

A SENIOR ORGANISATION

# COTA VIC AT 60



CELEBRATING  
COTA **60** YEARS OF ACTION  
& INFORMATION  
VICTORIA



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## President's Introduction

Organisations come and go. They come in response to a perceived need or interest and they decline when they no longer seem relevant. Sixty years ago, the Old People's Welfare Council came. It did not go. Eventually it changed its name and became COTA Victoria. What has not changed is the organisation's commitment to matters of concern to older people.

In earlier decades, the needs of 'old people' were assumed to be the concern of their families. Many people died long before they were old. By 1950 it was clear that the number of older people was increasing and that too often they had no family or other means of support. War, depression and another war took a heavy toll on Australians in the first half of the 20th century. Many lacked access to even basic needs, food, housing and health care. Thus, the Old People's Welfare Council (OPWC) came into existence.

Sixty years later, it continues, now as COTA Vic. Given the persistence of issues around ageing, it is likely to have a life for at least another 60 years.

In its first decade the Council, run almost entirely by volunteers, identified the needs of older people. 'Acute loneliness' and 'dangerous malnutrition' are graphic phrases which feature in an early annual report of the Council. With great energy, the three levels of government were lobbied, practical help was made available, and long-term policies were developed to safeguard the rights and welfare of the state's older people.

In 2012, we are appropriate heirs to these achievers. Volunteers have been joined by paid staff to form a professional and committed group who listen to what older people have to say and then convert words and needs into policy and deeds.

While there is still much to celebrate, the compilation of this short history of our organisation reminds us of how much has been done. It reminds us also of how much we build on the achievements of the past to support the work of the present and direct us to the future.

**Janet Wood, President COTA (Vic)**

**August 2012**

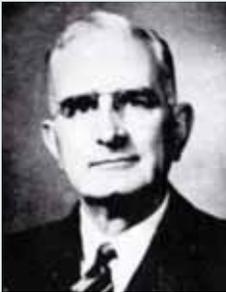


## Overview of Six Decades of COTA Victoria

### 1950s

- 1951 Inaugural meeting of the Old People's Welfare Council (OPWC) of Victoria (30 April).
- 1953 Lobbied for recreational centres with canteens serving a daily hot meal.
- 1954 Supported proposal to house "intellectually handicapped" people and the aged separately from the mentally ill.
- 1955 Involved in preparations for a national conference of organisations devoted to the welfare of old people.
- 1956 Mr. Randal White appointed to first paid position (Director).
- 1957 Formation of the National Old People's Welfare Council of Australia – Victorian OPWC President Sir Giles Chippindall appointed as first Chairman.
- 1958 Similar Councils established in Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales.

### Obituary: Randal Merrick White, 1896 – 1978



"Mr. White commenced as the first full-time Director of the Victorian Council on the Ageing in March 1955, a position which he held with distinction until 30 November 1967. In 1968 he joined the Executive Committee and served as a Member of the Executive until 1973. He was the first Honorary Secretary of the Australian Council on the Ageing from 1959 until 1976. Mr. White visited all parts of Victoria talking to groups, helping to get clubs, Meals on Wheels and other services established. He lectured at conferences, organised seminars and generally fought for the improvement of aged care in this State and in this nation. A truly gentle gentleman,

Randal will be remembered for years to come as a great worker for the aged."

### 1960s

- 1961 Two-day leadership training for 46 delegates from 23 country Victorian clubs.
- 1962 'Call of Age Appeal' – launch of a door-to-door public appeal for funds. OPWC Information & Advocacy Service established.
- 1966 *Directory of Services for Older Victorians* published.
- 1968 Became incorporated & name changed to Victorian Council on the Ageing (VCOTA).

### 1970s

- 1971-'72 Shortage of funds; reduction in VCOTA services.



- 1973-'74 Partnership with the Good Neighbour Council to research the needs of older migrants.
- 1976 25th anniversary year: submissions to governments to provide "full range of options from which [older people can] decide their future course". Pilot projects for Foster Grandparents, and training craft leaders to work in Senior Citizens Clubs. Booklet, *Cooking for One or Two*.
- 1977 VCOTA & CAE 'Over 60s Forum' established: fortnightly forums aired the concerns of older people.
- 1978 Submission to Equal Opportunity Commission on the lack of opportunities for older people.
- 1979 Review confirmed VCOTA's role as "advocacy for and with the aged to enhance and develop their role in society."

### 1980s

- 1980 Auspice and sponsorship of Abbeyfield and Foster Grandparents.
- 1981 Information & Advocacy Service increased to five days a week. VCOTA membership reached 500.
- 1982 Appeal Committee established, raised \$27,000. Recreation Committee established. First Senior Citizens Week.
- 1983 Promoted National Income Insurance Scheme as alternative to government's National Income Security Scheme.
- 1984 Opposed introduction of the Income Security Assets Test. Fitness Leaders Training Course had 36 graduates. Introduced HACC program in Western Melbourne region. Active role in establishing Alzheimers Association and University of the Third Age.
- 1985 Introduced commercial services, e.g. insurance, legal advice, financial planning. National Insurance Income Plan launched. Assisted development of regulations and policies on Resident Funded Retirement Villages.
- 1986 VCOTA Living Bureau & COTA Mature Outlook Insurance launched. Participated in Nursing Homes and Hostels Review.
- 1987 Participated in Aged Abuse Inquiry.
- 1989 Review of organisation into four divisions: Policy & Development, Community Education, Advocacy, Membership Services. Advocated on new public transport ticketing system (Metcards).

### 1990s

- 1991 National COTA movement strategy developed. Updated *Resident Funded Retirement Villages Directory*.
- 1992 MGM Consultants recommended COTA should become a consumer organisation. Name changed to COTA Victoria.
- 1993 Policy on leisure developed.
- 1994 Commissioned by state government to develop policy on ageing and recreation.



- 1995 Moved to present location in Block Arcade. Preparations for 1999 United Nations Year of Older Persons. Introduced Challenging Ageing concept.
- 1996-'97 Peer Education training for Wise Use of Medicines program. Creative Transitions to Retirement (CTTR) pilot program. Auspiced the Older Adults Recreation Network. Auspiced Secretariat for Australian Coalition '99 and Making the Most of Life.
- 1998 Position of Volunteer Co-ordinator introduced. SATIN established (Seniors Access to Information Networks).
- 1999 Lobbied against introduction of seniors' driving licence. Living Longer, Living Stronger™ (LLLS™) program introduced. Leadership role in Australian Coalition '99. Website established.

