

COUNCIL ON THE AGEING

COTA

victoria

*the voice
of older victorians*

CHOICE RESPECT
EQUALITY VALUED
RELATIONSHIPS CLIMATE HEALTH SECURITY PARTICIPATION
ENVIRONMENT DIGNITY COMMUNITY RIGHTS CHOICE
RESPECT HOUSING SECURITY INFORMATION
EQUALITY INFORMATION CLIMATE VALUED SECURITY
HEALTH ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIPS PARTICIPATION
DIGNITY CLIMATE COMMUNITY RIGHTS CHOICE
HOUSING SECURITY INFORMATION EQUALITY VALUED
INFORMATION RELATIONSHIPS CLIMATE
PARTICIPATION ENVIRONMENT DIGNITY COMMUNITY
RIGHTS CHOICE RESPECT HOUSING SECURITY
EQUALITY VALUED INFORMATION
HEALTH SECURITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

victoria

COUNCIL ON THE AGEING

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.

Board of Management

Janet Wood	President
Bob Barron	Deputy President
Anne O'Shaughnessy	Chair – Policy Council
Ian Jungwirth	Treasurer
Sue Healy	
Patrick Moore	
Alva Purkiss	



President's Report

I write this report at a time when Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria has significant involvement in the pursuit of pension reform – against a backdrop of dire events in the world's financial systems. The local and the global come together again. COTA Victoria is committed to making a difference in our state and nation and to being part of an international partnership for all matters which are of concern to older persons.

A major challenge for the Board over the past year has been to balance our financial and people resources with the increasing opportunities and requests for COTA's involvement in an ever-widening range of issues and actions.

The setting up of Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a major achievement. It brings together a cause, the prevention of abuse of older persons, with a wide-ranging structure to address it, a telephone information and referral line, community education, legal assistance, and a partnership with three legal bodies. Funded through the Office of Senior Victorians and Victorian Legal Aid, SRV calls on our strongest commitment and skills.

A two year challenge for the Board and for everyone associated with COTA Victoria is the exciting news that Melbourne will be the venue for the next conference of the International Federation on Ageing (IFA). John Wise, the immediate-past President of the Board, has agreed to chair the organising committee for this major event in May 2010 which could attract up to 3000 attendees from Australia and overseas. The theme is 'Climate for Change'. The Board believes that COTA Victoria can draw on its members' skills and commitment to host a conference which will advance the welfare of older persons in Australia and world-wide.

Partnership is a common feature of COTA Victoria's work. Some of these many issues of concern for older persons relate to housing, health, social inclusion, research into ageing. Partnership with other concerned and relevant organisations is essential to make change.

A significant partnership established this year has been with MonRAS, a research unit on ageing at Monash University. Evidence-based research is vital for COTA Victoria as it identifies issues of importance for older persons. We look forward to increasing collaboration between academia, advocacy and activism.

The Board's role is to direct and support the work of staff and volunteers to fulfill the COTA Victoria vision. Staff and volunteers deserve the highest commendation. Our Executive Director, Sue Hendy, organises and supports staff and volunteers with energy and total commitment to the elimination of ageism and the achievement of ageing well for all.

This year the Board has co-opted new members to ensure that it has the range of skills and experience necessary for the fulfillment of COTA Victoria's vision and mission and, of course, to ensure our adherence to the various legal and regulatory requirements of boards and their organisations. I thank all Board members for their dedicated co-operation and contribution.

Janet Wood



Treasurer's report

Following a year of consolidation, 2007/08 has seen growth into new areas, while maintaining tight control of expenditure, which has enabled COTA Victoria to finish the year in surplus. The stability with grants has enabled core activities to continue with many programs being funded for a number of years. Seniors Rights Victoria is a newly funded service being led by COTA Victoria. This service, which began part-way through the year, will be funded for three years by the Victorian State Government.

At the last Annual General Meeting we appointed Ryecrofts Pty Ltd as our auditors for the year ended 30th June 2008.

