



Dear Friends,

Though the past year has not been without its challenges, the key activity for us throughout 2009-2010 has been predominately about increasing the public face and credibility of COTA Tasmania at a State level.

It is still early days, but since the Board's internal organisational review in 2008/09 we have moved ahead in leaps and bounds toward the goal of being a true peak body for older Tasmanians.

In recent months we have had an increase in media activity with comments and representation on issues such as the older drivers licensing system, older Tasmanians and university education, elder abuse prevention, the Metro transport review, the rising cost of energy in Tasmania, aged care and isolation. Our public relations company *Font Public Relations* is to be congratulated for its professionalism and ability to grasp the complex issues impacting older Tasmanians. COTA Australia, our national body, has also increased its media and public profile through policy development with the astute and passionate leadership of CEO, Ian Yates.

With the launch of a new National Membership Company in August, our membership has increased by 15 per cent, along with a slight increase in organisation memberships. This year is also the first in COTA's history that we have had a flood of members wanting to join our Board of Directors. Happily, we also had more expressions of interest to join our Policy Council than there were positions available.

We have also secured the coordination of Seniors Week for 2011 and developed a fruitful partnership with Sustainable Living Tasmania and, along with other key organisations, COTA Tasmania was successful in lobbying the State Government to fund a much awaited *Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy*.

We've built a strong and resilient relationship with our State Government through the Seniors Bureau and enjoy a new and developing rapport with MP Cassie O'Connor in her new role. All of this would not be possible if COTA was unknown and not respected by the Tasmanian community.

We've also increased our presence at a local level with our unique consultation project, *Conversations with our Community*, being rolled out in the Southern Midlands, Huon Valley and Kingborough areas. COTA is now able to connect with older people by using older people at a local level. We plan to duplicate this model across the State if funding allows.

COTA has a small but dynamic team of staff and volunteers, and just like Tasmania, small organisations can produce big and better outcomes.

To our staff team, Jane Jeppson (Project officer/Admin), Jane Bowman (Peer Education Coordinator) and Linda Jamieson (Project Officer), many thanks for your support and commitment to COTA and what it values.

To our Board of Directors, a truly professional and talented team of individuals and in particular to our President, Margaret Bird, thank you for your wisdom, direction and energy. To our volunteer Peer Educators and COTA Champions, our real connection to older Tasmanians, thank you.

Maxine Griffiths, AM,
Chief Executive Officer

COTA (Tas)
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(03) 6228 1897
www.cotatas.org.au

New COTA Tasmania Board

The COTA Tasmania board underwent some changes at the recent Annual General Meeting, held on Friday 26 November. We would like to welcome the new members to the COTA Tasmania family and welcome back pre-existing board members. The new COTA Tasmania board consists of:

- Margaret Bird (President), re-elected
- Lindy Mackey (Vice President), re-elected
- Irene Walklett (Treasurer)
- Leigh Delaney, new Board member
- Lyne Cameron, re-elected
- Barry Lange, existing Board member
- Martin Modinger, new Board member
- Iris Goetzki, existing Board member
- Diana Carter, new Board member
- Jean Walker, new Board member

COTA Champions

COTA's *Conversations with our Community* project, including recruiting local older people as COTA Champions and the Have Your Say postcards, is progressing extremely well. COTA has now recruited seven COTA Champions in the Huon Valley, nine in the Southern Midlands and six in Kingborough, with still more being recruited.

The role of the COTA Champion is to listen to the needs and issues of older people in their local community and provide this information back to COTA, thereby ensuring COTA truly is the voice of older people. The COTA Champions also assist COTA to conduct consultations on specific issues.

Currently the Champions are involved with COTA in encouraging older people to have their say in the 10 year review of Tasmania *Together*. COTA Champions in Kingborough, Southern Midlands and Huon Valley have been assisting older people to complete the Tasmania *Together* Have Your Say brochures or inviting them to attend forums COTA is hosting for the 10 year review.

In Oatlands in mid-November a group of 12 lively and enthusiastic older people discussed key issues important to them and provided very practical suggestions for improvements for older people at a local community level. The key issues discussed included access to flexible and frequent public and community transport, greater coordinated communication channels for informing the local community of activities and events, a greater presence of community police in local communities and an increase in health promotion activities that improve both physical and mental wellbeing.