## 2000s

- 2000 Seniors Info Plus (SIP, new name for the information service) shopfront fully operational. LLLS™ Endorsement Scheme – 300 fitness centres registered. Green Sages environmental action group revived & Speakers Group established.
- 2001 Jubilee Year program included: anniversary breakfast, three seminars on critical policy issues, a celebration of Seniors Clubs & Associations, production of a commemorative glass.
- 2003 Potential merger with National Seniors Association (NSA).
- 2004 Withdrew from merger with NSA. COTA & Rotary Clubs established Older Men's Health Groups. Quality Use of Medicines peer education program fully operational. New shopfront for information service in Flinders Lane.
- 2005 COTA Over 50s Alliance established to provide national coverage. International Day of Older Persons – 12,000 participants. Auspiced Retirement Villages Residents' Association.
- 2006 Rainbow Seniors movement established. 'Age friendly' communities partnership with MAV. Active participant in Elder Abuse Inquiry.
- 2007 Promoted 'Fair Go for Pensioners' Coalition. Introduced 'Beyond maturity blues' program. Established Physical Activities Unit.
- 2008 Established Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) partnership. Won the right to host 2010 International Federation on Ageing (IFA) 10th global conference. Thirty Councils participated in Positive Ageing program.
- 2009 Climate change emerged as new issue for seniors.
- 2010 Hosted IFA Conference – 1100 delegates. Tenth anniversary of information service, now named Seniors Information Victoria (SIV). Community education programs involved 6500 seniors. LLLS™ – 17,000 participants at 120 venues.
- 2011 Convened Human Rights Network.



## COTA Vic – A 60-year History

COTA Victoria began life as the Old People's Welfare Council (OPWC) of Victoria at an inaugural meeting on 30 April 1951. The organisation was created out of post-war concern at the increasing number of older people living lives of quiet desperation, and named its initial objectives as addressing the critical issues of loneliness, lack of support services, poor or inappropriate accommodation, transport accessibility, nutrition and respite care. OPWC was comprised solely of volunteers until Mr. Randal White was appointed as its first Director in 1956. Advocacy and action were its touchstones.

Although some issues have changed since its inception 60 years ago, the organisation's approach essentially remains the same – as COTA Victoria President Janet Wood notes:

*For 60 years, COTA Victoria has advocated for the recognition of the human rights of older people. The organisation was born into the period when the naming of rights seemed to be at least one answer to the terrible events of the first half of the 20th century. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declared in 1951 by the very new United Nations, shone a light into the future, away from that dark period. In Australia there was a new interest in ageing, mostly expressed in the development of aged care services. COTA was one of the first organisations to hone its focus on this group of people. It has not shifted its gaze for these 60 years. [President's Report, 2010/11]*

COTA continues to call for an 'age-friendly Victoria', which will bring benefits not only to older Victorians but to all members of our community, through better design and planning in our homes and environment, our work, our training and education, and our health systems. As importantly, it must lead to changes in attitudes towards older people, and enable our communities to benefit from their participation and contributions. As a community-based, consumer-driven organisation, COTA works to bring about positive changes with and for senior Victorians.

Much can be said about about the numerous activities, services, events, partnerships, programs and research projects with which COTA has been involved over the decades. This is a brief account of that work. For the sake of clarity, the key functions and purposes of COTA's work are addressed under six thematic headings:

- Advocacy and representation
- Education, information and research
- Health, leisure and well-being
- Partnerships, networks and auspices
- COTA, Victorian and Australian
- Fluctuating fortunes

These categories do not represent the totality or full diversity of services and activities with which COTA has been involved. Many COTA programs and activities fit within more than one category.



## Vision

*Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria's vision is to contribute to a just, equitable and humane society in which older people are able to age with dignity and purpose.*

## Mission

*COTA Victoria's mission is to mobilise older people and those who work with them to age well in a just society.*

*The organisation has changed its name twice from the original OPWC. In 1968 the Council adopted the name Victorian Council on the Ageing (VCOTA). After becoming an incorporated body in 1990, an external review of the organisation brought about another name change in 1992 – to COTA Victoria, as part of a national strategy plan for all COTAs in Australia.*

*Our greatest achievements in 60 years are the amazing growth in seniors' participation in COTA, and the longevity of many of the core programs. John Wise, COTA Victoria President (2005 – 2007)*

## Obituary: Mr. A. J. Peddlesden, c.1927 – 1979



"Jim, as he was affectionally known to everyone, came to the Council in October 1969, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience, not only in hospital management, but also in the field of aged care. He had vision, imagination, sincerity and a tremendous capacity for enthusing others and working with them. He served on innumerable public and Council committees, and his advice and opinions were sought by Members of Parliament, the media, senior citizens' clubs, organisations and individuals. He made the Victorian Council on the Ageing the leading consultative body on aged care.

Above all, he cared about people, and in spite of his busy life he always found time to listen to and help individual people, particularly old ones. The Federal Government awarded him a Jubilee Medal for his work for the aged. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for others.' It was just this that Jim did."



## COTA Vic – The People

As a community organisation, COTA Victoria depends on people first and foremost.

### Members and Volunteers

COTA emphasises that older people can and do speak for themselves. Volunteers are advocates for their peers. In the International Year of the Volunteer (2001), COTA President Vivienne McCutcheon recognised “the immensely valuable contribution of our members... through their participation in our programs, their willingness to provide hours of support and back up in the office, as public speakers and leaders of programs. They demonstrate that as older people working together we can achieve so much for ourselves, our peers and our communities.” [COTA Annual Report, 2001]

These contributions have been consistent through the decades, and on more than one occasion volunteers have saved the day:

*In particular I must mention the very significant contributions made by Florence Houghton who decided mid-1991 that she must be able to assist more than by just sticking on labels. Florence took herself off and underwent a Telecom Commander System training course. Since then she has acted as volunteer receptionist/telephonist at least 4 days a week. Who says one is ever too old to learn something new – even at 86! [Executive Director Anne Jacques, COTA Annual Report, 1992]*

Don Ellard was appointed as COTA's first Volunteer Manager in 1998, and Susan Preece currently holds the role.

### Peer Educators

In line with COTA's principles of being an organisation for and by older people, the majority of COTA's community education work is conducted by peer educators – older people who are trained and supported to deliver key messages to senior Victorians. These educators are involved in such activities as seminars and workshops on ageing well, memory, myths and stereotypes of ageing, 'Beyond maturity blues', quality use of medicines, exercise programs, older men's health groups – and much, much more!

