

**COUNCIL  
ON THE AGEING  
(VICTORIA)**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1995**

Council on the Ageing (Vic) Inc.  
Mezzanine Level, Block Court,  
290 Collins Street Melbourne 3000

Tel: (03) 965 44443  
STD Free 1-800 136 381  
Fax (03) 965 44456

# BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

## Officers

President: Delys Sargeant  
Vice Presidents: Shirley Horne, John Wise

Honorary Treasurer: John Creffield

## Individual Members (5 positions)

Mr Don Campbell  
Mr Jack Cook  
Mrs Shirley Horne AM  
Mrs Delys Sargeant AM  
Mrs Margery Wilson

## Service Providers (2 positions)

Mrs Pat Mutimer OAM  
Mr John Wise

## Local Government (1 position) (Vacant )

## Seniors Organisations (2 positions)

Dr Jack McDonell AM  
Mr Brian Shakes

## Co-opted

Mr John Creffield  
Mrs Rita Packer

## STAFF

**Executive Director:** Pat Reeve

**Policy Officer:** Jill Thompson

**Office Manager:** Jill Bodnar\*

**Promotions Officer:**  
Pam Turnbull\*

**Receptionist/Membership Clerk:**  
Toni Wharewera

**Advisory and Information:**  
Shirley Ramsay\*  
Beth Stevenson\*  
Jill Williams (until August)\*

**Specific Project Staff:**  
Genia Sawczyn

\*Denotes part-time positions

## VOLUNTEERS

Norma Hampton  
Mavis Hotmer  
Charles Leighton  
Betty Leishman  
Patrick Moore  
Thelma Morris  
Jannette Shannon  
Myrtle Spottiswood  
Bill Turnbull

**Accountant:**  
Annette Tarrant

**Auditors**  
Peter J. Leggett Pty Ltd

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1995

I am delighted to report to members on a successful year in our work with older people, our special projects and the management of our organisation. The members of the Board have been actively engaged in the interests of COTA members through their participation on a wide range of committees, advisory and reference groups. The staff work very well as a team committed to empowering older people and achieving social justice for all Victorians.

Our Challenging Ageing Education Series has attracted interest internationally as well as by older Victorians. It is an ambitious project which will use the knowledge and wisdom of participants, enable them to recognise myths which shape their lives and prepare them to challenge age discrimination and stereotypes throughout the community. The initial participants reacted very favourably to the pilot program and their feedback will be included in the course handbook and materials to be developed over the next two years.

The Confident Living for Older People of non-English Speaking Background project involved consultations with 35 seniors' groups and resulted in publications of information in eight languages and on community radio. This information complements the comprehensive English language book used by Victoria Police in Confident Living seminars.

In partnership with Aged Care Victoria, the Department of Human Services & Health and the Inner West Migrant Resource Centre we completed and published a survey of non-English speaking background residents in nursing

homes and hostels. This work provided a comprehensive overview of issues related to languages spoken by residents and staff, the provision of culturally appropriate services and the interest of management in increasing the number of residents from ethnic backgrounds.

In the area of management we re-located to Block Court in Collins Street in a move which has made us more accessible to members using public transport and reduced our rental costs. As reported by the Treasurer we have achieved a very positive financial result following two years of deficit. The Board has formally acknowledged the skill and commitment of the staff in bringing about this result.

Our sights are now firmly set on some broader achievements by the end of the century. Through COTA (Australia) we are engaged in facilitating community action in preparation for the 1999 United Nations Year of Older Persons. I have been appointed to chair an interim advisory committee to establish Coalition 99 Australia. Through our leadership and the wide participation of community organisations and government in projects over the next three years we hope to achieve a year where substantial improvements in the quality of life of older people can be reported, and objectives for a further decade of development can be identified.

I have been proud to become Vice President of COTA (Australia) and through that office have ensured close cooperation with COTA (Vic) and the contribution of Victorian interests to the national agenda.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1995 was a challenging and rewarding year as we began our innovative education series on Challenging Ageing and concentrated on re-building our capacity for policy work.