COTA will provide the information gained through these consultations to the Tasmanian *Together* review process, but will also use this information to lobby for improved services for older people. COTA will also liaise with local councils and community health services to share with them the issues and suggestions from older people in their local community.

Master class seminars equipping the community services sector

A master class seminar is being run in 2011 by *Change Champions* targeting long term alcohol abuse in older adults. This master class aims to provide attendees with the knowledge and skills around the effects of long-term alcohol abuse on the ageing. It will further aim to convey other strategies to assist community service workers to manage concerning behaviours among older clients living with an alcohol related brain injury. Other master class seminars that will be running in 2011 will cover Medication Safety for Older People, and Mental Health and Medication Safety. For more information regarding the seminars visit www.changechampions.com.au.

"For an inclusive community which values, supports and recognises the contribution of all older people."

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COTA Policy Council

Access to transport has been highlighted through the *Conversations with our Community* consultation project as a key issue of older people. The Policy Council has agreed to explore this issue and has recently requested information from all local councils, Metro, Tassie Link, community transport providers, DIER and other key agencies. The information the Policy Council received was extensive and COTA has now contracted a consultant to identify the major issues and themes arising from this information before further consideration by the Policy Council.

At its meeting in early November, the Policy Council also provided input into the work of COTA's National Policy Council. Key issues for older people that were discussed included: issues for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people as they age, euthanasia and end of life issues, COTA's federal budget submission for 2011-12 and greater engagement of older people in policy work.

COTA Tas budget submissions

On 19 November COTA provided the State Government with a budget submission outlining their suggested initiatives for the upcoming State budget. The document makes a number of proposals on behalf of older Tasmanians.

Most prominent amongst these is the call to monitor and make more affordable, the cost of living for the older people. The recent rises in the prices of petrol, power, council and interest rates have meant that many pensioners, reliant on a fixed income are in need of more government assistance to ease the strain.

Other issues outlined in the submission were the call to promote Tasmania as an ideal spot to retire and an upgrade to anti-discrimination laws in the hope of making it impossible to discriminate against people based on their age.

Another matter submitted to the State Government was a way to tackle the loneliness and isolation felt by many, particularly rural, elderly residents. Incorporated within this is the suggestion for better educational opportunities and greater availability to digital services in rural areas. For a full copy of the budget submissions please contact COTA Tasmania on (03) 6228 1897.

Human Rights Week and Awards

December 3 – 10 is universally observed as Human Rights Week by the United Nations. This year, the week will be marked by TasCOSS with a Human Rights Week breakfast discussing the human rights and community service sector and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities for Tasmania.

For all those working or interested in the community services sector, this is a fantastic opportunity to hear some nationally acclaimed speakers including Cassandra Golding, the new CEO of the Australian Council of Social Service, and Robin Banks, the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.

This event will be held at 7.30am on Wednesday 8 December, at the Salamanca Inn in Gladstone street, Hobart. For more information email admin@tascoss.org.au.

Other Human Rights Week activities around the State include the presentations of a number of awards to individuals or organisations who have proven to provide a special contribution to the community services sector. These contributions relate to activities such as promoting equal opportunities and anti-discrimination, the promotion of greater respect and harmony between those of different ethnic and social backgrounds, working with people with an intellectual, physical, sensory or psychiatric disability and the promotion of social rights and peace.

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COTA Tasmania Christmas hours

COTA Tasmania offices will be closed from Christmas Eve until 10 January. Have a safe and happy Christmas and we look forward to a successful year in 2011.

Council On The Ageing (Tas) Inc

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name of Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Number of members _____ clients _____ residents _____

Contact Person: _____

Position: _____

Address (if different from above) _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Membership Category

Annual Fees are due by 1 July each year (Amounts are GST inc)

Please tick your organisation type:

Full year (July to June)

- \$20 Senior's Clubs
 \$55 Consumer / Peak Organisations
 \$110 Service Providers & Government Agencies

Half year (Jan to June)

- \$10 Senior's Clubs
 \$27.50 Consumer / Peak Organisations
 \$55 Service Providers & Government Agencies

**For consideration by the Board,
please complete & send to:**

COTA (Tas), 2 St John's Avenue, New Town Tas 7008

"For an inclusive community which values, supports and recognises the contribution of all older people."

If you would like to add or remove your name to the COTA Tas newsletter mailing list, please email admin@cotatas.org.au with "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" in the subject line.