



Dear Friends,

Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA Tas) would like to congratulate the State Government on their announcement of an elder abuse prevention strategy as part of 2010-2011 State Budget – a promise that has been 10 years in the making.

COTA Tas is relieved to see the government taking steps to protect older Tasmanians, not just those in retirement homes, but at a community level as well.

A policy to help prevent elder abuse is an integral element when looking after the needs of all older Tasmanians and it is unacceptable that Tasmania is the only state in Australia without one.

COTA Tas is looking forward to working with Secretary to Cabinet, Cassy O'Connor, and other members of the elder abuse prevention strategy to assist in the development of this policy.

The new prevention strategy will see \$2.6 million over four years to deliver a detailed review on the prevalence of elder abuse in Tasmania, a new "Office of Seniors' Services" established within the Department of Health and Human Services, an examination of legislative requirements and a community education program.

It is imperative that we tackle the issue through the development and implementation of a whole of government strategy for addressing and preventing elder abuse. It is our aim to move as quickly as possible. Tasmanians have been waiting long enough for this policy and we have a lot of work to do.

Before the State election in March all three political parties committed to the formation of an elder abuse prevention policy for Tasmania, and COTA Tas will do everything in its power to ensure that this policy becomes a reality now that a funding commitment has been made.

It is in everyone's best interests to ensure that this money is spent wisely so we can begin protecting older Tasmanians as soon as possible.

In the future, COTA Tas would also like to see the establishment of a Later Years Foundation, which would be modelled closely on Tasmania's current Early Years Foundation. This would work with governments and the not-for-profit sector to channel resources, information and support to elderly Tasmanians and those who care for them.

With the right strategies, such as additional support for research, advocacy, consultation and social policy development, older people need not be disadvantaged because of their age.

Maxine Griffiths, AM,
Chief Executive Officer

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An Update from the COTA Policy Council

Established at the end of 2009, the COTA Tasmania Policy Council is made up of 10 members from around Tasmania. The purpose of the Council is to assist COTA, at both a state and national level, in the development of key policies in relation to older people.

Council members have recently provided significant input into COTA's comments on the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resource's discussion paper on the *Review of the Older Drivers Licensing System* in Tasmania. In a response to the discussion paper, COTA expressed concern about the requirement that drivers 75 years and over are required to undertake an annual medical examination and drivers 85 years and over are required to undertake an on-road assessment. These requirements are based purely on age and not on driving ability which COTA considers to be age discriminatory.

Council members have also had input into the Greens issues paper on *Aged Care for the Future* and are currently considering the Productivity Commission's issues paper on *Caring for Older Australians*.

At their next meeting in August the Policy Council will consider the major issues that COTA has identified in their consultations and meetings with older Tasmanians over the last six months and identify key policy priorities for Tasmania.

The Chair of the Tasmanian Policy Council and a COTA staff member also represent Tasmania on COTA's National Policy Council. The Tasmanian Policy Council members have significant input into issues that are discussed at a national level. The National Policy Council met recently in Canberra and Tasmanian representatives made significant contribution into key issues including: mature age employment, universal housing design, aged friendly communities, aged care reforms and the priority issues for older people in the upcoming federal election.

Individual Membership

Membership is the lifeblood of any people-before-profit organisation and this is no exception at COTA Tasmania. A committed, capable and growing membership enables us to become a stronger and more sustainable organisation and to provide more programs and services.

Importantly, it also allows us to become more persuasive when lobbying Government, the business sector and the community in general for better outcomes for older Tasmanians. This is especially true during the lead up to the Federal election to occur in 2010.

In order to increase our focus on existing individual members and to grow our membership, COTA Tasmania is pleased to announce that a new business unit, COTA Member Services (CMS), has been created. CMS' sole purpose is to not only attract new individual members but to continually enhance the value we provide existing members - so they want to stay as members.

Establishing COTA Member Services is an important outcome for COTA. As Chief Executive Officer, Michael Mezzino will lead this new area and bring extensive experience in developing and growing member-based organisations.

With a team dedicated to looking after our individual members, many exciting changes will be noticed which will include expanding the range of benefits that we provide exclusively to our members. The first significant change will be to our members' magazine and you can look forward to the release of the new look magazine in September 2010.