### Staff

Dedicated staff are the backbone of COTA. Year after year, COTA senior executive officers have noted and applauded staff members' “untiring efforts”, “enthusiasm and responsibility”, “good humoured work under high pressure” and “commitment and stamina”. They have weathered many challenges and celebrated many team achievements.



*Clockwise from left: Making the Most of Life Day: trying his hand at croquet; Seniors Expo; OM:NI group day out.*

## Office Bearers and Board Members

The level of commitment and energetic input into fostering the organisation see these individuals involved in far more work than can seem feasible or realistic – and yet they do it all, and more.

## Partnerships

We are indebted to all the members and representatives of peak bodies, aged care sector services, policy divisions and other government agencies with whom we work now and have worked in the past. COTA's development into an influential force for improving the lives of senior Victorians has depended in no small part on the willing and dedicated collaborative work of these people.

A chronology of patrons, senior executive COTA staff members and office bearers is provided on page 30 of this booklet.



## Advocacy and Representation

These core functions were integral to the establishment of the Old People's Welfare Council (OPWC) of Victoria in 1951 and have remained centre-stage in our thinking and our approach through action. Of necessity, we can only mention a few initiatives as indicators of our focus in this area.

*We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation that advocates rigorously to government at all levels, to the media and to the broader community on matters important to older people. [COTA Annual Report, 2004/05]*

In the early 1950s OPWC approached the state government and municipal councils to set up recreational centres with canteens providing a hot meal daily and from which a Meals on Wheels service could operate (a pioneering initiative at that time). It supported the Mental Health Federation of Victoria's proposal to lobby for intellectually handicapped people and the aged to be housed in separate hospitals from the mentally ill; and it made preparations for a National Conference of organisations devoted to the welfare of old people.

In November 1962 OPWC set up its own Information & Advocacy Service, which received 800 calls in its first year of operation; 47 percent of these were enquiries about accommodation. Now known as Seniors Information Victoria (SIV), this service is discussed on page 13 of this booklet.

In the 1960s and '70s the organisation energetically lobbied state and federal governments on areas of concern highlighted in consultative forums with senior Victorians statewide: the lack of opportunities for older people in health care, transport, traffic safety, shopping, packaging, housing, income, societal attitudes, retirement and media coverage.

A review of the VCOTA general aims, structure and function in 1979 consolidated its core function as "advocacy for and with the aged to enhance and develop their role in society". Accordingly, the organisation made a number of submissions to government agencies in the 1980s, including one on the 'confused elderly and retirement villages'; another, the promotion of a national income insurance scheme as an alternative to the government's National Income Security Scheme; and opposition to the introduction of an income security assets test. VCOTA participated fully in several reviews and enquiries – such as regulations and policies on resident funded retirement villages, nursing homes and hostels, and the Aged Abuse Enquiry – and contributed actively to the establishment of the Alzheimers Association and University of the Third Age.

In the 1990s VCOTA was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation to develop policy on ageing and recreation. By the mid-2000s the organisation was represented on more than 30 government advisory bodies and review committees, campaigning on a range of issues: improved access to multi-purpose taxis, elder abuse, accessible housing, transport, and improving health services for older people, among others. COTA also established a Retirement Villages



Residents Association in this period, one major aim of which was to contribute to the development of government policy.

## Positive Ageing

In the mid-2000s COTA Victoria partnered with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to deliver a three-year Positive Ageing project, funded by the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV). In the life of the project the number of local councils having positive ageing strategies in place increased from 12 to 50, with an additional 13 councils having commenced their plans, and more than 20 officers had been employed at local councils with a dedicated responsibility to focus on ageing well strategies. The next step was a COTA Vic/MAV project to encourage leadership in promoting 'age friendly' communities.

In 2008 COTA became involved in a significant new service: Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV).



*Left: COTA cycling group day out.*

*Below: Making the Most of Life Day: a show of strength in the tug-of-war.*





## Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV)

*SRV is a free advocacy and legal service established to prevent and respond to older people experiencing elder abuse (physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and neglect). The most frequent form of reported abuse is financial, followed by psychological; these two forms of abuse often occur together.*

*SRV was established with funding from the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV) and Victorian Legal Aid as a joint venture comprising COTA as lead agency, the Public Law Clearing House (PILCH), Eastern Community Legal Centre and Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre. SRV provides telephone information and referral, short-term advocacy and support, community and professional information, and specialist legal services. It also engages in law reform, systemic advocacy and policy reform activities, working from a perspective of empowerment and human rights.*

*In 2010/11 SRV received 1592 calls to the helpline regarding elder abuse, 33 percent being made by older people themselves and 29 percent each by a friend or relative. The advocacy and legal service provided 696 advices; 332 new cases were opened and 232 cases were closed.*

*An important element of SRV's work is to recommend and respond to government proposals on reform. In recent times this has included responding to the Victorian Parliament Legal Reform Committee, and making a major submission to the National Inquiry on Human Rights.*

Other major issues on which COTA has concentrated its advocacy and representation within the past decade include: combating poverty and financial disadvantage in older Victorians, with submission of a four point plan to the federal government outlining a 'Cost of Living in Retirement'; priority issues of mental health, depression and suicide, ageism and employment; the Rainbow Seniors program, addressing issues of discrimination towards gay and lesbian seniors; developing a consumer engagement program for individuals, participants and members of seniors' service and recreational clubs and activity groups to have input into Aged Services planning processes; and convening the Human Rights Network.



# SHIRLEY RAMSAY

## My Life with COTA



In 1962 I was invited to join the Old People's Welfare Council of Victoria (over afternoon tea at the Windsor Hotel) to establish the Information & Advocacy Service. One of my work colleagues at the time said, "But why would you want to work with old people?" Sadly, this reaction was quite common among social workers then.

Joining OPWC was the beginning of an intense and abiding interest. I shudder when I think of the paucity of facilities for older people, especially for those with dementia. I remember the reluctance of many seniors to use available services, preferring to 'soldier on' out of a sense of duty to care for their ailing spouse when the task was beyond their strength... and I recall those who were eligible for the old age pension but whose pride would not allow them to register for it.

An important feature of my 'first life' at COTA was the publication in 1966 of our first *Directory of Services for Older Victorians*. All that we knew then could be contained in one small volume, which we sold for \$1 a copy (or was it ten shillings?).