Key results

	2007-08	2006-07
Ordinary Activities		
Revenue	\$1,920,803	\$1,550,298
Expenses	\$1,774,228	\$1,566,192
Net	\$ 146,575	(\$15,894)
Net Assets		
Reserves	\$606,265	\$458,690
Cash	\$503,313	\$392,165
Fixed	\$101,952	\$ 66,525
Total Assets	\$1,338,828	\$811,107
Total Liabilities	\$733,563	\$352,417

Ian Jungwirth



Executive Director

This year we have focused on two key strategic areas:

- **Enabling Seniors Voices, and**
- **Confronting Ageism**

We have had a successful year. This was achieved by the effort and skills of our great team, significant work towards important outcomes, new partnerships to add to our existing partnerships and addressing challenges as they arise. The work of the organisation continues to develop and gain traction on matters of ageism and the human rights of older people, and we are ever in demand. Being awarded Seniors Rights Victoria and establishing the joint venture to direct and implement this important work, has been a highlight. As has been the successful bidding for the 2010 International Federation on Ageing 10th global conference. Success is not only about the new, as much as it is about continuing the existing good work, and to this end we have been able to secure new contracts in most existing areas, and envisage signing off the others.

COTA Victoria recognises the value of working collaboratively with other organisations and this is integral to the success of our organisation. These include: our funding bodies Office of Seniors Victorians, Sport & Recreation Victoria, Department of Human Services, National Prescribing Service, VicHealth and beyondblue. We have also been working with various Municipal Councils, Diabetes Australia Vic, Divisions of General Practice, Carers Victoria, Ethnic Community Council of Victoria, Pharmacy Guild, VCOSS, Monash University, Barwon Leisure Networks and the Municipal Association of Victoria. Minter Ellison and John Howie of William Wintel have again provided ongoing legal support.

I would like to thank the team at COTA Victoria: the Board, Policy Council, staff and volunteers for their tireless and enthusiastic work.

Sue Hendy



Our Work

Policy Council.

COTA Victoria's Policy Council, comprising nominated older people, Board members, and COTA Victoria's Executive Director, governs our policy directions and activities. The Council meets monthly to share information, monitor the work of policy working groups and staff, and decide our policy positions.

At its annual planning meeting for 2008 the Policy Council identified five strategic priorities that were accepted by the Board as our primary focus for work for the year:

- Poverty – with a focus on pensions and concessions
- Housing
- Ageism
- Community Care
- Ageing in Victoria

Some of these issues are on-going, building on work undertaken previously, as well as responding to new developments and concerns. In addition a number of initiatives have been commenced and progressed in 2007/08.

Some of the major developments and achievements in these and other areas of advocacy and policy development include:

Poverty and Financial Disadvantage

Concerns about the cost of living for full pensioners and their struggle to make ends meet due to rising costs, which are above CPI, came to the fore in 2008. We know that health and pharmaceutical costs have increased by more than twice the inflation or CPI rate

since 1990. COTA Victoria has been involved in the issue of financial disadvantage of older people on a number of fronts:

- Fair Go For Pensioners Coalition – COTA Victoria in conjunction with its Fair Go for Pensioners Coalition partners rallied seniors to keep pressure on the Federal Government to address the needs of pensioners. We were rewarded with the Government agreeing to undertake a major review of pensions as part of the Tax Review.
- COTA Victoria presented a four point plan to the Federal Government which outlined a 'Cost of Living in Retirement' to provide a decent standard for all older people.
- Concessions and Utilities – concerns about the risk of cuts to concessions and rising costs of essential services – gas, water and electricity – prompted COTA Victoria to join forces with a coalition of over 70 community organisations and agencies to seek the safeguarding and enhancement of these important protections for low-income families and individuals. These efforts resulted in there being no changes to concessions in the 2008/09 State Budget.

Ageing in Victoria

The State Government has commenced a consultation process for the development of a positive ageing framework, which will guide the Government and its departments in making Victoria a better place for older people to live. COTA Victoria will be working closely with the Office of Senior Victorians to ensure this initiative results in a well-resourced strategic plan to improve the well-being of older people within a socially just and inclusive community.

