



**COUNCIL ON THE AGEING  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.  
COTA WA**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014**

## WHAT IS COTA WA AND WHAT DO WE DO?

### COTA WA IS:

- An independent organisation run by older people for older people;
- The voice of seniors, advocating on behalf of seniors to influence local, state and federal government, business and the community
- A provider of programmes and projects that benefit seniors, including the Seniors' Housing Centre, Living Longer Living Stronger, technology training, peer education and crime and safety talks
- A member organisation providing benefits including the Ambassador Card, COTA Maintenance, 'ONECOTA' magazine and free or reduced prices to attend our events for individual and organisational members
- An incorporated, non-profit, charitable, deductible gift recipient organisation governed by an elected Board, managed and run by professional staff, and supported by the generous contributions of many volunteers;
- Recognised by the state and federal governments as the peak seniors' organisation in Western Australia
- A member of COTA Australia, an organisation that brings together all state and territory COTAs. Nationally, we:
  - ❖ Assist and resource the COTA Australia National Policy Council in the key areas of policy development, information dissemination and resource development.
  - ❖ Collect, interpret and disseminate information within the COTA network and to interested external individuals and organisations
- As the peak non-government seniors' organisation in Western Australia, COTA WA is widely respected for its policy and programme work. Our submissions to Government have resulted in a number of significant improvements in services for seniors in recent times
- COTA WA is a uniquely inclusive organisation. Unlike mass membership organisations who lobby solely for their members, we seek to promote the interests of all older Australians, irrespective of their origin, situation or background

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## OUR VISION

An equitable, just and inclusive society in which older people can flourish.

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## OUR PURPOSE

To advance the rights, needs and interests of older Western Australians.

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## OUR KEY VALUES

Integrity

Respect

Inclusiveness

Impartiality

Excellence

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## OUR PRINCIPLES

- Valuing the contribution and lived experience of older people in all their diversity: consulting and acting on the advice of older people; engaging older people in all aspects of our organisation.
- Teamwork and co-operation: being respectful, ethical and cohesive; being committed and prepared to work hard to maintain the full involvement of all parts of the COTA federation for the common good of our constituents.
- Vision and Optimism: being enthusiastic: being creative and forward looking, prepared to think laterally and constructively.
- Leadership and Action: taking united action, providing unbiased advocacy and leadership for older people whilst having measurable and accountable outcomes.
- Quality and Efficiency: having planned, systematic, evidence based and best practice approaches to all that we do.

## OUR PEOPLE

### PATRON

His Excellency Mr. Malcolm James McCusker, AOC, CVO, QC, Governor of Western Australia.



### HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs. Bettine Heathcote AM  
Mrs. Clare Zilko

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT 2012-2013

#### Office-bearers

President	Hon. Bob Kucera APM, JP
Vice President	Dr. Ann Zubrick
Executive Members	Bettine Heathcote AM and Judy Hogben
Directors	Gerri Clay, Marie Moloney, Bob Raisbeck, Shelley Whitaker, Dr. Robert Ziegler, Kenny Annand
Chief Executive	Ken Marston
Auditors	Macri Partners

### POLICY COMMITTEE

Bettine Heathcote (Chairperson), Chris Jeffery (Policy Officer), Delese Betti, Helen Joyce, Luke Garswood, Theresa Kwok, Ron Lullfitz, Ken Marston, Bob Raisbeck, Donna Turner, Chris Twomey, Bob Ziegler, Ann Zubrick.

## STAFF

Chief Executive Officer	Ken Marston
Active Ageing Manager	Phil Airey
Finance and Administration Officer	Flyura Pak
Policy Officer	Chris Jeffery
Project Officer	Jane Newsome
Project Officer	Marlene Robins
SHC Community Education Officer	Diane Marks
SHC Information Officer	John Millar

## VOLUNTEERS

The projects and programmes conducted by COTA WA would not be possible without the hard work and generosity of our many volunteers. Our administration volunteers undertake a wide range of tasks including: answering telephones and assisting callers with their enquiries, greeting people as they arrive at the office, processing daily mail and event registrations, organising computer lessons, supporting staff with day to day procedures, and many more invaluable tasks.

## ADMINISTRATION VOLUNTEERS

Pat Billett  
 Erin Borgfeldt  
 Alison Cholajda  
 Kaye Douglas  
 Shanti Guda  
 Elaine Hardy  
 Alex Hogg  
 Peter Karczub  
 Jeannette Monteiro  
 Edith Pedersen  
 Judy Willson



## COMPUTER CLASS TEACHERS

Roger Vella Bonavita  
 Peter Foxx  
 Bob Heasman  
 Ashley Howley  
 Tony Loades  
 Manish Parekh  
 Liz Stafford  
 John Stephens



## IN ADDITION, SPECIAL MENTION GOES TO:

- Kaye Douglas who coordinates weekly computer class bookings and takes care of monthly donation receipts sent out to members,
- Megan Ellis who gives PA assistance to the CEO and executes minutes of meetings,
- Elaine Hardy who supports LLLS™, processes Seniors' Week Grants and other events with data entries,
- Jeannette Monteiro, Edith Pederson, Megan Ellis and Elaine Hardy who look after registration at events throughout the year.