I left COTA in 1969 for wider experience in local government, then in 1987 took early retirement. I was keen to return to aged care services and was offered short-term relief positions, mostly in residential care – another eye-opener for me. In late 1987 COTA invited me to re-join the Information & Advocacy Service on a regular, part-time basis.

And so began my 'second life' with COTA, which proved to be one of the most satisfying work experiences I have ever had. With considerably more experience and knowledge under my belt, I greatly enjoyed the personal contact with clients. I shall forever be grateful to COTA for this opportunity. Apart from occasional work, I retired from SIV in 1999 when age and hearing loss told me it was time.

I continue to follow, and indeed marvel at COTA's activities. My special love, of course, is SIV. Long may it continue to provide that essential personal contact!



## Education, Information and Research

*Key elements of all COTA's education programs are to challenge the existing myths and stereotypes that exist in our society. These include notions of an older person's learning capacity, ability and willingness to change, and the rights of people to remain active in all aspects of community life. [COTA Annual Report, 1999]*

We focus here on several of our key communication strategies and projects – which reflect the principles, purpose and strategic approach of all COTA empowerment endeavours.

### Seniors Information Victoria (SIV)

COTA Vic's longest-running service has operated for 50 years under several different names, including Seniors Info Plus (SIP), and to date has responded to approximately 170,000 enquiries. SIV provides a depth and breadth of information for the needs of senior Victorians and those who work with, or care for them, and is regarded as the information destination for seniors in Victoria.

The service also delivers regular information sessions, such as 'Solving the mysteries of your mobile phone', as well as the monthly 'Need to Know...?' sessions (on such topics as Considering a Retirement Village, Making a Will, Powers of Attorney, Costs of Aged Care). SIV staff and volunteers attend expos, present at conferences and community group sessions, and contribute to the Ask an Expert program.

While enquiries continue to be diverse, the most frequent are asking for information about accommodation options and, increasingly, enquiries about financial issues from senior Victorians who are finding it hard to make ends meet.

As a young social worker, Shirley Ramsay was recruited to establish the OPWC's Information & Advocacy Service in 1962. She shares memories of her 37-year-long association with SIV on the facing page.

#### ***Need information? Ask a Real Person***

*A common response from people who have contacted the service by phone has been pleasure that the service does not consist of recorded messages and that there is time to discuss an issue in detail. [COTA Annual Report, 2002]*



## **Creative Lifestyles for Older People**

This education series, formerly titled 'Challenging Ageing', was introduced in 1995. It uses the knowledge and wisdom of participants to identify and challenge the myths and misconceptions of ageing, and to examine the ways in which these may have a major influence on services and the care of older people.

"Many participants have expressed a lifting of a great weight from their shoulders as a result of doing the course. 'I feel like I can now look forward to my ageing, and to being who I am. Ageing is not something to be feared but embraced. It is terrific!'" [COTA Annual Report, 2000]

## **Peer Education and Leadership Training**

In May 2011 COTA's Peer Education Team received a Minister for Health Volunteer Award for 'outstanding achievement by a volunteer team (Primary Health)', in recognition of ten years of achievement: more than 2500 information sessions throughout Victoria on a wide range of topics, including Medicines and You, 'Beyond maturity blues', exercise programs, Myths and Stereotypes of Ageing, Memory – Remembering Well, Older Men's Health, and Positive Ageing; presentations at national forums and conferences; assisting at events; and participating in the Challenging Ageing, Creative Transitions to Retirement, Community Champions, Older Men's Social Groups (OM:NI), and other COTA programs.

## **Creative Transitions to Retirement (CTTR)**

This retirement planning pilot program introduced its first 14-month course in 1996/97, seeking to empower older workers and their partners to make successful transitions to retirement and to maintain or adapt lifestyles which contribute to their healthy and positive ageing. Peer educators were trained to run the program.

"Many participants report having had a very negative outlook on retirement before coming into the course; now they feel retirement is something to look forward to and can be meaningful." [COTA Annual Report, 1998]

## **Seniors Access to Information Networks (SATIN)**

SATIN was established in 1998 to recruit older people and train them to use the Internet so that they could train their peers. SATIN went on to develop an e-course to facilitate seniors' access to email and the Web, and piloted COTA into an online community at MC2 (My Connected Community). In 2001 SATIN set up its own transportable training facility with up to six networked terminals. COTA continues to support a volunteer who teaches the use of mobile phones.



## Other Key Projects

**NESB Consultations:** a three-year program commenced in 1994 to increase understanding and skills in working with and representing older people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). Eight language groups were included in consultations on safety and security issues. COTA contributed to a pilot scheme of community planning for NESB older people in aged care.

**'Have Your Say':** this series of meetings in rural and metropolitan areas commenced in 2005. The information gained from these consultative sessions with senior Victorians statewide influences COTA's representation, decision-making and publicity to government agencies and the broader Victorian community.

**Green Sages:** Formed in 2000, the Green Sages project facilitates older people working to improve environmental issues by raising awareness, lobbying government and forming strategic alliances.

**Finance Matters:** In the mid-2000s COTA undertook project management of a series of community workshops for women who wanted to learn more about creating a financially secure retirement.

## Publications

A wide range of publications has been issued by COTA Vic, either directly or in partnership with others. Beginning in 1956 with three leaflets, 'How to Start an Old People's Welfare Committee', 'Clubs for Elderly Citizens' and 'Meals on Wheels', the organisation has continued to provide printed and, more recently, electronic information on many aspects of life for older people in Victoria, as well as regular bulletins to COTA members. An important early publication was the *Resident Funded Retirement Villages Directory*, originally published in 1966 and periodically updated. Other significant endeavours include 'Confident Living for Older People of NESB' project publications of information in eight languages and on community radio in 1995; and the translation of *A Guide to Services for Older Victorians* into 17 languages.

## Research

A major goal of COTA is to review government policies, changes in legislation and actions which impact on the lives and well-being of older people in Victoria. Accordingly, numerous submissions, reports and reviews have either originated from COTA or been offered by the organisation as contributions to government agencies' and other funding bodies' reviews and papers.

COTA gains valuable and relevant research data from communicating with participants in its many projects, programs and consultative forums. For example, COTA's policy unit and the Department of Health gain invaluable insights from the SIV service through the provision of information about ongoing and current issues affecting older people.



His Excellency Sir Dallas Brooks who, with Lady Brooks, is Patron of the Old People's Welfare Council of Victoria chats with members following the Annual Meeting of the Council in 1983.



