

COUNCIL ON THE AGEING (VICTORIA)

Annual Report 1993

**Council on the Ageing (Vic) Inc.
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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

Chairman:

Mrs Judi McKee

Vice Chairman:

Mr P Wilson

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr D Shaw (to July 1993)

Mr J Wise (acting from July 1993)

Honorary Secretary:

Miss S Ramsay

Elected Members:

Mr A Cochrane

Mrs P Long

Mrs P Williams

Mrs M Wilson

Ms M Shepard

Mrs J Nathan

Mrs D Sargeant

Auditors:

Duesburys - Chartered Accountants

Bankers:

Bank of Melbourne

STAFF:

Executive Director:

Ms Jean Elder

Policy Officer:

Ms Pat Reeve

Promotions Officer:

Mrs Tricia Downs-Giannino

Receptionist/Membership clerk:

Mrs Joanne Lamprill

Membership Services:

Miss Debbie Hallahan

Ms Graziella Venuto

Social Workers:

Miss S Ramsay

Miss B Stevenson

Miss J Williams

Accounts Officer: (Part-time)

Mr R Hellard (to May 1993)

Mrs Annette Tarrant

Volunteers:

Volunteer Legal Service:

Mr P Shepherd

Mr J Howie

Tax Help Volunteers:

Mr D O'Toole

Mr E Anderson

Mrs D Anderson

Mr P Berger

Mr D Laurie

Mr N Clapton

Mrs C Prescott

Mrs T Dawson

Mr A Sheers

Mr J Cook

Mrs M Stacey

Office Volunteers:

Mrs N Hampton

Mrs G Olarens Shaw

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1993

In the 1992 report, reference was made to our complete restructure of administrative and service operations and that in the future we would be examining ways of implementing the newly developed policy aims for COTA (Vic) in 1993/94.

The board has accepted many of these challenges despite some limitations in Council's resources and budget. Like many state funded organisations in 1993, COTA (Vic) also experienced a reduction in its government grant.

The outcome has been a year of progressive change. Emphasis in COTA's work has been to raise the profile of COTA (Vic) to increase our membership base as well as to take action on issues affecting older Victorians. I list the following major points for your interest.

- **Proposed New Constitution**

COTA (Vic) Board members together with the Executive Director spent considerable time redrafting the constitution. The purpose of the new constitution is to ensure that COTA's structure reflects its changed function as an organisation of seniors as well as representing seniors groups, service providers and local government. This is in line with the national COTA movement strategy. The Board has recommended the proposed new constitution to members for adoption.

- **Staffing Restructure**

The restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities has been carried out in order that COTA better meet its goals. COTA is appreciative of the assistance of students and volunteers as additional resources.

By the end of 1993 it was clear additional office space was urgently required. The Board approved the move to larger premises so that COTA could function more efficiently and effectively.

- **Marketing, Membership and Finances**

The board has established a marketing committee which is responsible for the development of strategies that will promote COTA (Vic) to the public, consumer and service organisations and government departments as being the key organisation addressing issues relating to older Victorians.

Our bi-monthly Newsletter, COTA News has also been upgraded to ensure that COTA communicates regularly with members about policy issues.

Regular forums held in metropolitan and rural areas have made both members and non-members more aware of COTA's functions and have been another important way of gaining feedback on needs of older Victorians.

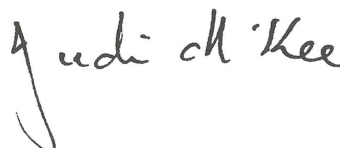
A substantial increase in new membership resulted in us achieving targets set in the early part of the year. Membership renewals were not as successful, particularly later in the year when COTA changed insurance underwriters from MLC to FAI. This was a difficult period for COTA board and staff. This change also had considerable impact on our budgeted income for the year. We are confident that our newly established data base for members, our partnership with FAI insurance and IOR Health insurance will be able to provide an improved service to members and generate substantial income for our benefit in the coming years.

- **Policy work and Response to Government Reports**

This important part of COTA's work has been a highlight of 1993. COTA (Vic) has made several written submissions in response to the release of government reports. These have been well received.