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

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Metro Urged to Consider Older Tasmanians

Council on the Ageing Tasmania would like to express their support for Metro Tasmania as they take steps to improve their bus services, however, we would encourage them to consult with the demographic that relies on them the most – older Tasmanians. Over the coming months Metro plan to conduct a number of focus groups and telephone surveys to determine the bus company's future development plans. While older Tasmanians may not be the biggest money earner, as a demographic many older people are dependent on public transport to stay connected with their communities, visit their doctor or simply buy their groceries. Changes to Metro services that would benefit older Tasmanians must be an essential part of an overhaul that Tasmania's public transport system desperately needs. With the number of Tasmanians aged over 65 predicted to double by 2050 it is important to plan ahead with a public transport system that is relevant to this growing demographic and COTA Tas would be happy to consult with Metro to help make bus travel more accessible to the needs of older Tasmanians.

Centrelink Age Pension Forms Simplified

Recent changes to Centrelink paperwork have made switching from an income support payment to an Age Pension easier for more than 50,000 Centrelink customers a year. Part of Centrelink's Service Delivery Reform Agenda, the new form is expected to take half the time of the previous form to complete and will make better use of information held by Centrelink. Forms have already been sent to eligible customers and further information is available by calling Centrelink on 132 300. More information about service delivery reform is available from www.worksforyou.gov.au.

Call for more Companion Card Support

The Minister for Community Services, Jenny Macklin, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, have called on more Australian organisations to join the National Companion Card scheme to help make entertainment, sport and recreational activities more accessible to people with disability. COTA Tas supports this call, and encourages more Tasmanian businesses to join the National Companion Card Scheme, which provides people with a disability two tickets for the price of one so that they are able to bring along a carer for free. The national scheme, launched in December 2009, now has 26 national affiliates who provide Companion Card holders with access to over 1,700 venues, 400 events and 17 tournaments or fixtures across the country without charging for their companion. More information for Tasmanian businesses wishing to take part in the National Companion Card Scheme is available from www.companioncard.com.au.

Archicentre urges architects to be mindful of older residents

The building advisory service to The Australian Institute of Architects, Archicentre, has issued advice to members on areas of risk for older Australians in the home. With the deaths of more than 1,300 people aged 65 and over a year attributed to falls in the home Archicentre has issued tips for fall prevention. Types of surface area, grab rails, interior colour schemes, level entry showers and impact absorbent floors are all addressed as ways of designing safer home for Australians. With one in three Australians experiencing a fall at least once a year COTA believes this reminder is a good step towards ensuring there is greater consideration for the impact building design has on older Tasmanians in the community. For more information visit www.archicentre.com.au.

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Senior's net kiosks up an running

The Australian government put aside \$15 million over three years (2008-2011) for the provision of 2000 internet kiosks for use by older Tasmanians. To date over thirty kiosks have been rolled out across the state with the broadband access helping older Tasmanians stay in touch with relatives and keep abreast of current issues. The kiosks are a friendly environment in which they can feel comfortable tackling new technology head on with the assistance of like minded individuals for free. For a full list of available kiosks visit www.necseniors.net.au.

Commitment to raising literacy standards welcomed by COTA

The Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) welcomed the State Budgets commitment to improving literacy standards recently and COTA would also like to commend the State Government on its commitment to bettering standards in Tasmania. We are committed to working with the Government to ensure this initiative extends to IT, health literacy and general literacy for older Tasmanians. It is a general misconception that literacy issues only impact younger people but understanding literacy, specifically in the areas of health and IT, is paramount to easy living for older Tasmanians. COTA Tas has, for the past five years, operated a Peer Education program whereby older people are recruited and trained to volunteer as Peer Educators and provide much needed information to older people. For information on this scheme contact the Peer Education Coordinator Jane Bowman on 62281897.

Upcoming Women's Banking Seminars

Westpac Banking will be running a series of seminars on retirement and superannuation as part of their Women's Markets group. Held over three months the seminars will cover retirement planning, superannuation, long term investment and property investment. The first session will feature Dora Capetanakis, a Senior Corporate Super Consultant for BT Financial Group and Jeff Frame and Rod Gardiner, both Senior Financial Planners for BT Financial Group. The first seminar will be held in Launceston on Wednesday 7 July and in Hobart on Thursday 8 July. Refreshments will be provided and the seminar is complimentary, however seating is limited. Contact Kim Linnett on (03) 62304249 for more information.

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

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With your help we can have a stronger voice to effect change across Tasmania.

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 Johns Avenue, New Town Tas 7008

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.