Sir Giles Clippindall, C.B.E.,  
Chairman, Old People's Welfare  
Council of Victoria



Mrs. J. G. Norris, O.B.E., M.A.,  
and Mrs. F. G. Tuddenham,  
M.A., Vice-Chairmen, Old  
People's Welfare Council of  
Victoria



Mr. Harold M. White, M.A.,  
Director, Old People's Welfare  
Council of Victoria



Left: enjoying a period of quiet reflection.  
Above: Living Longer, Living Stronger™  
participants build some muscle.



Left: "A Tower of Strength" - LLS™ group display in the City Square.

Seated in comfortable warmth at the Coolibah Club, Fitzroy, these elderly ladies enjoy a chat before dinner.



Storping yarns in the men's lounge at the Coolibah Club, Fitzroy

The "welcome" sign is prominently displayed outside the Footscray "House of Friendship"





Far left: Friends on the beach.



Left: Sonja Rutherford, LLLS™ program participant (see page 22).



Community singing in the Lounge of the Bendigo Elderly Citizens' Club.



A keen tussle at draughts is watched with interest by members of the South Melbourne Elderly Citizens' Club.



Opened in June by the Brunswick City Council, with the support of Rotary and Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Brunswick Elderly Citizens' Club provides hot meals for its members daily.

The game of Carpet Bowls has its keen contestants at the recently formed North and West Melbourne Elderly Citizens' Club. Plans are in hand to provide permanent suitable premises for this Club. Hot meals are already provided daily.



A corner of the bright Club Rooms of the Caulfield Elderly Citizens' Association in Glenbury Road, Caulfield. Members have themselves raised the funds to purchase these premises and they take an active interest in one another's welfare.





Above: Veteran Games participant.

Below left: Making the Most of Life Day: out on the water.

Below right: LLS™ group display in the City Square.



Enjoying a three-course meal for 2/6 at the well appointed Elderly Citizens' Recreation Centre, Essendon.



Billiards finds many devotees amongst the members of the "House of Friendship", Footscray



"Work is fun when it's done in good company" say these members of the Karlinia Club, Geelong





## Health, Leisure and Well-being

In the post-War period many senior Victorians were in a very poor state of physical and emotional health: "Acute loneliness and dangerous malnutrition, with resultant apathy, listlessness and depression, is the common lot of great numbers of our senior citizens, regardless of their location or social status." [OPWC Annual Report, 1956] This spurred OPWC on to address basic needs as a matter of urgency. In 1953 talks began with the state government and municipal councils about opening recreational centres, where older people would have the company of others and receive a hot midday meal. The idea of a Meals on Wheels service was also suggested by OPWC, a novelty at that time.

### *The Great Australian Loneliness: Old Age, Not the Outback*

*More than 100,000 older people have no regular visitors... It is difficult for the average, fully-occupied person to share the feelings and state of mind of an old lady who, when invited to a Christmas function in a Melbourne residential suburb, said, 'This is the first time I have been invited outside my own home for the past 15 years.*

*[OPWC Annual Report, 1958]*

As the years moved on and some critical issues were addressed, OPWC broadened its scope to include other aspects of older Victorians' well-being. Activities included energetic advocacy for Senior Citizens Clubs to be developed in every locality; submissions to government on all aspects of aged care in the mid-1970s; supporting a pilot project for Foster Grandparents and another for training at least 80 craft leaders to work in Senior Citizens Clubs, also in the mid-'70s.

The organisation's focus on health remained a constant, and a stronger emphasis on the promotion of exercise gradually developed. COTA established a Recreation and Education Advisory Committee in 1979 and A Physical Activities Unit in 2007. This work is encapsulated in the successful Living Longer, Living Stronger™ program.

### **Living Longer, Living Stronger (LLLS™)**

This COTA Vic program aims to provide all Victorians over 50 years of age with access to quality strength training programs, and has become a national program. The LLLS™ Endorsement Scheme, launched in 2000, invites partnerships with fitness, health and rehabilitation centres to provide accessible, quality programs in welcoming environments for older people. The response to the scheme has exceeded all expectations. The Director of Fitness Victoria noted in 2001: "I could not have attracted the same number of people to my gym without Living Longer, Living Stronger!" LLLS™ is seen as having a positive influence in preventing falls and other injuries among older people and the onset or impact of type 2 diabetes. In 2004 COTA published the LLLS™ Tool Kit, a strength training package for qualified personnel to run a 16-week Introductory Strength Training Program. The program's tenth anniversary in 2010 saw 17,000 participants at 120 venues across the state.



*[The LLLS program is] exemplified by Sonja Rutherford, a participant from the very beginning, who credits LLLS with her progress from 'struggling to hang out the washing' to internationally successful power lifter, with a record of 310.5 lbs in dead lift. [COTA Annual Report, 2010] See the picture of Sonja on page 18.*

Other exercise programs and activities run by COTA include: COTA Cycling whose leader, peer educator Janet Bennett, received an individual Minister for Health Volunteer Award in 2010; the 'Back in the Game' sport and recreation program for older people; the 'Active at All Ages' awards – "most nominees [have] several volunteer roles as well as participating in a diverse range of physical activities, from aerobics to Zumba"; the Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation (PICSAR) program, which aims to increase older people's participation in recreational and sporting activities, including as coaches and administrators; and the Growing Older, Dancing On manual and workshops.

COTA also tackles other issues and concerns of older people which impact upon well-being. These include:

A pilot seminar in 1996, now a national program, on Quality Use of Medicines, with the goal of reducing the potential for illness and admission to hospital as a result of medicine misadventure.

The Older Men's Health Project, calling for a co-ordinated effort to raise awareness of, and address the health and well-being challenges of older men.

The Older Men: New Ideas (OM:NI) social group program, established by COTA in 2004, currently has more than 20 active groups statewide.

Training for 23 peer educators in the 'Beyond maturity blues' program in 2007, who conducted 26 sessions across the state after training. The program continues to be active.

With funding from the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability COTA revived the Green Sages project in 2010, to facilitate older Victorians having their say on the impact they see climate change will bring to their lives.

In 2010 COTA began to work with older people in the 2009 bushfire affected areas, assisting them to maintain and improve their mental and physical health while rebuilding their lives and communities.

COTA is working closely with housing and homelessness services to raise awareness of issues around accessible and affordable housing in general, and the plight of older people in the private rental market in particular.

COTA is one partner in the People at Centre Stage (PACS) research project, which is testing a model of 'self directed care' for community aged care packages.