## AND SOME OTHER VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE KINDLY HELPED US IN A VARIETY OF WAYS:

Jane Figgis

David Wray

Georgy Hawden

Aiden Nawaz

Deirdre Chell

## COTA WA ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS AS OF 30/06/2014

Advocare Inc.  
 Aged & Community Services Western  
 Australia  
 Albany Public Library  
 Albany Region Over 50's Recreation  
 Association Inc.  
 Alzheimer's Australia W.A. Ltd  
 Amaroo Village  
 Armadale Bridge Club  
 Armadale Home Help Moorditj Services  
 BaptistCare Inc.  
 Bassendean Senior Citizens Welfare  
 Association Inc.  
 Bayswater Bridge Club  
 Bayswater ECHO  
 Bayswater Senior Citizens Association Inc.  
 Beit Midrash of W.A.  
 Bencubbin Community Resource Centre  
 Bethanie Group (Bethanie Fields ACF)

Beverley Community Resource Centre Inc.  
 Bos Architects  
 Boyup Brook Community Resource Centre  
 Braemar Presbyterian Care  
 Bridgetown - Greenbushes Recreation  
 Centre  
 Brightwater - The Cove  
 Brightwater At Home Services  
 Brightwater Care Group  
 Brookton Men's Shed Inc.  
 Brunswick Junction Community Resource  
 Centre  
 Bunbury Men of Song  
 Busselton Senior Citizens Centre  
 Care Options Inc.  
 Champion Lakes Boating Club (CLBC)  
 Chung Wah Community Aged Care  
 Citizens Advice Bureau  
 City of Armadale

City of Bayswater	Kununurra Neighbourhood House Family Support Services
City of Canning	Lawley Park Residents Management Advisory Committee
City of Cockburn	Leading Age Services Australia – W.A. (previously Aged Care Association Australia W.A.)
City of Fremantle	Linkwest Inc.
City of Gosnells	Lions Club of Balingup
City of Mandurah	Manning Senior Citizens Centre Inc.
City of Melville	Masonic Care W.A. (Freemasons W.A.)
City of Stirling	Maylands Autumn Club Inc.
City of Subiaco	Meath Care Inc.
City of Subiaco (Community Services)	Medicare Local Perth South Coastal
City of Swan	Melville Cares Inc.
City of Swan (Library Services)	Men's Advisory Network
City of Wanneroo	Merredin Community Resource Centre
Collie Adult Day Centre	Merredin Senior Centre Inc.
Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre	Moora HACC & Moora Seniors' Group
CommunityWest	Mt Laverna Retirement Village Inc.
Continance Advisory Service of W.A. Inc.	Multiple Sclerosis Society of W.A. Inc.
Convocation of UWA Graduates	Mundaring Sharing Incorporated
Craigcare	National Council of Women W.A.
Dale Cottages Inc.	Nedlands Community Care
Denham Seniors Inc.	Northam Heritage Forum
Denmark Over 50's Association Inc.	Northam Over 60's Group
Earth Solutions - Avon Valley	Older Women's Network (W.A.) Inc.
East Pilbara Independence Support Inc.	Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Parish
Esperance Public Library	Pakistanis in Australia Inc.
Goomalling Community Resource Centre	Park Home Owners Association W.A. Inc.
Gosnells Women's Health Service	Parkinson's Western Australia Inc.
Greenbushes Community Resource Centre	Peel Seniors' Net Association Pty Ltd
Guildford Care Facility	People Who Care
Hall & Prior Aged Care Organisation (Varna Pty Ltd / Fresh Fields)	Prime Timers Western Australia
Harvey Recreation and Cultural Centre Inc.	Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre
Health Consumers' Council	Redcliffe Primary School
Historical Society of Cockburn	Regis Aged Care Pty Ltd
Independent Living Centre of W.A. Inc.	Relacs
Injury Control Council of W.A. Inc.	Retired Teachers' Association
Ishar Multicultural Womens's Health Centre	Retirement Village Association of W.A.
Italian Age Care Incorporated	Rise Community Network
Jewish Care W.A. Inc.	Rod Evans Community Centre
Juniper (formerly Uniting Church Homes)	Rosewood Care Group
Kalbarri Senior Citizens Group Inc.	Royal Australian Air Force (W.A. Div) Inc.
Kalgoorlie Boulder Volunteer Centre Inc.	Shire of Augusta Margaret River
Kelmscott Church of Christ	Shire of Capel
Koorda Community Resource Centre Inc.	