Affordable and Accessible Housing

The availability of suitable housing is essential if older Australians are to 'age well' and to 'age in place'. Adaptability, accessibility and affordability are the key considerations. There is clearly a crisis in housing affordability, and, in addition, without regulation for universal housing, older people continue to struggle in housing that impacts on their health, quality of life, and ability to stay connected to their communities. In Victoria we have joined forces with a number of other stakeholders to form the Victorian Universal Housing Alliance to advocate for universal housing standards to be implemented. COTA Over 50s is working with other organisations to raise the profile of older persons' housing affordability issues and develop initiatives that are inclusive, encourage innovation and are built on best practice.

Older Men's Health

Following COTA Victoria's successful forum on Older Men's Health in 2007, the call for action on men's health continues to gather momentum. COTA Victoria has developed a *Strategic Policy Framework for Older Men's Health*, in which we call for a coordinated effort to ensure that the health and well-being challenges of older men are better understood and addressed. The development and launch of the Framework is timely with State and Federal government announcing renewed policy leadership on men's health issues. COTA Victoria will be working for the inclusion of older men in a formal consultation to be undertaken by the State government. We are also continuing to work with organisations and stakeholders that have an interest in older men's health.

State Government Budget and Outcomes

COTA Victoria presented a set of recommendations to Victorian Treasurer, the Hon. John Lenders, ahead of the 2008 State Budget. The priority issues identified in the Pre-Budget submission, included the following, some of which have been taken up:

- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Older Men's Health
- Additional Support for those on Low Incomes
- Protecting the Financial Assets of Seniors
- Provision of Transport to Health Services
- Empowering seniors through access to information, education programs and consultation.

National Policy Development

At a national level, COTA Victoria has collaborated with the other States and Territory COTAs, and ARPA Over 50s to develop policies on a range of issues impacting on older people, including:

- Housing and Older People
- Community Aged Care
- Pensions

Submissions and Representation on Committees

COTA Victoria developed and provided input into submissions on a number of State and Commonwealth policy initiatives and inquiries, including:

- Commonwealth Senate Inquiry into Cost of Living Pressures on Older Australians
- Development and Implementation of an Active Service Model in Victorian Home and Community Care services
- Residential Park Review
- Review of utilities charges and concessions
- Inquiry into the reform of the metropolitan retail water sector
- Transport Legislation Review
- Review of Australia's Consumer Policy Framework
- National Housing Affordability and Rental Schemes
- Homelessness
- Victorian Mental Health Services Reform
- Ageing in Victoria
- Harmer Pensions Review

COTA Victoria has represented older people and directly contributed to many different government reviews, reports and committees; namely:

- Ministerial Housing Task Force
- Statewide Reference Group on Elder Abuse
- Victorian Oral Health Alliance
- Yarra Water Community Consultation Committee
- Home & Community Care (HACC) Departmental Advisory Committee
- Public Transport Users Advisory Committee
- Accessible Transport & Accessible Taxis working group
- CAV Working Together Forum
- Caravan Parks Working Group
- Accessible Housing Alliance
- Affordable Living Alliance

- VCOSS joint discussions and action on issues impacting on older people
- Improving Care for Older People Advisory Group
- Insurance Council of Australia
- Division of Medicine Safety and Service Improvement Committee

Increasing opportunities for seniors to be involved in our policy work

COTA Victoria undertakes consultation and research with older people on issues that affect their lives, and holds forums on local issues. Older people have been directly involved in consultations through the "Have Your Say" sessions that have continued this year in local communities across metropolitan Melbourne as well as regional areas including ongoing activities focused on Greater Geelong, Casey and the Mornington Peninsula.

In 2008, COTA Victoria commenced a Seniors Engagement program, to provide enhanced consumer input directly into Aged Services planning processes, particularly the Home and Community Care (HACC) Planning Process for the North and West Metropolitan Region.

This process engaged over 1100 seniors from the Greek, Italian, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Macedonian communities. We also involved people over 80 to get their 'view from the top'.