## Partnerships, Networks and Auspices

In the early decades, OPWC partnerships and collaborations tended to be somewhat reactive, seeking to 'fill the gaps' in service provision, for example. Over the last few decades, however, COTA has moved increasingly into partnerships and auspicing in more broad-ranging alliances for longer-term outcomes. There are several reasons for this shift. One pressing reason is the search for secure funding, as COTA President Janet Wood notes:

*"A Forward Plan for 1993–1996 indicates the drastic effect of the new Victorian government's cut-backs for community organisation funding at the time. COTA hired a firm named MGM Consultants to make suggestions about how the organisation could respond. Its report suggested that COTA look for commercial opportunities – and we've been looking ever since!*

*"The two significant assumptions about the government's planning were that there would be an increasing centralisation of services and increased privatisation. The demise of smaller senior organisations was noted and the consequential possibilities for COTA to increase its role as a peak organisation. Also stressed was the opportunity to bring specialist organisations to network – e.g. the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Alzheimers Association, Aged Care Victoria." [2012]*

Another key factor in the increasing number of collaborations by the organisation is the potential for reaching greater numbers of senior Victorians and addressing a wider issue base.

Early work included preparations in 1955 for a National Conference of organisations devoted to the welfare of old people. By the early 1960s OPWC Victoria had forged close relationships with state government departments and other volunteer organisations, sharing a recognition of the "dramatic extension of the lifespan" for Australians.

*One of my most significant networking experiences was a lunchtime meeting for the administrators of a number of residential care services for older people – Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Mount Royal, Freemasons etc. To my amazement it appeared that none of these administrators had met each other before this occasion. They were most appreciative of the opportunity provided by COTA.*  
*[Shirley Ramsay]*

One important partnership in the mid-1970s was between VCOTA and the Good Neighbour Council, researching the needs of older migrants. This attention to the specific issues faced by migrants foreshadowed the later adoption of this issue by government and non-government agencies. By the year 2000 COTA had collaborated with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to organise the translation of *A Guide to Services for Older Victorians* into 17 languages.

The 1980s saw VCOTA forming alliances with a variety of agencies. Among others, it auspiced and sponsored Abbeyfield and the Foster Grandparents scheme, became



involved for the first time in the Senior Citizens Week event, and took an active role in the establishment of the Alzheimers Association and University of the Third Age (U3A).

In the 1990s COTA became an active participant in establishing the Retirement Villages Residents Association, and was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation to develop policy on ageing and recreation. COTA participated in two significant new projects: the Aged Services Network, Western Metropolitan Region, and Peer Education – Wise Use of Medicines. In the mid-1990s COTA auspiced the Older Adults Recreation Network, and began making preparations for its most ambitious endeavour to date: auspicing the Secretariat of Australian Coalition '99 Victoria. COTA received the 1999 VicHealth Award for Health Promotion for its work in auspicing this 270-member alliance of partner organisations.

As a 50-year-old organisation COTA continued to form new partnerships through the first decade of the new millennium – such as with the National Information Centre on Retirement Investment seminars; and with COTA National Seniors and the National Prescribing Council on a national Community Quality Use of Medicines program. Concurrently, it was consolidating existing relationships, including with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Carers Victoria, U3A, CWA, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Community Care Coalition.

*COTA Victoria together with the Department for Victorian Communities co-ordinated celebrations for the United Nations' International Day of Older People on 1 October 2004, that the Minister for Senior Victorians, Gavin Jennings, described as one of the most significant events on the seniors' calendar. More than 300 separate activities involving around 12,000 participants were registered by Victorian clubs, seniors organisations and aged care providers with activities ranging from walking, tai chi, scrabble and educational pursuits. [COTA Annual Report, 2004/'05]*

One of the most important partnerships for COTA brought about Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) in 2008, as described on page 11 of this booklet. In that same year COTA embraced its largest collaborative project yet by winning the right to host the 2010 International Federation on Ageing (IFA) 10th Global Conference. The conference, held in May 2010, attracted close to 1,100 delegates from 56 countries and featured more than 500 hours of presentations from 200 presenters, around the theme of 'Climate for Change: Ageing into the Future'. The topics were many and varied: housing, independence, physical activity, elder abuse, chronic conditions, lifelong learning, and many more, including a significant focus on human rights and the need for an international convention.



# PATRICIA REEVE

## Professional and personal challenges



COTA Victoria was in the midst of radical change when I joined the organisation as Policy Officer in 1993. In response to a national initiative, COTA was embarking on forging an effective national federation governed by older people to enable their participation as well as further their interests.

The following 19 years of employment at COTA were a time of incredible professional and personal challenge, growth and reward for me. I worked alongside so many creative, dynamic, committed people, seeking to improve the quality of life of older people, particularly those experiencing disadvantage. I was involved in a number of initiatives discussed in this 60-year history, including Challenging Ageing, Living Longer, Living Stronger™ and the 'Fair Go For Pensioners' Coalition. All of these COTA programs and projects share some guiding principles:

- To increase the opportunities for older people to develop their knowledge of the impact of ageism in their lives and to act collectively to bring about change;
- To challenge negative age stereotypes and build senior Victorians' confidence, such as in the use of new technologies;
- To engage members in policy deliberation through the Annual Conference; and
- To campaign and advocate for change in legislation, government programs and industry structures/practices at both the state and national level – in aged care, pension reform, concessions, equal opportunity legislation, elder abuse and more.

One personal regret is that, despite several small projects, we have been unable to forge enduring partnerships with Indigenous elders or to influence a change in the abysmal life expectancy of Indigenous people.

As noted elsewhere, a continuing difficulty for COTA has been the ability to maintain focus and strategic direction in the face of the continuing struggle for financial resources. Significant funding variations introduced by successive governments saw accountability tied to very specific and often narrow outcomes, which resulted in fewer opportunities for innovation, participatory action research and learning – although the development of COTA membership services companies to build a more sustainable organisation have gone some way to alleviating this situation.



## COTA, Victorian and Australian

*COTA Victoria recognises the value of working collaboratively with other organisations and that this is integral to the success of our organisation... Our work could not be achieved without these relationships and I would like to acknowledge them: funders, collaborators and colleagues alike. [Sue Hendy, COTA (Vic) CEO]*

The newly formed COTA in Victoria soon turned its attention to the need for a representative national body so that “questions of national importance in the sphere of old age” could be “considered and effective action promoted.” By 1958 Victoria had assisted the development of other state COTAs, and COTA Australia was established. From its inception until 2004 the national office was located in Melbourne, so a very close relationship grew between the staff of the two organisations – at times with shared accommodation and some shared staff positions.

