



**2018–2019**  
STATE BUDGET  
COMMUNITY  
CONSULTATION  
SUBMISSION

**COTA** TAS INC



## Who I am, not how old I am

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"I don't want to be valued or undervalued, respected or disrespected simply because of how old I am. I want to live in a society where how I am viewed is not determined by my age, but by how I live my life."

Active Ageing consultation participant

One in every five Tasmanians is now aged 65 or over.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016



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## About COTA Tasmania

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COTA Tasmania (Council on the Ageing [Tas] Inc) is a not-for-profit organisation, operating as a peak body for a wide range of organisations and individuals who are committed to encouraging our community to think positively about ageing. This involves promoting and encouraging social inclusion and championing the rights and interests of Tasmanians as they age.

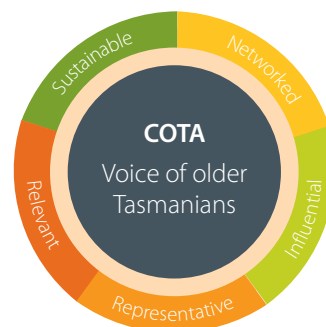
The vision of COTA Tas is for an inclusive society that values, supports and respects older people.

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For further information or advice regarding the content of this document please contact:

### **SUE LEITCH**

Chief Executive Officer  
COTA Tasmania  
'Westella'  
181 Elizabeth Street  
HOBART TAS 7000  
Phone: (03) 6231 3265  
Mobile: 0448 281 897  
Email: [suel@cotatas.org.au](mailto:suel@cotatas.org.au)



# PRIORITY ISSUES

## 1. Elder Abuse Prevention

Elder abuse remains a significant and under-reported issue in Tasmania. Large population-based studies show incidences of abuse at between three and five percent of the population, which equates to 3,000-4,500 Tasmanians.<sup>1</sup> The consequences of abuse can be substantial and older people suffering abuse can also experience feelings of helplessness alienation, guilt, shame, fear, and anxiety. Abuse of older Tasmanians is a violation of human rights and a rejection of the fundamental respect that our older people deserve.

*"An inquest into the death of an elderly woman in a near-freezing shipping container has heard that she lost 15 kilograms in the previous year to weigh just 37kg and died of hypothermia after spending a night in a converted shipping container."*

*Jessica Howard, Mercury 22 September 2017*

COTA supports a community and whole of government response to the issue of elder abuse and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with State Government to deliver actions to ensure that all older Tasmanians are valued members of society and are treated with respect. Ending abuse is a community responsibility that demands all sectors of society actively address its causes and reduce its harmful effects.

Older Tasmanians have the right to feel safe and respected in their own homes, in their relationships and within their communities. The *Protecting Older Tasmanians from Abuse: Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2015-18* has provided a framework for responding to elder abuse in our community.

As 2018 approaches and the breadth of discussion about elder abuse continues to grow, it is critical that Tasmania reviews and updates the elder abuse prevention strategy and action plan. The ALRC review and report entitled, *Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response* and the recent symposium on elder abuse and neglect held at Parliament House in November will both inform the redevelopment of the Tasmanian strategy.

It is well known that the most common form of elder abuse is abuse of a parent by a child. The current Tasmanian legislative definition for family violence as only occurring between spouses and intimate partners does not cover the type of intra-family abuse. COTA Tasmania believes strongly that the definition should be amended to include abuse of a parent by a child. This will ensure that older people suffering abuse at the hands of their children are afforded similar protections under the act to older people suffering abuse at the hands of a partner.

*"In recent times Australia has risen to the challenge of addressing the scourge of domestic violence. This issue of elder abuse requires a commitment of similar proportions."*

*Graham Hill, Chairman of National Legal and Director, Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania, August 2017*

1. Department of Health and Human Services 2012, *Protecting Older Tasmanians from Abuse*, Tasmanian Government.

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Specifically, we recommend the Government:

**Recommendation 1.1**

Commit to review, redevelopment and the ongoing resourcing of the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy; improve data collection across agencies and services (police, hospitals, legal services and courts).