Positive Ageing

COTA Victoria has been working in partnership with Municipal Association of Victoria for 3 years to deliver the MAV/COTA Victoria Positive Ageing project funded by the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV). This project has been successful in working with local councils to create age friendly environments. Over the 3 years, there has been an increase from 12 to 50 councils now having positive ageing strategies in place, with an additional 13 councils having commenced their plans. In addition, 31 demonstration projects were funded to either develop plans or implement components of plans. There are now over 20 officers employed at local councils who have a dedicated responsibility to focus on ageing well in their municipalities.

Seniors Information Victoria (SIV)

Information that is timely and accurate is vital for people in making good decisions, and is therefore, an important service in enabling older people to deal with the myriad of complex and unfamiliar issues that they can face. We know that poor information can lead to poor decisions, from which many people may never recover, and so this service is an essential part of early intervention for good outcomes.

The service has responded to nearly 20,000 contacts in 2007/08 in person, by telephone, letter and email. The most frequent requests were for information on finance, general ageing, wellbeing, accommodation and transport options.

The team of staff and volunteers at SIV work tirelessly to ensure the data system which supports their work, and contains over 14,000 entries, is kept up to date ensuring the best information is available. SIV also maintains a comprehensive stock of publications and produces 11 fact sheets on topics where little information is presently available. These are provided to callers to augment the initial contact.

In addition to individual contact, SIV provides an information outreach program, holding "Need to Know" information sessions in our city office and in partnership with local councils. The topics covered this year include powers of attorney, reverse mortgages, positive ageing, road safety, legal matters, and will making.

Seniors Rights Victoria

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a free service that has been established to help identify and reduce the incidence of abuse of older people and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians.

Funded by the Victorian Government through the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV) and Victoria Legal Aid (VLA), the service is led by Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria in partnership with the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH), Eastern Community Legal Centre and Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre.

SRV provides a range of services in relation to abuse of older people, including a telephone information and referral helpline, legal advice, advocacy, community and professional education.

The service operates from offices in central Melbourne, as well as sites in Melbourne's outer east and regionally in Bendigo. Services are also being established throughout Victoria via local area networks and developing pro bono legal outreach clinics.

The service was launched by the Minister for Senior Victorians, the Hon Lisa Neville on 28 April 2008. In the first 5 months of operation more than 600 calls were



received by the Helpline. The calls were divided into those seeking broad information and referral (30%), those requesting SRV information or community or professional education (30%), and those requiring legal advice or casework (40%).

Calls specifically describing abuse of older people comprised financial abuse (40%), psychological or emotional abuse (33%), physical abuse (9%), neglect (9%), social abuse (8%) and sexual abuse (1%).

SRV is supported by an Advisory committee providing expertise in matters of abuse of older people and the law, aged and community care services, as well as partners in the project. It is the only service of its kind in Victoria. Seniors Rights Victoria aims to lead research, policy and advocacy on issues of abuse of older people, mistreatment and neglect.

Community Education

This year has proved to be very successful through the consolidation of programs and their delivery, as well as the re-establishment of key education programs.

The demand for the presentations on Quality Use of Medicines (QUM), *beyond maturityblues*, Getting Connected, Memory, Myths and Stereotypes of Ageing, and Healthy Ageing is increasing. Our Peer Educators have presented over 850 sessions across the state at conferences, health forums, and to smaller community groups, comprising an estimated 26,000 older people. We have worked closely with our funding partners National Prescribing Service, Beyond Blue and Telstra.

The Challenging Ageing course has been reintroduced and three were offered in 2007/2008. Creative Transitions Through Retirement, a pre-retirement course, has been rewritten to respond to the changes in the employment market and to the needs of organisations and their older staff.

We continue to build our base of volunteers and have conducted six Orientation programs over the twelve-month period. Our Volunteers have wide and varied duties which this year have included Seniors Week, Seniors Awards, Peer Education programs, Peer Education support work, Seniors Information Victoria, Seniors Rights Victoria, administration and data entry,

Expos/Conferences, Policy Council, focus groups, reference groups and representing COTA Victoria on committees.

Community Quality Use of Medicines

Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) Program continues to go from strength to strength delivering 500 sessions throughout the community to June 2008, and adding new topics to its repertoire.