The position of Policy Officer, vacant since I assumed the Executive Director's duties in August 1994, was filled in March 1995 by Jill Thompson. Jill came to COTA from local government, having spent eight years in the development and management of Aged Services at the City of Moorabbin.

COTA Board members, volunteers and employed staff undertake particular roles on behalf of the organisation. However our strength depends upon the skills and support of all members. I thank all those involved in a most successful year.

## CHALLENGING AGEING

Challenging Ageing is a three part Education Series designed to increase understanding, challenge the myths and misconceptions of ageing, and examine the ways in which these may have a major influence on services and the care of older people.

It is being developed and conducted by COTA Board and staff members with the input of participants, who are all older people.

### Part 1 Understanding Ageing

Thirty-five people successfully completed the pilot program sharing their understanding of the ageing process from their own life experience and with the contribution of some eminent older guests. From these analyses they began to develop

a critique of the understanding of many professionals and of policies on aged care. Participants contributed to the evaluation and improvement of the program which will now be offered more widely in 1996.

Many of these people have signed on for part 2 beginning in February 1996.

### Part 2 Leadership roles in Older Age and

### Part 3 Educators on Ageing

These sessions will be offered for the first time in 1996 to people who have completed Understanding Ageing.

## FORUMS AND NEWSLETTERS:

Members' Forums provide opportunities for members and staff to get together to discuss current issues. During the year these have included Challenging Ageing Stereotypes; an update on Home and Community Care services, with particular emphasis on Linkages programs, (programs of care in the home for older people who are particularly vulnerable), and on the role of the Public Advocate and Administration Board. These latter two forums have led to the production of information booklets available to members on request.

Regional Forums held in Swan Hill and Camperdown, allowed us to present COTA activities to a broad range of people and to hear of local issues and initiatives.

Six issues of COTA NEWS and three of Policy Update were clearly well read by members who provided feedback on a wide range of items. Over 300 responses were received to our article on euthanasia.



## POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Changes in Health and Community services at local and state levels demanded much of our time.

**Home and Community Care (HACC)** issues proved difficult to monitor, with the outcomes of council amalgamations and compulsory competitive tendering still very unclear. COTA participated on a state government working party developing policy around fees for HACC services which proposed ways of achieving a uniform set of fees across Victoria. The related issue of **total** costs which individuals pay, and proposals for 'capping' these, will continue to be pursued.

Changes to the **hospital system** in Victoria have been of concern - in particular the lack of consumer consultation and input into planning for the future hospital networks. COTA has worked with the Health Issues Centre, and others, to lobby government on the need for consumer input into all stages of the planning, delivery and evaluation of hospital and health services. This included running a workshop which was attended by a number of members of hospital network boards.

The issue of **euthanasia** was prominent during the year, because of the Northern Territory's introduction of legislation for voluntary euthanasia. COTA conducted a survey to gauge the opinions of members and was delighted with the interest and response to this issue. The results of our survey, in which three-quarters of respondents supported some form of voluntary euthanasia, were conveyed to the Minister for Aged Care, Rob Knowles.

The Australian Nursing Federation invited

COTA to participate in a statewide phone-in to assess the impact of **discharge planning** on nursing home care and to examine other issues of quality of care. Some 500 calls were received, and a key issue to emerge concerned the lack of trained staff providing personal care in nursing homes. The phone-in was followed by a deputation to the Minister, lobbying for an immediate increase in training places for state enrolled nurses and more regulation of agencies providing personal care staff in nursing homes.

The report on Discharge Planning released in December 1994 has been widely used and clearly of benefit to those designing better practices. To influence national issues we work with our federal body COTA (Australia) who made over 20 submissions to parliament and federal departments.