Shire of Chittering  
 Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup  
 Shire of Kellerberrin  
 Shire of Lake Grace  
 Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care  
 Shire of Mukinbudin  
 Shire of Mundaring  
 Shire of Murray  
 Shire of Narembeen  
 Shire of Shark Bay  
 Shire of Three Springs  
 Shire of Victoria Plains  
 Shire of West Arthur  
 Shire of Woodanilling  
 Silver Wings Senior Citizens' Group  
 SOS - Supporting Our Seniors & Disabled Inc.  
 South Lake Ottey Family & Neighbourhood Centre  
 Southcare Inc.  
 Southern Cross Care (W.A.)  
 Southern Cross Community Resource Centre  
 Spanish Speaking Seniors Association  
 St. Paul's Anglican Church  
 Sunshine Welfare Action Mission Australia  
 Super Tuesday Whitfords Church of Christ Seniors  
 Tambellup Community Resource Centre  
 Tammin Senior Citizens Inc.  
 TAPSS Community Care Inc.  
 The Bethanie Group  
 The Burmese Association of W.A.  
 The Centre for Cerebral Palsy  
 The Society of Women Writers W.A.  
 The Spiers Centre Inc.  
 Toodyay Community Resource Centre  
 Town of Bassendean  
 Town of Mosman Park  
 Town of Narrogin, Narrogin Homecare  
 Trinity School for Seniors  
 Umbrella Multicultural Community Care Services Inc.  
 University of the Third Age (UWA) Inc.  
 Volunteer Task Force Inc.

W.A. Deaf Society  
 W.A. Retirement Village Residents Association Inc. (WARVRA)  
 W.A. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Association Inc.  
 Walridge Village Residents' Association  
 WANSLEA  
 Waroona Community Resource Centre Inc.  
 Waroona Senior Citizens Welfare Committee  
 West Australian Tamil Seniors Association  
 Western Australian Council of Social Service - WACOSS  
 Westonia Community Resource Centre  
 Wheelchair Sports W.A. Association  
 Wickepin Community Resource Centre  
 Wyalkatchem Men's Shed  
 Wyndham Family Support Inc.  
 Yarloop Community Resource Centre Inc.





## REPORTS

### President's Report

Negativity towards seniors rose to appalling levels in 2013-2014. We were led to believe in the lead-up to the federal budget that the country was going broke and that Australia could not support its ageing population. Seniors' entitlements were set to bankrupt the country according to media coverage surrounding the report of the Commission of Audit and the budget. Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss MP is reported to have stated that many older people squander their superannuation savings on luxury items and cruises in order to qualify for the age pension.

This rhetoric conflicts with the evidence. The age pension was comprehensively reviewed as recently as 2009 and was found to be sustainable over the long term, and there is no evidence that there has been a change to those projections.

The federal budget woes were compounded by the decision of the W.A. government to reduce concessions to seniors following the scrapping of the National Partnership Agreement on Concessions, and the reduction of the Cost of Living Rebate by 50% despite the cost of living increases flowing from rising utility prices, transport costs and council rates.

Other issues of concern resulting from the federal budget are the proposed co-payments for GP visits, watered-down financial advice regulations, and the reduction in staffing at the Human Rights Commission, where the Age Discrimination Commissioner is now expected to serve in a dual capacity as a full time role following the abolition of the Disability Discrimination Commissioner.

Seniors responded strongly to the budget decisions. COTA WA took a lead role in voicing older people's concerns at our Fair Go for Seniors rally held in Perth Town Hall during June 2014, where a more than full house of seniors expressed their fears and concerns vociferously, while many more waited patiently on the steps outside the Town Hall and spoke to media representatives there.

COTA Australia has launched the Hands Off the Pension Campaign and we will continue urging a more balanced approach to the ageing population. COTA WA will also continue to

lobby the state government to make seniors' concessions efficient, equitable and well-targeted.

In thanking you for your support as COTA members and your being here today, I want to ask you for more.

COTA WA has a long and proud tradition as the voice of seniors. There has never been a time when the voice of seniors has needed to be heard louder or clearer. If seniors do not speak out, they are accepting that the value of the age pension will gradually be eroded by the new indexation formula that will be used after 2017. You might say that there are state and federal elections before that occurs, but few people are aware that the changes have been approved by the House of Representatives already, and, that subject to passage through the Senate, they will be implemented in 2017. Please enrol for the Hands Off the Pension Campaign, and ask your friends, relatives and acquaintances to do so too.

What else can you do? Pick up the telephone and speak to your local member or send them an email. Write to the newspaper. Ring your favourite radio presenter. Without a strongly-voiced protest, these changes will inevitably be passed.

And, one last request – ask a friend to become a COTA member. We need your support. Sometimes, size matters!

In conclusion, I thank my fellow Directors, the staff and all the volunteers of COTA WA. In particular, I would like to thank Ann Zubrick and Bob Ziegler who have completed 6 years as Directors of COTA WA and leave the Board today.

My term of office as President ends this year. I have been delighted to lead this organisation, attending many and various events, speaking to thousands of seniors, hearing your views, conveying them to Ministers and decision makers throughout WA and making a difference!

Bob Kucera  
President

### Chief Executive's Report

Following my absence for the first half of the 2013 due to a combination of long service and sick leave, I returned at the beginning of financial year 2013-2014 to find COTA WA in good shape. Staff and volunteers had continued doing their excellent



work, and I would like to thank them all for their efforts while I was away, and particularly Chris Jeffery, who filled in as acting CEO. I also thank Directors for their support and understanding during my absence.