COTA Victoria has continued to play an active role in shaping the national organisation through various stages of development and changes of focus. From time to time this involves robust debate and intense negotiations over the use of very limited resources to determine priorities and devise strategies to bring about the desired social change. Since so many issues affecting the well-being of older Victorians are determined at the Commonwealth level, Victoria believes it needs to be part of a strong national organisation, operating effectively across the country.

In common with many other non-government bodies in Australia the original COTA national arrangements reflected government structures, with a federation of state-based organisations and a national representative body, COTA Australia (COTA A), which had limited powers. This continues to be the model for policy development and representation. However, following a fundamental change in the nature and purpose of COTA during the 1980s, the relationship between state and national roles became far more complex. COTA's primary purpose was no longer that of a broker co-ordinating the work of welfare organisations. It positioned itself as an older people's organisation, run by and for older people. At the same time, as new membership structures and services were being developed, the national commitment to social justice was renewed and several peak body functions were retained. COTA Australia, with its federated structure, was responsible for policy and representations to the federal government and for co-ordinating the work of the COTAs on issues of national significance.

The perennial pressure to find funding for COTAs' community and policy activities drove many of the initiatives. Older people's human rights were promoted and we were no longer depicted as objects of charity. Yet, to be inclusive, we needed to offer access to the majority who were on low incomes. In 1965 the Commonwealth Government granted the national body \$100,000 per annum; from that source funds flowed to the state COTAs, which were expected to raise local financial and other forms of support to complement the grant. In the first year Victoria received an allocation of \$10,500 (some 20 percent of its total income) from this grant. Over



the next decade Victoria's share increased to \$25,000, but then the grant began to decline and by 1981 Victoria received no funds from this source. The need to develop independent sources of income, in addition to government grants, became of paramount importance to the development of a sustainable organisation that could continue to pursue its mission.

Over the last 25 years the growing complexity of the various relationships between the web of COTA organisations has driven a succession of review and restructure processes.

The COTA Movement Strategy 1991 – a national change initiative – was adopted by all state/territory COTAs and progressively implemented over the next decade. It provided a blueprint for the transition to new structures to realise this new vision. Central to this development was the participation of people over 50 years of age. As individual members of COTA in their state/territory, they would inform the activities and policy positions and hold the majority of governance positions. Building an active membership base necessitated the development of recruitment initiatives and membership management arrangements. A separate not-for-profit company (later two) was established to market individual membership, to develop a range of commercial products to deliver benefits to members, and to raise income for the work of COTA. Whereas COTA Australia was constituted on a senate model with eight equal partners, power within the commercial operations is proportional to the investment and business share. These differing power relations for various functions have introduced a further layer of complexity.

In 2001 a proposed merger with National Seniors Australia was tabled at a national meeting, and for the next three years Victoria participated with other COTAs in these negotiations. The Victorian Board sought to ensure that the potential benefits of the merger for older people were realised, and that the strengths of COTA – including its social justice mission and democratic governance – were reflected in the proposed organisation. In 2004, when negotiations foundered on these points, Victoria withdrew from the partnership, together with NSW, Western Australia and Tasmania, and worked collaboratively with these states on national issues. Withdrawal from the merger required Victoria and the other three states to also withdraw from ownership of the commercial companies. By 2005 the proposed merger was no longer proceeding and all state/territory COTAs were once again members of COTA Australia.

The combined business of the COTAs now involves political and policy influence, sector development, innovative projects, community education, empowerment of older people, membership services, and commercial revenue-raising operations. A variety of governance and management structures has been developed to run these concerns, but at present there is no overall governance structure.



## DELYS SARGEANT



Delys was a very well-known educator, medical scientist, health professional and advocate for change before she added championing older persons to her CV. The award of an OAM in 1993 recognised her pioneering work in the general area of community health, particularly sexuality and relationships education for people with disabilities. Since then she has co-authored a book on 'remembering', chaired the UN International Year of Older Persons Coalition in 1999, been the founding chair of the Mornington Peninsula Shire

Council's Older Persons Advisory Committee – and chaired COTA's Board from 1994 to 2000. She came to COTA at a time when it was experiencing some of the tremors of organisational death – like having few funds! Since that difficult time, in the early 1990s, she has coaxed, urged, and pushed COTA into shaping itself for success.

*"There are thousands of older Victorians who might never know the contribution Delys has made to improving their lives – but we do, so we thank her with the most prestigious award COTA can make, that of a Life Member," said Janet Wood.*

*[Extract from Janet Wood's speech at the COTA Vic AGM on 24 November 2010, while presenting Delys Sargeant with life membership.]*

### Obituary: Dame Ada May Bickford Norris, 1901 – 1989



Dame Ada Norris was a founding member of the Victorian Old People's Welfare Council in 1951, and later became a life member of VCOTA. She was appointed OBE in 1954, DBE in 1976 "for distinguished community service", and was awarded the Order of St. Michael and St. George – Commanders (DCMG) in 1969 in her capacity as President of Australia's National Council of Women. "During [Dame Ada's] long association with ACOTA and VCOTA, she made an unparalleled contribution to raising public awareness of the needs of older people."



## The Fluctuating Fortunes of COTA Victoria – A Story of Survival

COTA Victoria has had a rich history with regard to the people and partnerships, programs, activities and events with whom and with which we have engaged. However, financially it has been a different story – to the point where the organisation's survival has been at risk on more than one occasion.

As noted earlier, the work of the OPWC Victoria was conducted entirely by volunteers until the appointment of Mr. Randal White as Director in 1956. Funding issues came to the fore in the 1960s, as the eagerness to engage in activities outstripped available funds. In 1962 OPWC launched the 'Call of Age Appeal', a public appeal for funds involving door-to-door canvassing, which was "embarked on with some trepidation for there was evidence of a considerable body of opposition to this method." [OPWC Annual Report, 1962/'63]

By the early 1970s the organisation was forced to consider reducing some services while continuing to work with limited resources under an operational deficit. In 1977 the Executive noted that this was "one of the most significant and challenging periods in the life of the Council". Inflation was eroding increases in support from members, and things came to a head when the Executive declared that VCOTA would cease to operate at the end of July unless there was a dramatic rise in financial support. Responses to this crisis included moving to cheaper premises, joining with the national COTA organisation and sharing staff.