— \$360,000 over three years

**Recommendation 1.2**

Support the implementation of the recommendations of the ALRC report, *Elder Abuse: A National Legal Response* to safeguard older people from abuse and support their choices and wishes.

**Recommendation 1.3**

Refresh the Elder Abuse Prevention Campaign to raise awareness of elder abuse within the community with appropriate web-based and social media support.

— \$50,000

**Recommendation 1.4**

Endorse and ensure promotion of Guiding Principles that Protect and Respect Older People and progress the principles to become a charter of rights for older Tasmanians.

**Recommendation 1.5**

Expand the legislative definition of family violence to include the abuse of a parent by a child.



## 2. Affordable Housing: Private Rental Market

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*"When you take away a man's house, that he has worked for his whole life, you take everything."*

*Extract from Active Ageing consultation storytelling project*

COTA continues to be concerned about the vulnerability of older Tasmanians living in private rental and the availability of age appropriate housing, particularly in regional areas.

More older Tasmanians are finding themselves in the private rental market. Security of tenure is a major concern and increasingly the ability to pay the rent is front and centre as competition for rental properties is increasing statewide. Only 6% of rental properties were affordable for a pensioner in 2016<sup>2</sup>. The death of a partner and escalating costs is enough to force many older people on fixed incomes into homelessness for the very first time in their lives. Older women are particularly vulnerable to homelessness in older age due to lower earnings over their lifetime and lower superannuation balances.

We note that the Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-25 canvasses options to incentivise landlords to assist vulnerable groups and strongly suggest that the needs of older Tasmanians are incorporated in any planning in this area.

National and local research has identified limited availability of appropriate and affordable rental properties to meet existing and projected demand from older renters. Higher rental rates are also impacting on the capacity of older renters to afford other services such as aged care.

COTA welcomes the commitment to construct accommodation for older disadvantaged Tasmanians along the lines of the widely respected Wintringham model. It is critically important that the Government commits to funding this initiative and to adopting a consultative and consumer-focussed approach to design and implementation at the earliest opportunity.

Specifically, we recommend the Government:

### **Recommendation 2.1**

Progress the development of the Wintringham style supported accommodation for older Tasmanians in southern Tasmania at the earliest opportunity.

### **Recommendation 2.2**

Improve the tenancy security of Tasmanians in private rental housing.

### **Recommendation 2.3**

Introduce incentives for landlords to modify properties to support ageing in place.

### **Recommendation 2.4**

Develop supported accommodation for older people experiencing homelessness in northern Tasmania.

### **Recommendation 2.5**

Explore opportunities and reduce barriers to private sector investment (including Tasplan) into age appropriate housing throughout Tasmania.

### 3. Cost of Living

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Many older Tasmanians living on fixed incomes are struggling to make ends meet and the cost of living is a very real concern for them.

The range of seniors concessions supported by the Tasmanian government allow older Tasmanians and others on low incomes to enjoy a better standard of living in an environment where the cost of living is continually on the rise. COTA commends the government on the announcement of the \$125 special energy bonus for aged pensioners and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders. This one off payment is welcome but more needs to be done to support those in most need, many of whom are living below the poverty line.

Government concessions are greatly appreciated and relied upon by many to help with costs for healthcare, motor vehicle registration and licences, buses, taxis, rates, water and parking in Hobart City Council car parks. By continuing support for senior concession, the Tasmanian Government helps to assist older Tasmanians to enjoy healthier, less stressful lives and remain socially included and active.

Specifically, we recommend the Government:

#### **Recommendation 3.1**

**The Tasmanian Government continues to support senior concessions.**

2. Anglicare Australia (2016)  
Anglicare Australia Rental  
Affordability Snapshot, April 2016,  
Canberra.

### 4. Ageism

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*“There is a tendency in our communities to judge and stereotype people by age. ... Age-old human experiences are superficially adorned with each generation’s fashions and motifs and so appear new and unprecedented. ... To dismiss someone as too old or too young ... exposes narrow minded thinking.”*

*Simon Bevilacqua, The Mercury, 13 November 2017*

We must foster a different approach to ageing in our communities, one that acknowledges that every person is ageing and that being valued or respected is related to who you are and not how old you are.