It was certainly a case of hitting the ground running (and perhaps limping a bit) when I did return. Fora and meetings had been scheduled and we had many commitments including meetings with the Department of Commerce to discuss the future of the Seniors' Housing Centre contract which was due to cease in February 2014. We also received early notification of the impending changes to and tendering out of our contract with the Health Department for Living Longer Living Stronger, which was to expire on June 30th, 2014. These two contracts made up 50% of our annual income, and the prospect of losing them caused great uncertainty throughout most of the remainder of the financial year.

In addition, our office lease was due for renewal, which was a problem given the uncertainty of our financial future should we lose these two contracts. The future of our national membership company, COTA Membership Services, was also uncertain. The Board met in December 2013 to review our strategic direction and consider our long term future, discussions which were timely and constructive in the context of possible cataclysm.

Needless to say, considerable efforts went into securing our future. Our tender for the Health Department Falls Prevention Contract was completed in November, and after many representations, we gained notice of renewed interim funding for the Seniors' Housing Centre in December. A tender was called for the Seniors' Housing Centre late in the financial year and we remained uncertain of the outcome until July of this year. Discussions with COTAs regarding the future of membership servicing continue.

In terms of outcomes, we won and we lost. We were unsuccessful in our bid to retain Health Department support for Living Longer Living Stronger, but we won a three year contract for the Seniors' Housing Centre. We remain committed to Living Longer Living Stronger and we are seeking alternative sources of funding to make this an even more attractive and beneficial program for seniors. Discussions within the COTA network on the future of membership servicing are continuing and we hope to see a refreshed and renewed approach to membership after the expiry of our current agreement at the end of this financial year.

In terms of process, we expended enormous energy on these matters – using time and resources that could have been better used. However, this has been a learning experience from which we have benefitted, and we have proved again that we are an adaptable and resilient organisation. Staff, volunteers and Directors have been supportive, dedicated and

focused on maintaining COTA's role throughout these difficult times, and we have continued to provide high quality services and support to meet the needs of older people.

Older people themselves also experienced a period of uncertainty and difficulty in 2013-2014, particularly in the lead up to and the aftermath of the federal budget. The Commission of Audit made recommendations that would have done immense harm to many seniors. The federal budget threatens to harm seniors well into the future, the reduction in state government concessions has had immediate effects on many people, and we fear that there is more to come.

Despite our internal difficulties and concerns, COTA WA responded vigorously to the concessions issue, mounting on June 20th one of the biggest rallies to be held at Perth Town Hall in recent years. With the support of 6PR, we were able to attract a more than full house, with some seniors waiting on the steps of the Town Hall, which was filled to overflowing. The voice of seniors was well and truly heard, and we gained very significant media attention in the lead up and aftermath of the rally. We are continuing to seek a full and comprehensive review of concessions to ensure that they are efficient, appropriate and equitable in meeting the needs of seniors.

Our work in the public domain was complemented by our continuing work in the background to make the needs of W.A. seniors known to politicians and decision makers. Mandatory, age-related driving tests have been a bugbear for seniors for many years, and we were pleased that the Minister for Transport made the decision to scrap them in 2013-2014, thus removing the age discrimination to which seniors had been subjected previously. We also saw the introduction of a photo ID card which will benefit seniors who do not have a driver's license or passport, overcoming the limitations they experience in obtaining anything that requires the 100 point ID check and photographic identification. These are beneficial changes for which we have advocated over several years.

Other work in the background includes our policy work at state and federal levels and our submissions to and discussions with Ministers and agencies in which we continue to lobby on behalf of seniors.

We are a small voice in a clamorous world. Much of our day to day work receives little attention or publicity. Our media presence is intermittent and our profile is low, and too many people remain unaware of our organisation and its achievements. The challenge we face is to become increasingly well-known and well-recognised for the excellence of our work without a multi-million dollar advertising budget – a luxury that we will never enjoy!

“Our strength lies in our people” is a somewhat hackneyed expression, but it couldn’t be truer in the case of COTA WA. My thanks go to all directors, staff, volunteers and members for their continuing support, and particular thanks to Bob Kucera at the end of his presidency, Ann Zubrick as our departing Vice President and Bob Ziegler at the end of his directorship. You have worked hard and well to advance the cause of seniors in Western Australia.

“We need you” is equally hackneyed, and equally true. If you don’t like what we do, tell us. If you do like what we do, tell a friend – spread the word about COTA – the voice of seniors.

Ken Marston - Chief Executive Officer

## Financial Report

The year 2013-2014 was a challenging one for many Western Australians and COTA was not immune from this. With respect to our income streams, we continued to receive income from diverse sources, including grant income, fee for service income, membership and insurance royalties. Sponsorship and donations increased, but remain a relatively minor source of income.

I am pleased to report that we have succeeded in winning a tender for the provision of the Seniors’ Housing Centre until 2017. This contract has a value approaching \$1 million over 3 years and provides COTA with a degree of financial and service certainty. On the other hand, the loss of Health Department funding for Living Longer Living Stronger will require the reformulation of the program under new funding and sponsorship arrangements and we continue to build our active ageing portfolio through the acquisition of the Mall Walking Project, which has the capacity to grow over the coming years.

In common with many organisations, membership remains static and we look forward to a fresh national approach to membership and the development of a wider supporter base after the current national contract expires at the end of 2014-2015.