An Appeal Committee was established in 1982, consisting of such distinguished members as Bob Hawke, Henry Bolte, Billy Sneddon, Tom Roper and Peter Hollingworth, and it raised \$27,000, the largest contributor being the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. By the mid-'80s donations to VCOTA represented 60 percent of all income, as the government grant declined. In this critical period the organisation was forced to use bequest funds to finance operations, to reduce staff hours and cut back staffing levels. In 1992 the state government grant was cut, and VCOTA was struggling again:

"In my report for 1991 I referred to the financial difficulties confronting the Council. Despite attempts at securing additional funding, no further funds became available to the Council and the Board have recently introduced a number of cost-cutting measures. These include change of office location, a 4-day week for staff, and the termination of the book-keeping position and other administration changes [which have] meant a significant reduction in the effectiveness of the Council." [Revd. Ray Cleary, Chairman, 1992]

MGM Consultants were hired in 1992 to conduct a review of VCOTA; their report recommended a move to becoming a consumer organisation. The effects of this review included major staff changes, the establishment of a National Membership Services Company, and a new name: COTA Victoria. By the end of that year the Treasurer reported a surplus, with a turn-around of approximately \$60,000.



A complete restructure of administrative and service operations occurred in 1993. Notwithstanding the need for stringency with the budget, services and programs were expanding and the Board sanctioned a move to larger premises so that COTA could function more efficiently. Board members also reluctantly agreed to increase membership subscriptions, as the only way to maintain the level of services. At the same time, new membership services were introduced, including a free legal advisory service, a volunteer tax help scheme, travel insurance, and Senior Citizens Club insurance.

Two years later COTA moved to its current location in the Block Arcade, Melbourne CBD, for two main reasons: to make the organisation more accessible, and because the rent was cheaper! There was a sense of beginning to be able to move forward. In 1996, reporting a surplus of \$70,000, President Delys Sargeant declared: "There has been a giant leap forward in the organisation of the office – from a 1970s level of equipment we are now ready to move into the 21st century! Each staff member has access to a computer work station, we are on the Internet, and are developing a comprehensive computerised data base."

COTA's finances waxed and waned through the first decade of the new century. A diversification occurred in the organisation's funding base, whereby it received funds from trusts and from new funding partners as well as from increased membership numbers in both the individual and organisational categories. Notwithstanding this change, other factors resulted in a net deficit, which led to stringent Board policies in order to achieve a balanced budget. In the years since then COTA has seen a more consistent surplus, despite continuing pressure on funds.



*Of course there are always challenges and struggles for a not-for-profit organisation. Funding is one of these... Despite these challenges, we have managed to keep all our programs in place and reach out to more people this year than in the past – over 60,000 people, in different ways. [Sue Hendy, CEO, 2010/11]*



## Key Honoraries, Office Bearers and Staff

Patron/s:	H.E. Sir Dallas Brooks & Lady Brooks (1952 – 1963) H.E. Sir Rohan Delacombe & Lady Delacombe (1963 – 1974) H.E. Sir Henry Winneke & Lady Winneke (1974 – 1981) H.E. Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray & Lady Murray (1982 – 1985) Governor Davis McCaughey (1986 – 1991) <i>COTA (Vic) has had no further patron/s</i>
Chairman:	Sir John Newman-Morris (1952 – 1956) Sir Giles Chippindall (1957 – 1968) M.R.C. Stradwick (1968 – 1971) S.M. Stevens (1972 – 1975) R.F. Howden (1975 – 1976) Neville Brooke (1977 – 1980) Roy Jackson (1981 – 1984) Cecil Looker (1985 – 1988) Rev. Ray Cleary (1989 – 1992) Judi McKee (1993)
President:	Delys Sargeant (1994 – 2000) Vivienne McCutcheon (2001 – 2004) John Wise (2005 – 2007) Janet Wood (2008 – date)
Director:	Randal White (1956 - 1967) Shirley Ramsay (1967 – 1969) P.D. Chomley (Acting, 1969) A.J. Peddlesden (1969 - 1979) Anne Fulcher / Jacques (1980 – 1991)
Executive Director:	Anne Jacques (1991 – 1992) Jean Elder (1993 – 1994) Patricia Reeve (1994 – 2002) Sue Hendy (2003 – 2009)
Chief Executive Officer:	Sue Hendy (2010 – date)



## Glossary of Acronyms

<b>AC '99</b>	Australian Coalition '99 Victoria
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>COTA</b>	Council on the Ageing
<b>CTTR</b>	Creative Transitions to Retirement
<b>CWA</b>	Country Women's Association
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Human Services (Victorian State Government)
<b>HACC</b>	Home and Community Care
<b>IFA</b>	International Federation on Ageing
<b>LLLS™</b>	Living Longer, Living Stronger™ program
<b>MAV</b>	Municipal Association of Victoria
<b>MC2</b>	'My Connected Community' seniors' online community
<b>NSA</b>	National Seniors Australia
<b>NESB</b>	Non-English speaking backgrounds
<b>OM:NI</b>	[Older Men: New Ideas] Older Men's Social Groups
<b>OPWC</b>	Older People's Welfare Council [of Victoria]
<b>OSV</b>	Office of Senior Victorians
<b>PACS</b>	People at Centre Stage [research project]
<b>PICSAR</b>	Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation program
<b>PILCH</b>	Public Law Clearing House
<b>SATIN</b>	Seniors Access to Information Networks
<b>SIP</b>	Seniors Info Plus (now named Seniors Information Victoria)
<b>SIV</b>	Seniors Information Victoria
<b>SRV</b>	Seniors Rights Victoria
<b>VCOTA</b>	Victorian Council on the Ageing
<b>U3A</b>	University of the Third Age



## COTA Vic Earns a Seniors Card

Marking the historic milestone of 60 years of continuous service, in October 2012 the Victorian Minister for Ageing, the Honourable David Davis, presented COTA Vic with a special honorary Seniors Card.

While this does not provide COTA with the discounts enjoyed by individual Seniors Card holders, the Minister said that it signified those decades of work in the Victorian community. Meeting with board members, staff and volunteers, the Minister praised all for past and present commitment and for the vision COTA has demonstrated for the future well-being of older Victorians.

This award joins others made to the organisation over its lifetime, including awards for its work in physical activity for older people and for the commitment of its volunteers. COTA Vic people also have been called on by government ministers and by their departments to assist in selecting older individuals and groups for awards for their work in the community and for advancing the cause of older Victorians.



*The Honourable David Davis, Minister for Ageing, presents COTA Vic President Janet Wood with an honorary Seniors Card.*

