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Plea for minister to support ageing state

Sue Bailey

In the wake of the latest population projections, the Council on the Ageing Tasmania has renewed calls for a dedicated minister for ageing in line with other states.

COTA chief executive Brigid Wilkinson said it was time for the government to "step up and create a better future and ageing journey for us all".

"We are all ageing and I'm sure we all want that experience to be a positive one," she said. "This experience should not be determined by our postcode."

"We call again on the current government to appoint a

minister for ageing so that there is consideration, resources and support for the needs of all Tasmanians."



Brigid Wilkinson

A Department of Treasury and Finance report predicts a dramatic increase in Tasmanians aged over 85 in the next 30 years.

Ms Wilkinson said it had been known for a long time that Tasmania had a higher proportion of older citizens and the highest median age

range in Australia.

"What we see time and time again is this figure presented to us as a 'burden' on our communities," she said.

"Ageing is not a burden. The burden is created when we do not have structures and resources in place to support the ageing process effectively."

Ms Wilkinson said the projections provided Tasmania with an opportunity to "stop, reflect and re-position our thinking".

"We have not invested properly in preventative health, transport, social or housing options that support us to age well, to have what we need in

our local communities to assist us to age well, and to keep us connected to community."

Community Services Minister Roger Jaensch said he had responsibility for ageing Tasmanians and would continue to meet and work with COTA and was providing \$1.98m for it to deliver services to older Tasmanians.

"I am deeply committed to listening to and working with older members of our community to understand, respond to and advocate for their needs," he said.

Demographer Lisa Denny said population trajectories can be influenced by policy in-

tervention "and we can shape our demographic destiny".

"Population projections should be used to plan for our future," she wrote on her blog.

"Informed policy levers should be pushed and pulled and used to influence population change, particularly to accentuate favourable socio-economic demographic trends and offset the negative ones, based on our collective, long-term, vision for the state."

The Treasury report said the number of Tasmanians aged 85 and over was predicted to rise from one in 41 people last year to one in 15 people by 2053.

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Hitch for raffle winner

BLAST FROM THE PAST
 with Damian Bester

Raffle prizes don't get much better than a brand-new car, but there was a slight hitch when Mr J.O. Robson's ticket was drawn ahead of 93,000 others in May 1949.

Mr Robson, of Lower Sandy Bay, was the proud winner of a Vauxhall car in a raffle raising funds for the Red Cross.

And it was the Red Cross that came to his aid when he collected the keys to the Vauxhall Velox sedan the next day.

Not being a driver himself, Mr Robson rode home to Braeside Crescent with Red Cross officer Mrs J. Cane behind the wheel of his new car.

The raffle raised £4689 for Red Cross funds (about \$415,000 today).

Further to the recent column featuring the 1949 Collinsvale Show, former champion axeman Pat Marshall was in touch to say he had spotted the late Ken Devine in the woodchopping photo.

Damian is a former Mercury journalist who now publishes the fortnightly New Norfolk and Derwent Valley News. He welcomes feedback on this column. Call or text 0417 387 577 or send an email to damiambester@gmail.com



There were 93,000 tickets in this tarpaulin at the Red Cross Ball in Hobart in May 1949, with first prize of a new Vauxhall car to be won. The lucky winner, Mr J.O. Robson, of Lower Sandy Bay, collected the keys the next day but was unable to drive the car home because he did not have a licence. Mercury historical archive images.