Financial pressures continue in the light of increasing costs. Regular (and well deserved) increases in award wages over the coming few years will see community sector wages approach public service rates, which will require us to drive a harder bargain with funding agencies to ensure the viability of contracts and fee for service work.

In common with many seniors, COTA WA experiences financial pressure as interest rates fall, diminishing our term deposit income from our reserves. The Board continues its conservative approach to investment which makes our reserves secure and ensures their availability should income falter significantly.

While changes to our funding have presented financial challenges, they do provide COTA with the opportunity to reposition some of our services to better meet the needs of our seniors. The changes to the Living Longer Living Stronger program are an example of this.

On behalf of the Finance Committee and Board, I thank our Finance and Administration Officer, Flyura Pak for her professional and well-humoured contribution to our financial administration and record keeping. Financial oversight has been provided during the year by Finance Committee members Ken Marston, Kenny Annand, and Bob Raisbeck.

The Board will continue to review our strategic and business plans to ensure that we have continuing capacity to meet the ever changing environment in which we operate.

The Board recommends appointment of Macri Partners as auditors for 2013-2014 and the audited financial statements are available separately.

Judy Hogben BA(Hons), MBS, GAICD

Chair, Finance Committee

## Policy Report

Bettine Heathcote AM – Chair COTA WA Policy Committee

Chris Jeffery – Policy Officer

The past twelve months has seen a great deal of policy activity on many fronts at both the national and state levels. These activities are outlined below:



### NATIONAL ISSUES (ALL OF WHICH HAVE INVOLVED WA'S PARTICIPATION)

#### POLICY PRIORITIES

- Income issues, focusing on advocating for linking age pension increases to the existing MTAWEs (Male Total Average Weekly Earnings) rather than the current CPI, the

impacts of increasing the age pension eligibility age to 70 and the whole issue of retirement incomes, including superannuation

- Abolition of the current COTA Policy Compendium to be replaced by a series of policy positions on key issues
- Affordable housing especially for older single women in the private rental market
- Energy costs
- Ageing and disability, especially relating to the interface between them. Despite constant advocacy for change, the upper age limit of 65 remains in the Disability Australia scheme
- The Government's aged care reform (Living Longer Living Better), continues to involve a great deal of activity relating to the Gateway; changes in funding; changes in service delivery
- Another outcome of the aged care reform initiative has been COTA'S involvement in various groups including the Home Support Care Advisory Group, the Gateway, and Specified Care and Services
- Contribution to the initiative to abolish the mandatory driving test for over 80s
- Age friendly cities and communities
- The National Insurance Disability Scheme, particularly as it relates to older people
- Palliative care

#### PARTICIPATION IN NACA (NATIONAL AGED CARE ALLIANCE)

Dr Ann Zubrick, Vice President of COTA (WA) and a member of the State Policy Committee is a COTA (Australia) representative on this group. The National Aged Care Alliance (the Alliance) is a representative body of peak national organisations in aged care, including consumer groups, providers, unions, and health professionals, working together to determine a more positive future for aged care in Australia.

#### POLICY FORUM

The very successful policy forum "Making an Australia for All Ages: What's the Plan?" held in Canberra in July was attended by a large audience. The eminent speakers presented a number of different perspectives on the theme.

## OTHER

In addition to the major initiatives and activities outlined above, COTA WA has been active in many federal portfolio areas, contributing to ongoing inquiries, submissions and discussions.

## STATE ISSUES

COTA WA has been active in many arenas during the year, commencing with a review of the Policy Committee's objectives and meeting structure with a view to developing terms of reference. This outcome was achieved.

## POLICY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Lifestyle villages and residential parks, including issue of FBT on land in lifestyle villages
- The effects of the aged care reforms on providers (ongoing)
- Extending the smart rider concession to include support carers (successful outcome)
- More widespread use of captioning (in conjunction with Deaf Society)
- Issues around Medicare co-payments
- Issues concerning carers working with the aged and people with disability, for example.
- Response to WA Dept. Commerce's Consultation Position Paper on the "Proposed Deregulation for Settlement Agents and Land Valuers"
- Response to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee inquiry into the Policy Implications of an Ageing Community
- Review of Caravan and Camping Grounds and Residential Parks Long Stay Tenants Act
- Age discrimination
- The operation of the HACC program in W.A. and its interface with the broader LLLB reforms
- Issues for People from CALD backgrounds
- Age friendly cities and communities
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme
- The UN Convention on the rights of older people
- Aged Care Reform Package
- Palliative care



- All issues outlined under 1.0 above
- Policy development and implementation
- Continuing work on housing issues, including the review of retirement village legislation and review of park homes (long stay caravan park residents)
- Application to the Potter Foundation for funding to mount a pilot project for the development of an employment service for older Western Australians
- Contributions to Policy (non-COTA organisations)
- Participation in WACOSS emerging issues forum
- Participation in WACOSS Peaks Forum
- Participation in Measuring the Impact of Community Care: Silver Chain Project Reference Group
- Attendance at Seniors' Ministerial Advisory Council meetings
- Attendance at DHS Health & Older Australians Disabilities & Carers Consultative Forum
- Continuation of Seniors' Alliance meetings
- Discussions with Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition W.A.
- Attendance at Housing Advisory Round table meetings.
- Attendance at Community Reference Group Breastscreen W.A.
- Attendance at Department of Human Services Consultative Forum on Health & Older Australians Disability and Carers
- Liaison with Shelter W.A. and other housing organisations including the Community Housing Coalition, St Bartholomew's (homeless men's service), Tenants' Advice Service, W.A. Retirement Complexes Residents' Association and Park Home Owners' Association
- Participation in Elder Abuse Marketing Working Party