Existing campaigns that support ‘positive ageing’ may assist in spreading this message but there is an ongoing need to shift community perceptions toward older people. Social perceptions of ageing contribute toward a culture in which older people are demeaned and seen as lacking in agency. In the context of care and support relationships this can lead to elder abuse; elsewhere in the community it may take the form of devaluing or ignoring the valuable contributions made by older people.

Ageing should not be viewed through a diminishing lens but should be seen as an opportunity to explore and value the benefits of experience, wisdom, and skills accumulated over time.

Notwithstanding this fact, ageism and discriminatory practices are alive and well in our community. Combatting ageism is a community responsibility that must involve government at all levels, business and the community.





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A key role for government is to ensure that age discrimination is not embedded in legislation nor in the language used in communication about issues related to older people.

Tasmania's anti-discrimination legislation contains specific provisions that exempt other pieces of State legislation from the operation of the legislation where that legislation specifically permits discrimination (section 24). The Anti-Discrimination Act 1988 also includes specific reference to areas that are exempt from the operation of the Act.

The Tasmanian Government could take a lead role against ageism by removing this exemption in relation to age discrimination. Such action would make a clear and strong statement that the government respects the rights of older Tasmanians and will not accept age discriminatory elements in existing and new legislation.

Communication and the use of language is frequently raised with COTA as an expression of ageism that compounds ageist stereotypes. The public discourse frequently describes the issue of the ageing population as a problem and this perpetuates negative attitudes and our perceptions of self-worth as we age. Tasmania has the opportunity to take the lead in the development of media protocols for the coverage of ageism and elder abuse similar to those that operate for media coverage of mental health and suicide. A collaboration between the School of Social Sciences at the University and Tasmania and COTA Tasmania could initiate such a project if seed funding were to be made available.

Specifically, we recommend the Government:

#### **Recommendation 4.1**

The Tasmanian government moves an amendment of section 24 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1988 to remove the ability to apply age discriminatory provisions within other legislation. This will ensure that any exemptions from the Act relating to age would be specifically detailed under Division 3 of Part 5 of the Act as an extension to the existing list.

#### **Recommendation 4.2**

The Tasmanian government funds a pilot study into the representations of older people in the media to build an evidence base for the development of media protocols for the coverage of ageism and elder abuse.

— \$10,000



## 5. Strong Liveable Communities

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*“Strong Liveable Communities: Tasmania’s Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022 (the Plan) builds on previous and current government strategies, to create a Tasmania that is the best place to live, work, invest and be part of a family, as we grow older.”*

*Premier’s foreword, Strong Liveable Communities, p3.*

Liveable community ideology is changing the way communities are developed across Australia and the world. Adopting policies and inciting action that creates inclusive, safe, connected and sustainable communities has obvious benefits for community members, businesses and Governments as they support, promote participation and create opportunities for all members of society. It is obvious that Governments and communities that do not adopt liveable community policy and implement actions will suffer socially, economically and morally as they rest of the world moves forward.

COTA Tasmania is pleased that the Tasmanian Government has recognised the importance of developing liveable communities through its commitment to support an ageing population in *Strong Liveable Communities: Tasmania’s Active Ageing Plan 2017-2022*. This is an integral step in supporting the development of liveable communities, but full commitment and ongoing support is vital to ensure that this Plan is successful in its implementation, evaluation and reporting to create a Tasmania that thrives socially, economically and culturally.

Implementation of *Strong Liveable Communities* requires development of strong key performance indicators across all implementation strategies, with adequate financial and human support to achieve these effectively. Enforcement of a whole-of-Government approach must occur to ensure that implementation is consistent and sustainable, and evidence of this must be transparent to the whole of community.