COTA has also been represented on a range of committees and worked to achieve change by commenting on radio and in newspaper articles. As our older population continues to grow, unemployment continues to increase and resources are limited, COTA (Vic) will need to maintain and adapt its resources to be in a position to debate and respond efficiently and effectively to changes in government policy direction that will impact on older people.

My personal thanks to the board, staff and volunteers who have contributed enthusiastically and responsibly to COTA during 1993.



Mrs Judi McKee
CHAIRPERSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

For many older Victorians, particularly those on fixed incomes, 1993 was a difficult year.

The year began with some uncertainty about the continuity of state concessions for pensioners; implementation of the state \$100 State Deficit Levy; increases to public transport costs and reduction of the 3 hour travel ticket to a 2 hour ticket; and both increases and changes to the structure of charges for gas and electricity. In addition, those older people in receipt of the age pension and who had small share and managed investments holdings were affected by the implementation of the Federal government's decision to assess unrealised capital gains on shares as income. In late February 1993 the decision was announced that free travel for Senior Citizens Week was to be abolished. Yet another blow to older people who took advantage of free travel to attend events during this important festival - Victoria's largest.

Although some of the State government's reforms e.g. the introduction of a new method of financing Victoria's public hospitals, ("casemix funding") will be of overall benefit to older people, many of the above outlined changes have caused distress and hardship.

This difficult environment provided the backdrop against which COTA operated in 1993.

As an organisation in the midst of a change process and expanding activities and services, the difficult economic climate had an impact on our income. Despite not wanting to increase our membership subscriptions it became evident in the middle of the year, that some increase was essential if we were to maintain our level of services. The new rates began on October 1st.

In addition, changes to the underwriters of COTA Mature Outlook Insurance exacerbated the situation. This change was brought about by our former insurance underwriter, MLC cancelling COTA's contract with them.

Despite these problems, COTA (Vic) achieved a great deal during the year.

The highlights included:-

- *A proposed new constitution was developed and recommended by the Board to the membership for adoption.*
- *In June 1993 the Board considered and adopted a 3 year forward plan for future development of COTA's activities.*
- *Staffing re-structure agreed by the Board in late 1992 was implemented.*
- *New membership services were introduced. These included a free legal advisory service, a volunteer tax help scheme, travel insurance and Senior Citizens Club insurance.*
- *In addition to quarterly Council meetings, 4 COTA forums were held in provincial areas, and the first of regular forums for our organisational members was held in November 1993.*
- *COTA was successful in gaining a \$15,000 grant from the Felton Bequest to undertake some policy work addressing the question of Older People's Lifestyles.*
- *Our Promotions Officer gave 40 talks to clubs and groups about the work of COTA.*
- *COTA made five major policy submissions and met with the Minister for Aged Care on 3 occasions over a range of key policy concerns.*
- *A COTA policy on leisure and older people was developed.*
- *COTA played a key role in the very successful celebration of the U.N. International Day for the Elderly "Making the Most of Life" held at Moonee Valley Racecourse on October 1st.*

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1993 saw a continuation of the implementation of many of the broad recommendations of the MGM Consultants Report reviewing COTA (Vic). Many of these changes related to strengthening organisational capacity to undertake new roles. In late January, Pat Reeve began as COTA's full-time Policy Officer. In order to strengthen COTA's membership services work, two new positions were created and by April, Graziella Venuto and Debbie Hallahan had been appointed to these positions. The final major staffing change for 1993 occurred when the Board agreed to a full-time Promotions Officer position being created.

Tricia Downs-Giannino moved into this role and Joanne Lamprill was appointed to take on the Receptionist/Membership clerk role that Tricia had vacated.

An important administrative development was the move to computerise our accounting system. As a result of this decision COTA farewelled Dick Hellard, our part-time accounts officer, and welcomed Annette Tarrant as COTA's accountant/bookkeeper.

In June the Board spent a full day discussing and adopting a 3 year forward plan for COTA operations. Strategies for action were outlined in 7 key areas. There were - COTA's image, membership, policy/advocacy, information and advisory service, commercial services, other financial strategies and organisational structures.