COTA (Vic) was represented on committees for:

- ▶ Confident Living
- ▶ Aged Care for NESB people
- ▶ Lincoln Gerontology
- ▶ VUT Gerontology
- ▶ Older Adults Recreation Network
- ▶ "New Homes for Old" Project
- ▶ Carers Association of Victoria
- ▶ Falls Prevention Strategy
- ▶ Eastern Aged Care Strategy
- ▶ HACC Fees Policy
- ▶ Nursing Homes Standards
- ▶ Senior Citizens' Week
- ▶ Breastscreen
- ▶ U.N. International Day

The voice of older people through COTA was also heard through membership of organisations such as Australian Association of Gerontology (Vic) Executive Committee and the Older Australians Advisory Committee.

## ADVISORY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

This service responds to any question under the sun helping people to think through their issues, and possible solutions, and providing information on resources available. The majority of callers are older people themselves, families, or friends and neighbours acting in the interests of older people. The balance are from social agencies and students. The availability, features, eligibility for and costs of various forms of accommodation including retirement villages, low cost units, nursing homes and hostels account for around the majority of our inquiries. Other common subjects are financial matters, legal issues and guardianship, recreation and employment. Plans to computerise our information and extend this service to full-time during 1996 are well underway. COTA receives funding from the HACC program for salaries and equipment for this service.

## MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Howie and Maher Solicitors and MacKinnon, Jacobs, Horton and Irving Solicitor provide legal advice to members by appointment. This pro bono service is greatly appreciated.

Financial Advisory Service (with RetireInvest and Godfrey Weston) and Financial Information Services (with DSS) continue to respond to members needs.

In principle agreements made in November 1994 to transfer all insurance and associated services to COTA Membership Services Company were implemented by the end of January. Board member Jack Cook is a Director of this company and

ensures that members' interests are central to its work. Insurance clerk, Graziela Venuto transferred to the national company office in South Australia to ensure that Victorian issues and members continued to be well served by the new operations. Despite the very competitive nature of the insurance industry and the resources needed to establish the new operations the Company had a successful year and will appoint a full time Chief Executive early in 1996. In December our board formally recognised the contribution and achievements of Ian Yates, Executive Director COTA South Australia who has acted as Chief Executive in a part-time capacity since the company's inception.

## COTA AWARDS 1995

COTA's major event, Senior Showcase including the presentation of our Awards was once again a highlight of Senior Citizens Week.

Awards presented:

- \* **Senior Achievers** Award to Laura Guthrie; Florence Sullivan; Jeannie Taylor; Betty Ward; Albert Birtles; Arch Dryburgh; Gus Ryberg; Gertrude Berger, recognising the range of contributions older people make to their communities.
- \* **Seniors' Organisation** Award - Chewton Senior Citizen's Band and Concert Party.
- \* **Innovative Program** awarded Southport Daylinks
- \* **Aged Care** Award - Ashburton Senior Citizens' Welfare Association
- \* **Challenge to Ageism** - City of Voices Command Performance



# TREASURER'S REPORT

The Council's financial affairs for the year ended 31 December 1995 have been audited by Peter J. Leggett Pty. Ltd.

The full auditor's report and audited financial statements are included as an insert to this report, and are available to members on request.

The auditor's report contains the balance sheet as at 31 December 1995, statement of income and expenditure, explanatory notes and statement of cash flows.

## KEY RESULTS

In 1995 the Board committed itself to achieve a surplus and begin to rebuild operating reserves to an appropriate level. A surplus of \$23,680 has been achieved following two years of deficit.

As anticipated in 1995, insurance operations were transferred to a national marketing centre operated by a separate trading company, COTA Membership Services (CMS), in co-operation with other state/territory Councils on the Ageing. This company pays all costs associated with the provision of agreed membership services and pays COTA (Vic) a royalty on all commissions earned from Victorian business. It is also anticipated that the company will distribute a dividend in future years.

The following financial summary is based on the audited accounts. The graphs on page 8 demonstrate summary information on income and expenditure.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### Income

Total income for the year was \$410,893.