COTA Victoria and the Whitehorse Division of General Practice have formed a joint venture, to work collaboratively at a community level within the division's boundaries.

NPS is in the process of developing a new topic targeting chronic illness groups that will be launched in 2009. The 'being an active partner' medicines message continues to play a significant role in COTA Victoria's mission for "healthy active ageing".

At the National QUM awards held in Canberra in May, the national Peer Education Program, of which COTA Victoria is a part, was the recipient of a Highly Commended Medicines Award that recognised excellence in Quality Use of Medicines.

'beyond maturityblues'

beyond maturityblues has been very successful in raising awareness of depression in older people in Australia. Over the past 12 months, Peer Educators have presented 240 sessions reaching over 4,500 seniors in Victoria.

beyond maturityblues sessions have been presented to a range of senior clubs and groups including: chronic illness groups (eg. Diabetes, Parkinsons, Arthritis, heart disease and lung support), carers support groups, vision loss support groups, Rotary, Probus, Lions, U3A, Veteran Affairs, planned activity groups and at many seniors' expos. There are still many groups and clubs we have not been able to reach as yet.

Currently COTAs across Australia are working with *beyondblue* to scope the future directions for this vital program.

Professional Education

Enhancing Practice Program

This program, developed in 2004, continues in partnership with Northern Health. This interactive program provides a constructive way of challenging current attitudes and behaviours in relation to older people in the public hospital sector. A broad range of health service workers participate. The key themes of ageing, ageism and person-centered care are explored through a series of discussions, role-plays and group activities in 4 sessions over a 6 week period. Participants are encouraged to reflect on how they work and can improve their approach with patients.

To date 70 Enhancing Practice programs involving more than 800 participants have been held around Victoria. In addition, more than 400 Managers have experienced a shortened version of the Program. Professional development forums are held 3 times a year to support facilitators who work in the Program.

An extensive feedback report was completed at the end of 2007. This report indicated that the Enhancing Practice Program has been a very positive experience for staff, managers and hospitals. It has assisted in putting the needs of the older person on the agenda and significantly raised awareness of person-centred care. The completion of an "action plan" project by each participant is a major outcome of their involvement in the program. These projects result in improvements in the care delivered to patients and their carers. COTA Victoria believes that there are other significant impacts of Enhancing Practice in this sector. These include: broadening the understanding of ageing and ageism; better health outcomes for older people when staff are more person-centred; increased representation of older people at consumer advisory committee level and awareness raising of COTA Victoria and its mission.

Funding for Enhancing Practice has been from the Department of Human Services, via the Improving Care for Older People initiative. Expressions of interest from Health Services around Victoria resulted in DHS funding the Program in 2008 to work with 8 existing Health Services. As well as this, 2 regional areas, Barwon South West and Loddon Mallee have implemented Enhancing Practice in 2008.

HACC Training Program

COTA Victoria auspices the Home and Community Care (HACC) Regional Training Program of the Western Sector of the North West Metro Region (NWMR), which is funded by the North Western Department of Human Services.

The HACC training coordinator, in consultation with the HACC Training Advisory Committee (HACC TAC), develops training program for the HACC workforce, based on identified needs, across different areas and levels of responsibility in the HACC system. HACC TAC is chaired by COTA Victoria and has representation from all HACC funded agencies in the west.

In total, 32 training courses were delivered in 2007/08 with over 500 staff and volunteers participating in the training courses. The 69 organisations represented included 9 Local Governments, 14 organisations representing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, and 10 major health services in the Western Sector. In addition to this, a total of 13 courses were run in association with the education unit of the Royal District Nursing Service.

A number of significant issues and challenges have been identified as recurring themes to be addressed through on-going planning and training including:

- Managing Complex and Difficult Behaviours & Mental Health Issues. There continues to be a high demand for training in areas relating to mental health issues and especially in dealing with complex behaviours of clients, including dealing with anger and managing potentially violent situations.
- Meeting Needs of Ageing CALD Communities. Ageing communities of non-English speaking backgrounds feature prominently in the Western Sector which includes some of the most disadvantaged Local Government areas.