FORUMS AND NEWSLETTERS

These are the two major forms of communication with COTA members, and judging from the positive feedback they are seen as very important activities of COTA. Six Newsletters were produced reporting on a wide range of COTA's policy activities as well as membership services. The quarterly council meetings covered topics including COTA's policy directions for 1993, Age discrimination, Leisure and the State Government's policy document "Everyone's Future", and the new hospital funding arrangements in Victoria.

Provincial forums "COTA's Coming Out" were held in Wangaratta, Moe, Ballarat, and Geelong. They were very well attended and provided the opportunity for older people in rural areas to raise their concerns. COTA wishes to thank Minet Australia (Victorian Office) for assisting with the catering costs for these regional forums.

Finally, the first forum for organisational members was held in November with David Green as the guest speaker outlining the State Government's agenda for 1994.

SENIOR CITIZENS WEEK 1993

COTA's major event, the presentation of our Senior Citizens Week Awards was held in the Royal Botanic Gardens and attended by 200 people. The Hon. Robert Knowles, Minister for Housing and Aged Care presented the Awards on this very happy occasion. COTA thanks our sponsors for this occasion - I.O.R., Permanent Trustees (who also arranged the musical accompaniment provided by Vintage Red), Cochrane Shaw and the State Government through the SCW Advisory Committee.

Awards were presented to:-

- *Senior Citizens Centre - Town of Camperdown Senior Citizens Centre "Killara Complex".*
- *Innovative Program - Barwon Older Adults Recreation Network*
- *Worker in the Aged Field - Mrs Margaret Arnold (City of Hawthorn)*
- *Residential Care - Walmsley Friendship Village Nursing Home*

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

COTA made submissions and/or responses to five major inquiries/government reports. These were the State Government's Review of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984; response to the Victorian Commission of Audit in the area of state concessions for pensioners; response to the State government's Regulatory Impact Statement - concerning minimum staffing standards for nursing homes; response to the State Government's report on future direction for aged care "Everyones Future"; and a submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into the HACC program. With two of these submissions, the Review of the Equal Opportunity Act and the HACC inquiry, COTA representatives also took part in the public hearings.

Other policy work has included support for the retention of the Community Visitors Scheme run by the Office of the Public Advocate; strong opposition to the cancellation of free public transport during Senior Citizens Week; support together with COTA (Australia) for the repeal of commonwealth legislation re the income test on unrealised capital gains on shares and managed investments; development of policy options for resolution of disputes within retirement villages; development of a COTA policy on leisure for older people; information paper on Casemix funding, and support for the retention of medicare (again in conjunction with COTA (Australia). This work has involved consultation with members, extensive lobbying, letters to the press and parliamentarians, deputations to Ministers as well as COTA representation on relevant committees.

In response to an invitation from the Retirement Village Association, COTA has been active in supporting the development of a Retirement Village Residents' Association.

Both the Policy Officer and the Executive Director have addressed and participated in numerous public forums on a wide variety of policy issues ranging from housing options to the implications of casemix funding for older people.

The development of COTA's leisure policy was ably assisted by a final year RMIT Recreation degree student, Mr Tony Bentley, who actively involved COTA members in this policy development process. It is hoped that this will become a model for COTA in developing policies across a range of areas.

The Lifestyle study being undertaken by a consultant Sylvia Geddes began in late 1993 and will lead to the outlining of 8 discrete smaller projects which COTA may implement over the next few years.

COTA was represented on

- *The State HACC Advisory Committee*
- *Standards and Monitoring Liaison Committee (Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health).*
- *Senior Citizens Week Advisory Committee*
- *Public Hospital Patients' Charter Reference Group*
- *Steering Committee to research Community Involvement in Divisions of General Practice.*
- *Breastscreen Consumer Advisory Committee*
- *HACC TAFE Curriculum Committee*
- *Bundoora Extended Care Casemix Projects' Reference Committee*
- *U.N. International Day Co-ordinating Committee*

COTA representatives also took part in the Victorian Community Summit held in November 1993. COTA also assisted ABC regional radio with the development and presentation of a 5 part series on housing choices for older people.