## CONFERENCES AND FORA

COTA hosted or co-hosted a number of Fora between October 2013 and October 2014 including:

- Ongoing meetings of the Age Friendly Communities Network Forum
- Seniors in the City (October 2013)
- Conversations About Dying (November 2013)
- Get Your Act Together (March 2014)
- Ageing and Disability (May 2014)

- Fair Go for Seniors rally (in conjunction with Channel 7, June 2014)

## PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

### ACTIVE AGEING AND LIVING LONGER LIVING STRONGER™



In September 2013, I took over leadership and management of COTA WA's Active Ageing programmes, after serving as Community Education Officer in the Seniors' Housing Centre since March of 2012. Our Active Ageing programmes and initiatives have changed markedly within this time, but we maintain Living Longer Living Stronger™ as our premier programme.

Living Longer Living Stronger™ (LLS™) is an evidence-based programme which makes a strong contribution to all aspects of health and wellbeing in the community and optimises conditions for the social engagement of participants, both to foster compliance with the training programme and to minimise the social isolation frequently experienced by those seniors with poor health. It aims to maximise the opportunities for people to engage in affordable, high quality, results-oriented, strength training programmes.

In Western Australia, LLS™ has been running since 2004 and continues to be the leading strength and resistance training and physical activity programme for the over 50s.

In 2013 - 2014, the programme has been through massive changes, including changes to our baseline funding arrangements due to the discontinuation of W.A. Department of Health funding. While stressful, this has heralded in a much more streamlined and core business focused approach needing to concentrate less on financially unsustainable and time intensive social aims nested within project funding.

I was able to build upon the strong foundations left by the former manager, Nicole Joubert, who had stabilised the loss of providers with an extensive programme of site visits and relationship building. We had lost some 30% of providers in the previous year. Due to her hard work and efforts in restoring open and active relationships (and loyalty) with our providers, I have been able to sustain excellent and fruitful communications with telephone, email and social media communications only, at a significant cost saving to the programme. With the exception of the expiry of one free trial period, any losses sustained to the program

in this financial year have been due to sale of gym centres or changes to local government funding arrangements.

Following her consolidation activity, in 2013 - 2014 the program is now growing and evolving apace. We have added 20% to our number of providing centres in 2013 - 14, and currently have 62 Providers in both metropolitan and regional settings. Monthly attendance is also up roughly 20% - from 4,200 monthly attendants to 5,000.

New Instructor Training Sessions increased from 4 to 5 during 2013 - 2014 to accommodate the large number of new trainers (around 60). This growth in trainer numbers was due to the addition of 14 new centres, including strategically significant areas such as Bunbury and the far northern (Quinns/Yanchep) suburbs, where there are high concentrations of seniors, and to the new, state-of-the-art centres all around the metropolitan area. Successful launches were run for all Centres who requested them.

Improving the quality of our service also took a number of large steps forward. I worked with Community West and 2013 Excellence Award winner for Best Metropolitan Instructor James Hales to create a revitalised Refresher Training course that suited their needs. Drawing on our backgrounds in education, we created a course that focused on the aspects of creative program design and working with seniors, using James' Industry Best Practice Standards as a benchmark. This course was delivered in March to nearly 40 instructors who were overdue for refresher training. All Instructors were able to reaccredit, and feedback was universally positive. The refresher course will run again in early 2015.

In addition, we submitted the core Living Longer Living Stronger™ Instructor course for reaccreditation through Fitness Australia, and took the time to completely update, streamline and improve the organisation of the course. I am indebted to Jane Newsome for her assistance on this resubmission, which included entire image refits, resulting in the successful accreditation of the program. I can safely say that the educational components of our programme are again state-of-the-art and industry best practice again.

The quality in our organisational effectiveness also improved markedly, with unified central data records created to house all aspects of our provider details, where often only pen and paper versions existed previously. I am indebted to our pioneering volunteers Peter Karczub, Edith Pedersen and Alex Hogg for their assistance with the creation and streamlining of these processes, as well as their sterling administrative assistance.

There have been changes in our communications model and practice. We have increased the number of e-newsletters from bi-monthly to monthly, and social media interactions with all of our providers and instructors, resulting in a growth from around 100 participants to 160 during 2013 - 2014. Formerly an in-house, online forum was created for the use of instructors, which relied upon their creation of content to remain viable. This was discontinued in favour of the more centrally-directed social media and newsletter approach.

Social media has proven to be cost effective. An investment of \$47 to announce our new Festival, for instance, reached 5,000 people through “friends” and “friends of friends” of subscribers to the page. Coverage in OneCOTA and COTA WA e-newsletter continues, and radio appearances on ABC Regional and ABC National have helped raise the profile of the programme.