Robust evaluation of *Strong Liveable Communities* implementation is critical to ensure that it addresses new and long-term challenges in the ageing space. Appropriate data collection is necessary to benchmark and improve on the Active Ageing Plan. This requires best practice, evidence based research and reporting using segmented age data across all Government departments. Only by collecting data that reflects the diversity of older people can the Tasmanian Government demonstrate that Strong Liveable Communities is effective in creating a Tasmania that is the best place to live, work, invest and be part of a family, as we grow older (Premier’s Foreword, *Strong Liveable Communities*, page 3).

Reporting on *Strong Liveable Communities* implementation should occur progressively to inform the community of the Plans success and growth, and affirm the Tasmanian Governments ongoing commitment to it. This report should include input from COTA, all Government departments and other organisations involved in the Plans implementation.



Support and implementation of *Strong Liveable Communities* has real potential to improve communities across Tasmania and benefit generations to come. This Tasmanian Government can leave a lasting and positive legacy by ensuring that this document lives up to its aims and truly creates a stronger, more liveable Tasmania.

Specifically, we recommend the Government:

**Recommendation 5.1**

The Tasmanian Government makes a firm and ongoing commitment to implement *Strong Liveable Communities*, with adequate support, strong key performance indicators and use of a transparent, whole-of-Government approach to ensure long-term sustainability.

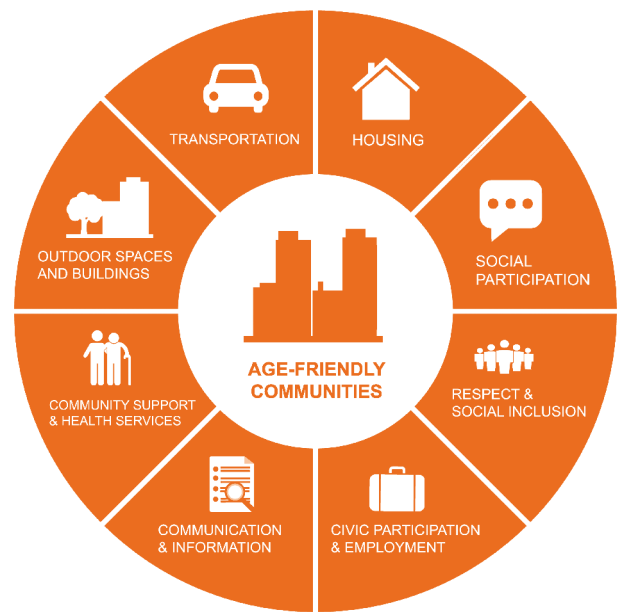
— \$435,000 over 3 years

**Recommendation 5.2**

All Government departments use best practice, evidence based research by collecting segmented age data to reflect the diversity of older people and allow meaningful analysis of the Plans success and support its ongoing development.

**Recommendation 5.3**

Production of a short, concise progress report that informs community about the progress of *Strong Liveable Communities* implementation, sourcing input from COTA, Government departments and other organisations involved.



The 8 domains of liveability (WHO, 2007)



## 6. Community Sector Support

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The community sector delivers a wide range of value-added services to the community at minimal cost. Many not-for-profits operate as micro-businesses and experience many of the attendant challenges. Delivering more with less is a feature of the operation of the community sector while continuing to produce high quality projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to problem solving.

COTA Tasmania has delivered a number of services to government and the community for many years and welcomes the partnerships and co-operative working arrangements. However, we are now experiencing considerable budgetary pressures due to the absence of indexation on grant funding that flows from the Department of Premier and Cabinet. COTA strongly encourages the Tasmanian government to introduce indexation on DPAC grants to the community sector to reflect current practice in relation to grants that are delivered through the Department of Health and Human Services.

Furthermore, COTA supports the TasCOSS proposal for a joint committee of sector and peak body leadership representatives and representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) to ensure the sector maximises the opportunities provided by the reforms it is undergoing, meets increasing demand for services and responds to changing community need.

Specifically, we recommend the Government:

### **Recommendation 6.1**

The Tasmanian Government supports the TasCOSS proposal for a ten year operational plan to support the community sector and the state government to face the significant issues confronting the sector.