ADVISORY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

There is a widespread scepticism about statistics, but sometimes such figures give the comfort of confirming a sense of change - in the case of the Advisory & Information Service, a busy year with 20% more calls in 1993 than in 1992.

Major areas of increased enquiries were the various types of accommodation for older people - especially independent living units, hostels and retirement villages. Articles on resident funded retirement villages in a national magazine and daily newspapers gave us useful publicity.

An increase in enquiries about pensions reflected the extension of concessions to all part pensioners, so that there was some stimulus to look again at the

crucial cut off figures for assets and income. Also, many people still feel more secure in making their first enquiries to a non-government body. COTA of course, only provides the department's own information and does not attempt to advise on pension amounts or entitlement.

There is a continuing interest in personal safety and our list of alarm systems is frequently requested. With the interest in alarm systems on the market, COTA is of the view that some standard setting should soon be attempted. The origin of calls was evenly spread among older people themselves, their family or friends, and service providers, with calls coming from throughout the metropolitan area and across the state.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

New services introduced during the year included a Tax Help Scheme run by trained volunteers; a free Legal Advisory Service; finance and investment seminars (with assistance from Godfrey Weston & Womens' Investment Network); travel insurance and Senior Citizens Club insurance. All of these services have been well utilised by COTA members and will continue to grow and expand.

Our COTA Health Benefits and COTA Mature Outlook Insurance have both seen steady new growth.

The cancellation of COTA's agreement with MLC as underwriter's for COTA Mature Outlook Insurance has caused considerable confusion and difficulties to members. Contrary to initial assurances of a smooth changeover, MLC then moved to retain the COTA policies itself. The new COTA Membership Services company, COTA's national marketing arm was involved in a protracted legal process over obtaining much needed portfolio information. Eventually, in October, MLC handed over the information requested in May but in a form requiring extra costs to put it back on computer. The move to our new underwriter's FAI, gives COTA Insurance the backing of one of Australia's largest insurers. At state level FAI are providing direct support with staff training and with some promotional costs. We are most appreciative of this direct assistance.

SUMMARY

COTA (Vic) has grown rapidly during 1993. This has both been exciting and challenging, for as indicated we have been growing at a time of general economic restraint. The loss of \$10,000 from our major government grant combined with some drop in other income added to our tight financial circumstances. However, the positive achievements include new

computer equipment and software to handle our growing membership data base; new and expanded membership services; dramatically increased policy capacity and output and capacity to promote COTA as the peak body for older Victorians.

My thanks to all Board members for their support, to staff for their enormous commitment and enthusiasm over the year and to COTA members who have volunteered their time to assist us or who have phoned and written to express their appreciation of our work. Thanks also to our many members who have given

additional donations to support COTA's work. And finally thanks to our Senior Citizens Week sponsors and to the Felton Bequest, the Flora and Frank Leith Charitable Trust and State Trustees for generous assistance with project work.



Jean Elder
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**SENIOR CITIZENS WEEK -
Award Presentation at Botanic Gardens**

Judi McKee (Chair of COTA Board) shares a joke with Hon. Robert Knowles (Minister for Housing and Aged and Care)

**COTA's COMING
OUT - Wangaratta
Rural Forum**

Pat Reeve and Jean Elder (COTA Staff) at morning tea with Phyllis Frost and Bill O'Callaghan



TREASURER'S REPORT

The Council's financial affairs for the year ended 31 December 1993 have been audited by Duesbury's. The full auditor's report and audited financial statements are included as an insert to this report, and are available to members.

The auditor's report contains the Council's balance sheet as at 31 December 1993, statement of income and expenditure, notes to the financial statements and statement of cash flows.

The following financial summary is based on the audited accounts. Due to changes in our account coding categories a direct comparison with 1992 figures is not possible in some instances. For instance part of the 1992 category Promotional Services has been replaced by categories of Insurance Commission and COTA Membership Co.

The year resulted in an operating deficit of \$27,184 compared with the 1992 result of a surplus of \$37,597.