The LLLS™ Excellence Awards Night, an annual event that aims to recognise, celebrate and honour our LLLS™ participants, and those who support them towards a healthier quality of life, was held in October 2013, with a record 130 attendants. While a successful event for the reward and recognition of our people, I saw this as a missed opportunity to promote and educate the wider community regarding the availability and stunning results of LLLS™.

Consequently, the Excellence Awards for 2014 will now form part of the first inaugural Active Seniors' Festival, a totally free, as opposed to “user pays” for seats, open-air event at the Perth Cultural Centre in Northbridge during the peak of Seniors' Week.

We will be using the Festival to launch the following new Active Ageing innovations:

Diversifying Living Longer Living Stronger™ to include an assessment only level, which will enable working seniors (50-65) to access the benefits of a personalised programme that takes into account their medical and prescription history. They can then utilise the exercise facilities in their own time

During 2014 - 15 COTA WA will become the concierge for quality seniors' community providers, in order to make available to our seniors to the very best in specialised services, and an aggregator/referral hub for a range of ethical and excellent products. Early adopters include LiveLighter® (for nutritional and healthy eating advice), Your Brain Matters® (for cognitive health), and eFriends (for physical and social networking).

The sponsorship-funded Active Ageing Network Service has the potential to replace COTA WA's current dependence on government tenders for funding, leveraging our good

reputation and commitment to the seniors community, in order to achieve mutually beneficial results for both our clients and our backers.

I hope that my stewardship of COTA WA's Active Ageing programmes and initiatives within this period have - despite a stressful transition period – contributed towards a consolidated, high-quality, effective and larger service that now stands every chance of being sustainable into future years.

Phil Airey

Active Ageing Manager

COTA (WA)

## PEER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

### *beyondmaturityblues*

Funding for the *beyondmaturityblues* program was due to cease on 30th September but was extended to 31st December 2013 with an additional 16 sessions funded. All session targets contracted were achieved.

During the year the following people were active in the *beyond maturityblues* program.

#### STAFF

Marlene Robins

Jane Newsome

#### PEER EDUCATORS

John Anderson

Malcolm Ginn

Roberta Gripton

Maureen Holmes

Maggie Richardson

Bob Ziegler

#### Italian Program

Connie Dj Perna



A total of 42 *beyondmaturityblues* sessions were presented to more than 1000 participants. Five of the sessions were presented outside the Perth metropolitan area, in Kalgoorlie, Northam and Guilderton.

Five sessions were delivered to CaLD groups; three sessions by the Italian speaking team.

A diverse range of seniors' groups hosted sessions. These included retirement villages, chronic illness and carers' support groups, membership based seniors' organisations, Probus/Rotary clubs, Men's Sheds, local government community groups, senior citizens centres and HACC funded day centres.

In February 2014 peer educators from the *beyond maturityblues*, Seniors' Quality Use of Medicines and HACC programs, all of which have now ceased, were thanked for their fantastic efforts at a special morning tea, where they were also presented with Certificates of Appreciation by the Hon Tony Simpson MLA, Minister for Seniors.

## **CONTROLLING MY OWN LIFE: MAKING THE MOST OF CONSUMER DIRECTED CARE (CDC)**

A new peer education program, providing free information sessions around the recent changes in delivery of home care, commenced in May although the first consumer sessions will be delivered in the 2014-2015 financial year.

Jane Newsome attended coordinator training in Adelaide in May. Six volunteers, all experienced COTA WA peer educators, were trained during June 2014. The CDC team will be Agnelo D'Souza, Roberta Gripton, Maureen Holmes, Jen Stewart, Pat Zanetti and Bob Ziegler.

## **OTHER PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**

### **BENDIGO BANK SENIORS' WEEK FESTIVAL 2013 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM.**

In 2012-2013 COTA WA obtained funding from the Department for Communities (now Department of Local Government and Communities), and Lotterywest to support many and varied events during the Bendigo Bank Seniors' Week Festival. A total of 116 grant applications were received with 86 being successful. A total of \$82,000 was allocated, with a particular focus on events aimed at seniors who would not normally participate in Seniors' Week activities, who were at risk of becoming socially isolated, or who were members of Indigenous or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Jane Newsome, Elaine Hardy

**COTA CONNECTIONS**

The COTA WA e-newsletter, COTA Connections was distributed on a fortnightly basis until March 2014, when due to time constraints it was changed to a monthly issue, distributed mid-month. The distribution list, which is in excess of 1500 addresses, includes but is not limited to individual and organisational COTA members in W.A. with email addresses, web subscribers, LLS staff and participants, and attendees at COTA WA events such as Housing seminars and fora.

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Jane Newsome, Megan Ellis, Ashley Howley

**CRIME AND SAFETY**

COTA WA was successful in obtaining funding from the Hon. Minister for Police to present a number of talks to seniors on preventing crime and enhancing their personal Safety. Particular emphasis was on protecting their homes, together with practical advice on avoiding "Internet Fraud", door to door sales fraud and personal violence.