### **Recommendation 6.2**

Community sector funding through the Department of Premier and Cabinet is subject to indexation and that there is a formal and urgent review of the adequacy of base funding.



## Summary of Recommendations

1.1

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.1**

Commit to review, redevelopment and the ongoing resourcing of the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy; improve data collection across agencies and services (police, hospitals, legal services and courts).

**\$360,000 over three years**

1.2

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.2**

Support the implementation of the recommendations of the ALRC report, Elder Abuse: A National Legal Response to safeguard older people from abuse and support their choices and wishes.

1.3

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.3**

Refresh the Elder Abuse Prevention Campaign to raise awareness of elder abuse within the community with appropriate web-based and social media support.

**\$50,000**

1.4

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.4**

Endorse and ensure promotion of Guiding Principles that Protect and Respect Older People and progress the principles to become a charter of rights for older Tasmanians.

1.5

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.5**

Expand the legislative definition of family violence to include the abuse of a parent by a child.

2.1

### **RECOMMENDATION 2.1**

Progress the development of the Wintringham style supported accommodation for older Tasmanians in southern Tasmania at the earliest opportunity.

2.2

### **RECOMMENDATION 2.2**

Improve the tenancy security of Tasmanians in private rental housing

2.3

### **RECOMMENDATION 2.3**

Introduce incentives for landlords to modify properties to support ageing in place.



2.4

**RECOMMENDATION 2.4**

Develop supported accommodation for older people experiencing homelessness in northern Tasmania.

2.5

**RECOMMENDATION 2.5**

Explore opportunities and reduce barriers to private sector investment (including Tasplan) into age appropriate housing throughout Tasmania.

3.1

**RECOMMENDATION 3.1**

The Tasmanian Government continues to support senior concessions.

4.1

**RECOMMENDATION 4.1**

The Tasmanian Government moves an amendment of section 24 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1988 to remove the ability to apply age discriminatory provisions within other legislation. This will ensure that any exemptions from the Act relating to age would be specifically detailed under Division 3 of Part 5 of the Act as an extension to the existing list.

4.2

**RECOMMENDATION 4.2**

The Tasmanian Government funds a pilot study into the representations of older people in the media to build an evidence base for the development of media protocols for the coverage of ageism and elder abuse.

**\$10,000**

5.1

**RECOMMENDATION 5.1**

The Tasmanian Government makes a firm and ongoing commitment to implement Strong Liveable Communities, with adequate support, strong key performance indicators and use of a transparent, whole-of-Government approach to ensure long-term sustainability.

**\$435,000 over three years**

5.2

**RECOMMENDATION 5.2**

All Government departments use best practice, evidence based research by collecting segmented age data to reflect the diversity of older people and allow meaningful analysis of the Plans success and support its ongoing development.



5.3

**RECOMMENDATION 5.3**

Production of a short, concise progress report that informs community about the progress of Strong Liveable Communities implementation, sourcing input from COTA, Government departments and other organisations involved.

6.1

**RECOMMENDATION 6.1**

The Tasmanian Government supports the TasCOSS proposal for a ten year operational plan to support the community sector and the state government to face the significant issues confronting the sector.

6.2

**RECOMMENDATION 6.2**

Community sector funding through the Department of Premier and Cabinet is subject to indexation and that there is a formal and urgent review of the adequacy of base funding.



Nursery woman,  
volunteer, lover of all nature  
...older person.



#RethinkAgeing

Conflict resolution  
specialist, cyclist, carer,  
gardener...older person.



#RethinkAgeing

Couple of 31 years, naturists,  
gardeners, accommodation  
hosts...older people.



#RethinkAgeing

Grandmother, pilot,  
volunteer ambulance  
officer...older person.



#RethinkAgeing







**COTA TAS Inc**

“Westella”

181 Elizabeth St, Hobart TAS 7000

Phone: (03) 6231 3265

Email: [admin@cotatas.org.au](mailto:admin@cotatas.org.au)

[www.cotatas.org.au](http://www.cotatas.org.au)