The main features of the sources of income were:

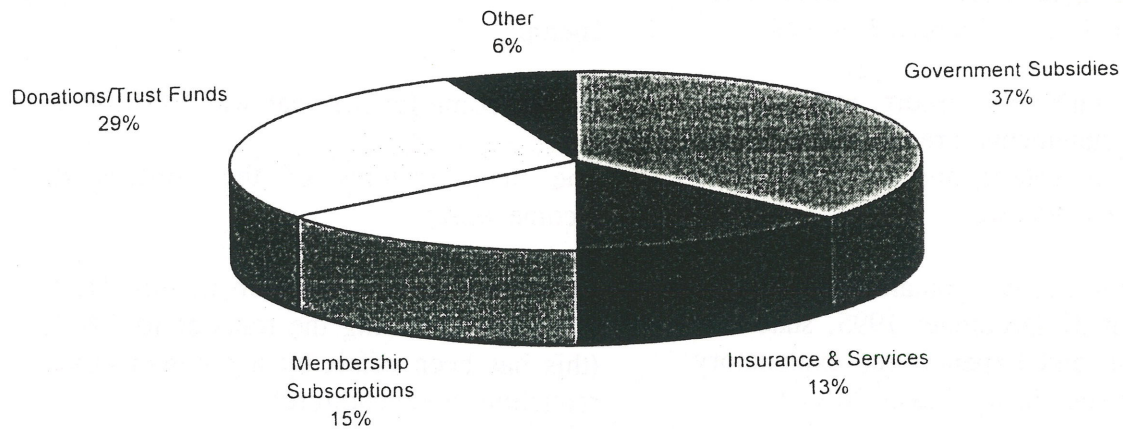
- ▶ a reduction of \$44,000 in income from insurance following the transfer to CMS, (this has been offset by a commensurate reduction in expenditure).
- ▶ a \$34,000 increase in trust fund project grants and individual donations which now represent 29% of total income.
- ▶ continued support from government for activities specified in a negotiated service agreement.

## EXPENDITURE

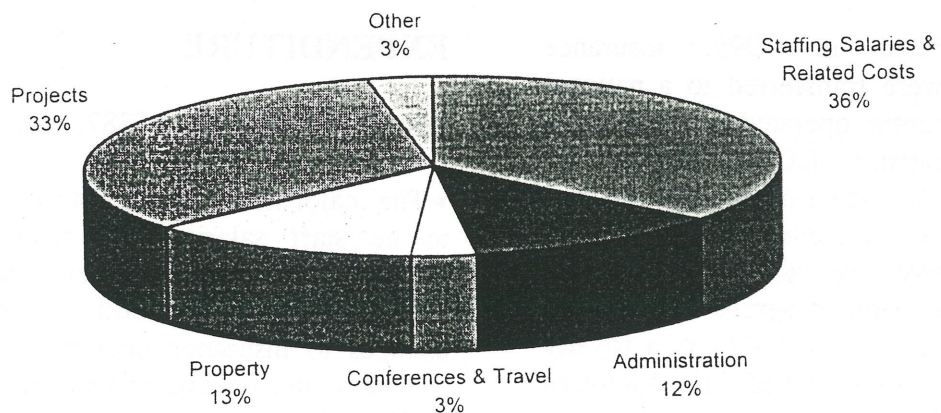
Total expenditure was \$387,213.

- ▶ The major item of expenditure continues to be staff salaries and related costs although these were further reduced to 36% of total expenditure following changes to insurance operations. Given the range and volume of work undertaken staff numbers are very low.
- ▶ Administration costs which include telephone, postage, printing, stationery, audit and accounting fees were contained at 1995 levels and now represent 12% of expenditure. This item includes telephone costs for the Advisory & Information Service.

### Sources Of Income



### Major Areas of Expenditure



### BEQUESTS AND DONATIONS

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

On a number of occasions COTA has been extremely fortunate to receive substantial funds from the generosity of people who have remembered us in their wills. Should you wish to support COTA in this way the appropriate wording is "I give, devise and bequeath to the Council on the Ageing (Vic)." Legacies and bequests to COTA are exempt from any Government Duties or Taxes.