The talks were presented by the Hon Bob Kucera, the President of COTA WA, David Cook Head of Computer Science ECU on Internet Safety, a representative from Advocare on Elder Abuse and where possible local police.

This information is vital for the protection of one of the most vulnerable groups in Society, our seniors and older Australians. The program aimed at making sure they are well informed and personally equipped to cope with the emerging and worrying trend toward older citizens becoming cybercrime targets.

Presentations were given to 850 seniors in Scarborough, Wanneroo, Girrawheen, Kwinana, Byford, Rockingham, Bull Creek, Victoria Park and Ellenbrook

## SENIORS' AWARDS 2013

COTA WA produced the Seniors' Awards 2013 ceremony held at the State Reception Centre on Sunday 10th November 2013. This event was managed by Hayley Hinchcliffe of ESP who was employed by COTA WA with a grant from Lotterywest and in collaboration with the Department for Communities.

The Bendigo Bank Seniors' Awards is an annual event held during Seniors' Week. In 2013 Errol Bartlett-Torr of Shark Bay was named as the Juniper Senior of the Year. The Awards had a cash prize sponsored by Bendigo Bank, Juniper, *beyond blue*, Australian Super, COTA WA and Have-a-Go News.

## COTA WA SENIORS' HOUSING CENTRE

The Seniors' Housing Centre (SHC) has continued to provide information and referrals to hundreds of W.A. seniors who have accessed the centre or attended one of the many seminars. The year has been very successful. Since the commencement of COTA WA's involvement with the Department of Commerce in 2012, we have developed a broad range of partnerships and networks in order to improve and sustain both high levels of relevant knowledge and potential opportunities for disseminating housing information, whilst increasing our profile within the community. With a stream of compliments and feedback COTA WA has been able to measure both the success and need for this important service.



For example:

Mrs. P., a sprightly octogenarian, contacted the SHC because her relationship with her child whom she was living with had deteriorated. She lacked the degree of freedom she required, felt unwelcome (particularly from her child's partner) and also felt insecure. She didn't have the resources to buy into a retirement village and was too active and independent for residential aged care. She didn't know what to do.

After a lengthy discussion with the SHC Information Officer it was suggested she contact her local council which was known to have some accommodation for seniors. She did, her telephone call was opportune and, within a few weeks had her own room in a seniors' share



house with a few people her own generation. She reported that she was now very happy as she is still in the same area close to friends and able to attend the church she is a member of.

## SHC STATISTICS

Type of contact	2013 - 2014
Total Telephone	523
Total Email	39
Total Counter	138
Total Office Enquiries	700
Total Presentations attendees	1304
Total Events contacts	340
Total Attendees/Event contacts	1644

Community education, delivered by the Community Education Officer, is the foundation of the service with an Information Officer also based in the COTA WA office to provide more detailed and personalised information to those who, after attending seminars, require it. Increasingly, enquiries are being received from people who have heard about the service through word-of-mouth and from SHC promotions. These are dealt with through a combination of one-on-one personal contact, telephone, email and post.

Our community education seminar topics for the year 2013 - 2014 included:

- Making Informed Housing Decisions (MIHD)
- Downsizing – A Field Guide (DAFG)
- Modifying Your Home (MYH)
- Low Cost Housing Options (LCHO)
- Reverse Mortgages and Accessing Equity (RMAE)
- Retirement Villages and Residential Parks (RVRP)

The seminars have been promoted through our website, e-newsletter and through the network of the groups to whom they are delivered. Some seminars have been advertised in the seniors' newspaper Have-a-Go News. As well as a regular monthly spot at the Citiplace Community Centre, presentations were held all over the metropolitan area from Rockingham up to Joondalup. Group attendance varied from a few people up to 110, which included church groups, Probus clubs and others. A number of presentations were held at council libraries, including Safety Bay, Southern River, Bayswater, Warwick and Joondalup.

Presentations have also been made for National Seniors Australia groups, Association of Independent Retirees, Morley Parkinson Group and Swan Region Seniors.

Staff continues to expand its knowledge through networking, self-education and importantly visits to establishments such as retirement villages and aged care facilities.

Mr. Phil Airey, who was the full-time Community Officer, left the SHC in August 2013 to take up management of the Living Longer Living Stronger project. He was replaced by Ms Diane Marks who took on the position part-time. Diane, with her background in education and training, has quickly assimilated herself into the SHC and has ably and seamlessly delivered the programme of seminars that Phil Airey had been delivering, adding her own style and humour.

Our two SHC officers, Diane Marks and John Millar, strive to constantly enhance current seminar topics and extend the subjects offered, the most recent being Downsizing to Strata Titled Living. For a summary of this seminar and others on offer to community groups and clubs please refer to our website.



Funding for the centre was due to cease in December 2013. After significant lobbying by the Chief Executive Officer and significant others, funding for an additional few months was found by the Department of Commerce, and staff were invited to remain with COTA WA to continue delivering the service. Subsequently, the Centre's funding was extended again until July 2013.

It is hoped that the W.A. state government will continue to fund this important and informative service through a not-for-profit organisation, and COTA WA is awaiting notice of a new tendering opportunity.

John Millar, Information Officer

Diane Marks, Community Education Officer





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