

Improving your communications with older Tasmanians

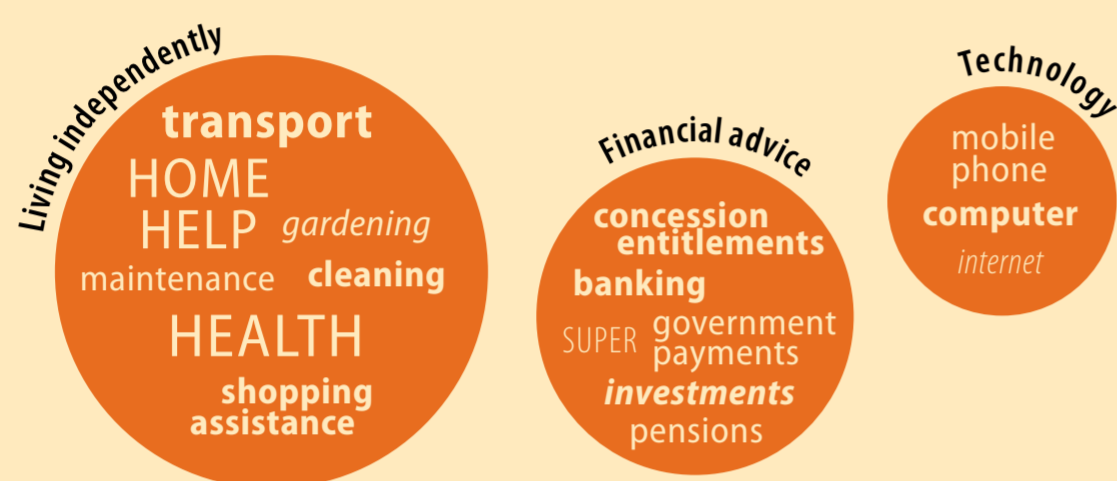
Key messages from the COTA Tasmania *Finding out: accessing the right information at the right time* project

What we know

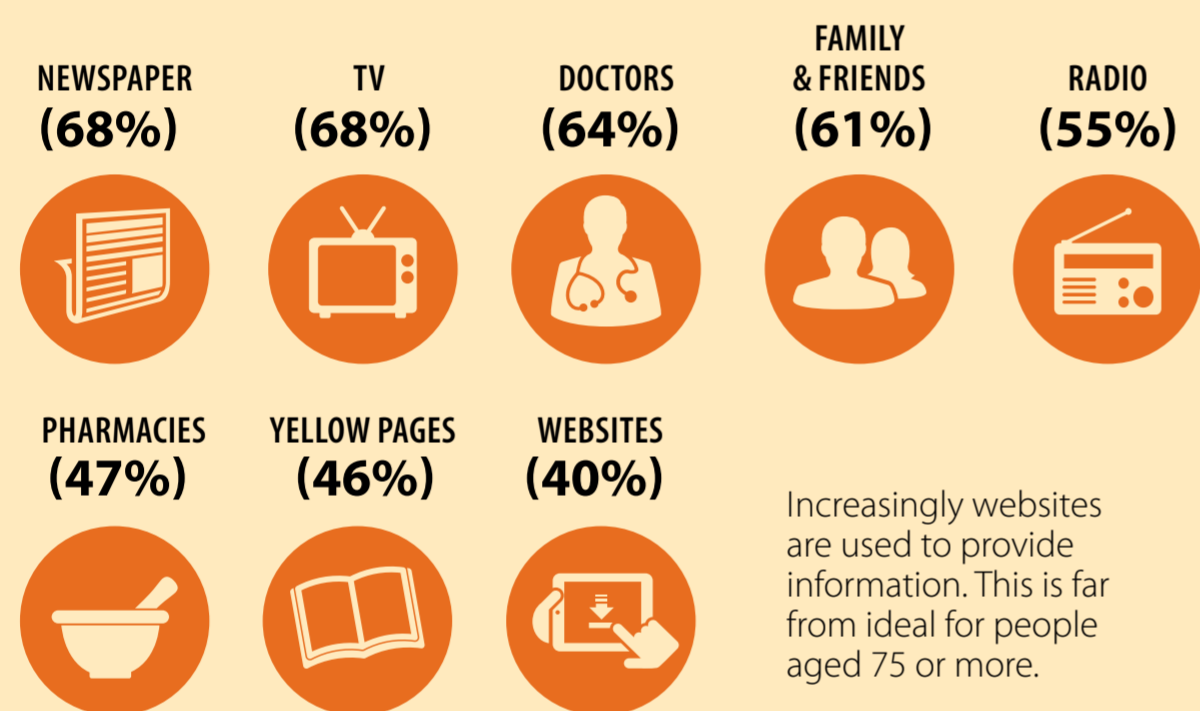
It is projected that in 2030, 1 in 4 Tasmanians will be aged over 65 years.

