engagement.

Suggested additions / emphasis

- Plan outcome 4.1: Healthy lives for all
Include specific acknowledgement of older residents' needs around prevention, social connection, and accessible places to be active.
- Plan outcome 4.2: Inclusive and connected communities
Add commitments to reduce isolation through place-based connection (libraries, neighbourhood houses, community hubs) and transport links.
- Plan outcome 4.3: Resilient together
Include proactive supports for older people in emergencies (heat, smoke, storms), including "check-in" networks and clear information channels.
- Plan outcome 4.4: Engaged, aware and empowered communities
Strengthen inclusive engagement by specifying multi-channel consultation (online + paper + phone + in-person), with deliberate outreach to older residents and those without internet.

Practical actions

- Adopt a simple "inclusive engagement standard" for Council projects and consultations: plain-language summaries, accessible formats (large print, printable PDFs), and clear pathways for phone/in-person feedback as well as online submissions.
- Deliver targeted outreach to older residents through trusted community touchpoints (libraries, community houses, neighbourhood centres, seniors groups, service centres), including pop-up "listening sessions" at different times of day.
- Strengthen "close the loop" reporting by publishing short "You said / We did" updates after consultations, and by explaining how feedback shaped final decisions (or why suggestions could not be adopted).

5. Conclusion

COTA Tasmania supports the direction of the Revised Strategic Plan 2025–2035 and recommends targeted refinements to embed age-friendly principles across all pillars, supported by measurable actions and accountability.

Demographic projections make this work urgent and high-value: an age-friendly Clarence is a more liveable Clarence for everyone.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with Council officers to discuss implementation, including practical indicators, integration with relevant structure plan and public realm work, and multi-channel engagement methods that reach older residents, including those who are not online.