Increasing Physical Activity

A major focus for the Physical Activity Unit during 2007/08 has been the development of the *Moving More* peer education program. *Moving More* aims to motivate and encourage people to become more active and to address some of the barriers and misconceptions commonly associated with physical activity, and in particular strength training, for older people. The program is a valuable promotional strategy for all of COTA's physical activity initiatives.



Living Longer Living Stronger™

In order to improve access to Living Longer Living Stronger™ (LLLS), particularly for people who find it difficult to travel to strength training classes, COTA Victoria has introduced two new partner categories. The residential facilities category recognises that some facilities have gymnasiums, which are often under-utilised, which could be used to deliver LLLS. The personal trainer category enables appropriately qualified trainers to travel to a range of venues and deliver LLLS program on-site.

The Victorian Government's Office of Senior Victorians has now funded LLLS until June 2010, which has greatly facilitated planning for the further development of LLLS as it enters its ninth year.

The preliminary findings of the evaluation of LLLS, conducted by the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI), and funded by the William Buckland Foundation, are encouraging and will greatly assist COTA Victoria in future planning and implementation.

Participation in Community Sport and Active Recreation (PICSAR)

During 2007/08 COTA Victoria set out to develop a model that could be used by community sports clubs to establish sporting opportunities that would appeal to older people, and address some of the obstacles to their participation.

It achieved this by consulting with State Sporting Associations, key local community groups, sports clubs and older residents of the Northern Bellarine Peninsula, where COTA Victoria's VicHealth-funded PICSAR project is focused. In addition, a review of the relevant literature was undertaken. COTA Victoria's experience in establishing recreational table tennis groups (Keen-Agers) and in administering LLLS has also informed this process.

During 2008/09 the model will be tested in the City of Greater Geelong. Sports clubs will be asked to express interest in offering a new seniors' 'section' for older players that will be largely self-reliant, with players coordinating their own activities. There will

be no formal competitions or training requirements, set teams or game schedules – the emphasis will be on participation in a casual, social atmosphere that promotes fun, friendship and physical activity. During this period, COTA Victoria will gather feedback and adjust the model accordingly.

COTA Cycling

Janet Bennett, COTA Victoria's cycling leader, continues to offer a busy and enjoyable schedule of rides for people aged 50 and over, that caters for all levels of ability and experience. The rides are a great social activity, with a mid-morning coffee stop and picnic lunch on the long rides. For the most part, the weekly rides follow Melbourne's picturesque bike paths.

Leaders in Fitness Education (L.I.F.E.) Special Interest Group

In June 2008 L.I.F.E. SIG supported a very successful Sensational Senior Workshop at The Celtic Club, Melbourne. The focus of the workshop was The Resistance-Safety Continuum.

L.I.F.E. Special Interest Group (SIG) worked with COTA Victoria to consider the group's directions and its current organisational structure. Extensive consultations and a survey of L.I.F.E. SIG members was undertaken to inform the process.

Despite a great year, the L.I.F.E. SIG members have reluctantly decided to wind-up the group. COTA Victoria will continue supporting people interested in fitness for older people including training opportunities for this group.

We thank all those involved in L.I.F.E. over its history and appreciate their contributions to older people's wellbeing during that time.

Older Men: New Ideas (OM:NI)

The interest by older men to participate in OM:NI continues to grow with 18 groups now operating across Victoria, despite lack of on-going funding to support the program. Representatives from the groups participate in quarterly meetings with COTA Victoria, enabling groups to share information and assist the coordination and development of the OM:NI program. This in turn informs the newly established OM:NI Advisory group.

With the growing interest in the support OM:NI groups can provide older men, requests for speakers on OM:NI and older men's health is increasing. A peer education program is being developed with input from OM:NI participants and men with an interest in the area of older men's health.



Council on the Ageing Victoria
Level 4, Block Arcade
98 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: (03) 9654 4443
Toll Free: 1800 136 381
Fax: (03) 9654 4456
Email: cotavic@cotavic.org.au
Web: www.cotavic.org.au

Incorporated Association Registered No. A022312N
ABN 81 960 500 420