Older people are becoming a larger proportion of customer bases – ‘grey power’ is becoming a recognised force in economic consumption, marketing, workforce participation and political polling.

What do older Tasmanians want information about?



Where do older Tasmanians find information?

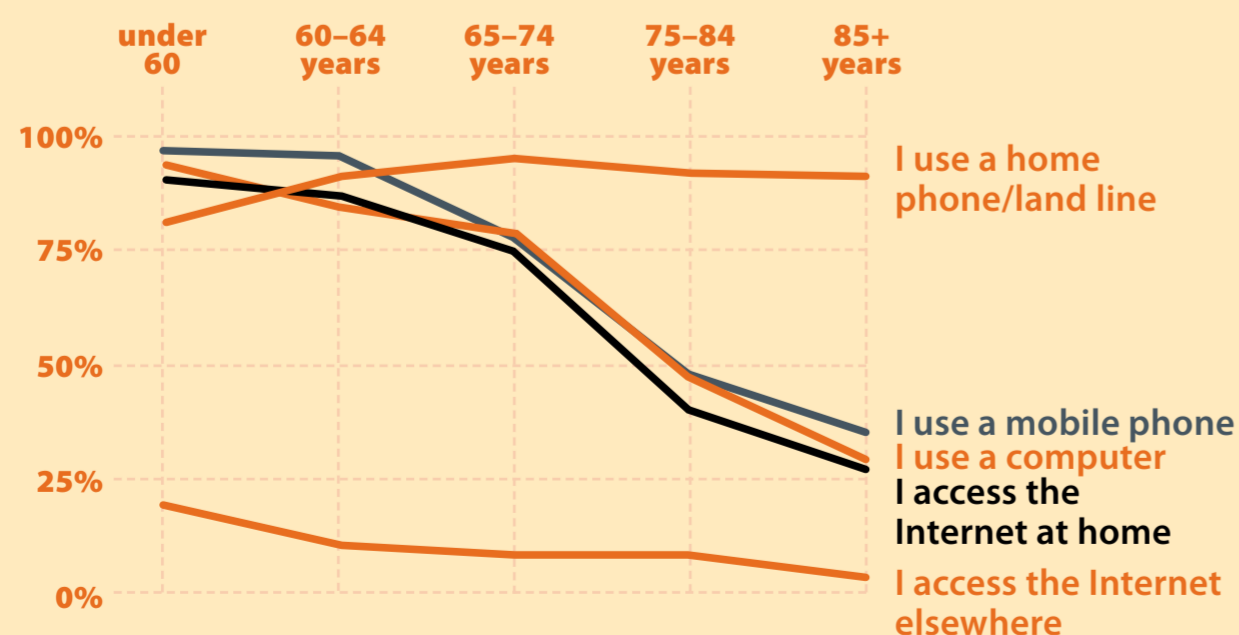


	WEBSITES	DOCTORS/PHARMACIES
50–59 YEARS	19%	16%
60–74 YEARS	12%	23%
75–84 YEARS	6%	27%
85+ YEARS	4%	27%



Better communication relies on understanding the information seeking habits of your target audience.

Technology use at home



What we need to do

Over 600 Tasmanians aged 60 years or more described the problems or barriers they experienced in finding information in a timely way. They also provided many practical solutions to overcome these barriers.

Barriers

- COMMUNICATION**
- Confusing, complex mechanical instructions, multiple prompts, long waiting periods
 - Difficulties understanding and being understood
 - Cost of waiting time
 - Confusing language, small font sizes, insufficient contrast between background and text

Solutions

- Offer no more than four automated menu options** – including “speak to an operator”
- Offer a call back function** during long waiting times
- Use clear speech, don’t rush**
- Conduct age-friendly communication training**
- Use 12-14 point font size**
- Always use plain English**, no acronyms
- Use dark ink on light background**

TECHNOLOGY

- Limited access. Lack of familiarity with technology
- Lack of training and rate of change
- Problems with online instructions and forms
- Cost and low coverage in rural areas
- Low usage rates, reliance on fixed land line, cost of internet based technology

- Provide clearer online instructions** (language and font size)
- Provide a tip or link to enable text to be magnified**
- Provide hardcopy alternatives** to online forms
- Include phone as well as online contacts** at top of webpage

PHYSICAL

- Health-related restrictions, long queues with few or no seating options, limited transport options especially in rural areas

- Provide seating**
- Offer face-to-face options** to provide information

CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL CONNECTION

- Social isolation, ageism, discrimination
- The evidence shows strong links between a lack of confidence, feelings of social isolation and an inability to access information

- Provide and promote social opportunities** for older Tasmanians
- Provide information about transport routes** and options
- Promote in-home assistance** for internet, computer, mobile devices
- Provide and promote age-friendly communication training**

A small number of specific changes in policy and practice can improve access to information. It is crucial that we do not focus solely on addressing the technological needs of older people, and neglect evidence from the research that social interaction plays a vital part in overcoming barriers to accessing information.

Access to information is a human right