As mentioned in other sections of this Annual Report, the greatly increased activities of Council and expenditure on essential upgrade of capital equipment has occurred at a time when Council's income was \$17,000 less than in 1992.

The graph below shows the sources of income.

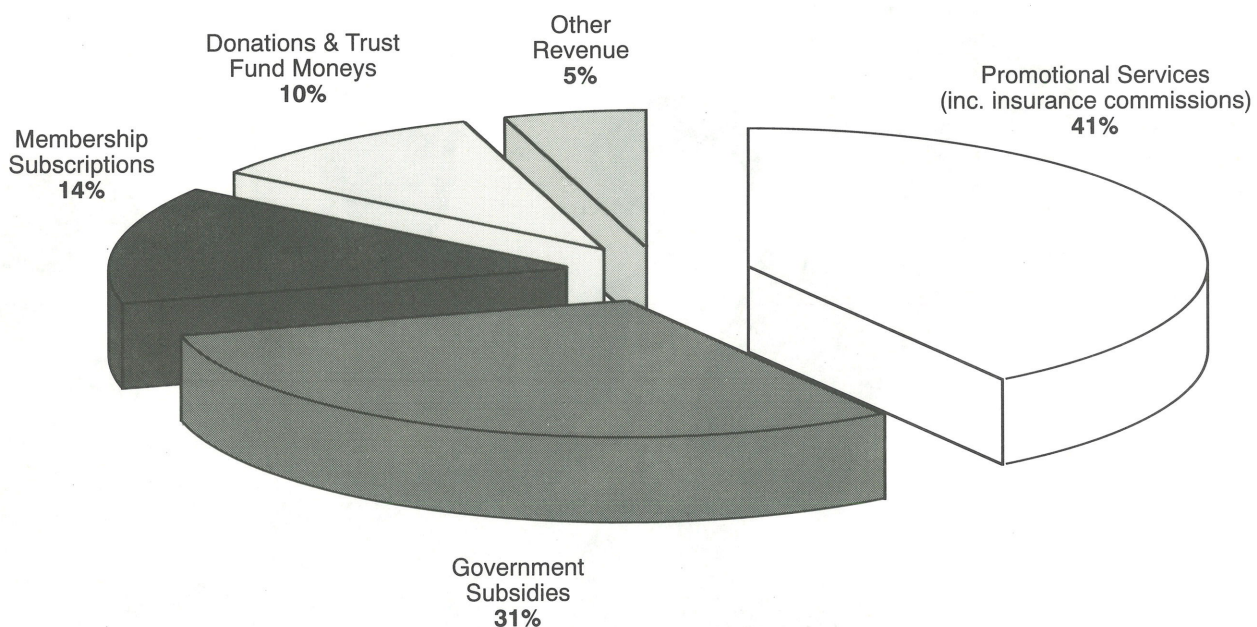
INCOME

Total income for the year was \$351,603 a decrease on 1992's result.

The main features of the sources of income were:

- a \$5,000 increase in membership subscriptions which represents 14% of total income.
- a \$4,000 increase in individual donations and grants from trust funds which represents 10% of total income (9.5% in 1992).

Sources of Income



- a decline in income from insurance commissions (41% of the total income in 1993 compared with 47% in 1992). This decline is largely due to difficulties caused by MLC during the changeover to our new underwriters FAI. New business growth has been extremely good and it is anticipated this source of income will steadily grow in 1994.

EXPENDITURE

- The major item of expenditure was on staff salaries and related costs which accounted for 59% of total overall expenditure (44% in 1992). Given that staffing levels more than doubled during 1993 to meet the demands of Council's expanded activities, this result is not unreasonable.
- Property costs remained at 10% of total expenditure.
- Administration costs which includes telephone, postage, printing, stationery, audit and accounting fees increased by \$16,000. This expenditure reflects the greatly increased activities with 6 Newsletters being produced and posted, two major mailouts to all Senior

Citizens Centres in the State and production and printing of several information pamphlets. Administrative costs represented 17% of Council's total expenditure.

The chart below graphically represents the major areas of expenditure.

THE FUTURE

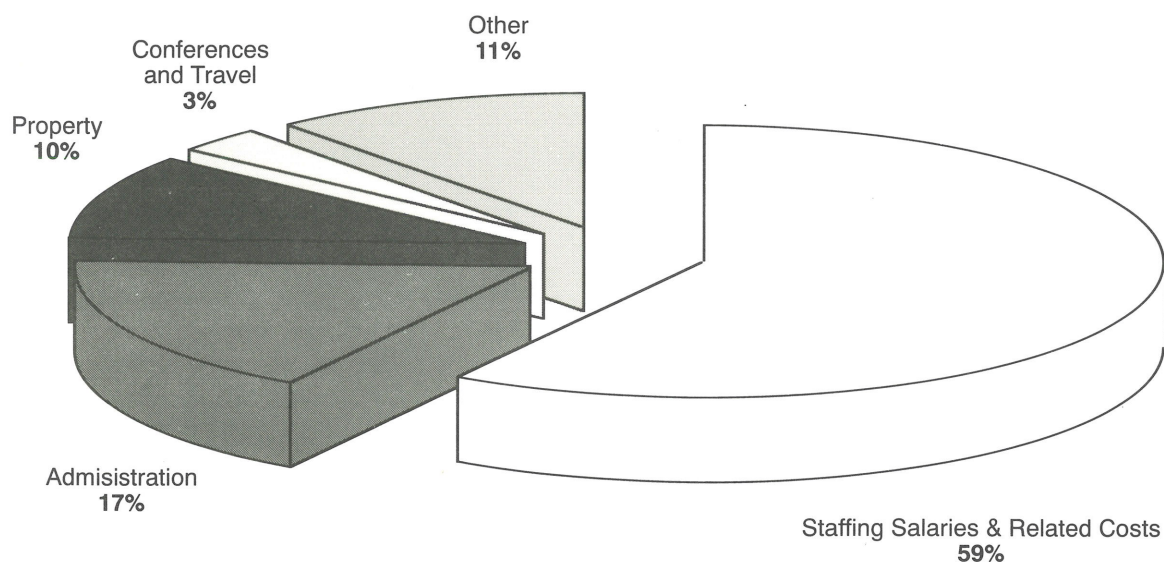
1994 will be a year of consolidation for COTA (Vic). The increase in staffing levels and the planned move to slightly larger premises will place COTA in an excellent position to achieve higher membership levels and an increase in general membership services.

The Board has budgeted for a small surplus and will be working hard to ensure that income targets are met whilst keeping a tight rein on expenditure.

John Wise

John Wise
TREASURER

Major Areas of Expenditure



BEQUESTS AND DONATIONS

Donations of \$2 and over to support the continuing work of COTA (Vic) are allowable deductions for Income Tax Purposes.

On a number of occasions COTA (Vic) has been extremely fortunate to receive substantial funds through the generosity of people who have remembered us in their wills.

Bequests not only allow COTA (Vic) to maintain its services to the community, but to expand its work into new areas for the benefit of older people.

Should you wish to support COTA (Vic) in this way, the appropriate wording when making or amending a will is:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the Council on the Ageing (Victoria) Inc."

Legacies and bequests to COTA are exempt from any Government Duties or Taxes.

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COTA NT
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NIGHTCLIFF 0810
Telephone: (089) 481 511

COUNCILS ON THE AGEING

Councils on the Ageing (COTA), protect and promote the well-being of all older people.

COTAs are independent organisations run by and for older people. They had their beginnings as Older People's Welfare Councils in the early 1950's.

The COTA Movement is the largest and most extensive organisation of older people in Australia. COTAs represent over 50,000 individual members and over 2 million older Australians in our 1,500 member organisations.

COTA Movement membership encompasses individual older people, seniors organisations, service providers, professional and industry groups and local governments.

COTAs are recognised by Federal and State Governments as peak bodies for the ageing sector, and as major spokesbodies for the interests of older people.

The stylised "A", of the COTA logo represents Ageing, Advocacy and Action, and the logo as a whole represents our peak body role and dynamic movement forward. The logo colours are distinctly representative of the Australian landscape.

COUNCIL ON THE AGEING



