



## **Victorian State Budget 2026-27: Welcome help for older Victorians, but bigger challenges still to be addressed**

**Melbourne, 5 May** – Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria and Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) welcome a series of initiatives in the Victorian State Budget 2026-27 that offer tangible help to older people struggling with the cost of living. However, it misses opportunities to make Victoria a better place to grow older and respond to our ageing population.

A number of measures including free and half-price public transport, car registration rebates, indexed carer allowances, and energy assistance initiatives are helpful for older Victorians in their everyday lives as prices rise.

“These measures help ease financial pressure and improve mobility – including for older people living in regional areas – that are crucial for wellbeing,” said Ben Rogers, CEO of COTA Victoria and SRV.

We also applaud new investments in essential services and infrastructure that older Victorians rely on, including hospitals, transport, and social housing. This includes additional investment in public sector residential aged care, hospital in-reach services, and aids and equipment to support recovery at home. Further expansion of hospital and community-based care – including urgent care clinics, mental health community hubs, and community hospitals – will also benefit older Victorians.

“However, there needs to be a renewed vision for, and investment in, ageing in Victoria,” Mr Rogers emphasised. “Older Victorians need to be a key focus, not an afterthought.

“Older people use care services at disproportionately high rates, and investment must keep pace with population ageing,” he continued. “Meeting this challenge requires addressing the particular needs of older Victorians across the whole system. For instance, it is great to see funding for social housing, one of the key issues raised by our members, but how do we make sure this investment helps older people at risk of homelessness?”

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“The upcoming state election offers a key opportunity to make sure we are prepared to support our ageing population,” Mr Rogers said. “We have identified some key proposals to support this as part of our Election Platform. Victoria is getting older, and the next Victorian Government must be ready.”

COTA Victoria and SRV welcome commitments to strengthen aspects of Victoria’s family violence system, such as the expansion of the Strengthening Women’s Safety Package. However, it is vital that there is renewed and increased funding to address elder abuse, a distinct form of family violence that affects older people. There is growing need and demand for elder abuse prevention and specialist support services, such as those provided by SRV.

“It is vital that next week’s federal budget delivers an implementation plan, and funding, for the new National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People, which can provide the basis for future Victorian efforts,” Mr Rogers said.

“Overall, today’s budget provides some positive support measures and incremental service expansion. However, there is a missing bigger picture about how older people need to be a part of mainstream priorities, to benefit all Victorians. We remain committed to advocating for, and working with stakeholders to deliver, necessary future investment to address the systemic challenges affecting the health, wellbeing, and safety of older Victorians.”

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## Further information

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## About us

**Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria** is the leading not-for-profit member organisation representing the interests and rights of people aged over 50 in Victoria. Celebrating 75 years of service in 2026, we have led government, corporate and community thinking about the positive aspects of ageing in the state.

Today, our focus is on promoting opportunities for and protecting the legal rights of people 50+. We value ageing and embrace its opportunities for personal growth, contribution, and self-expression. This belief drives benefits to the nation and its states alongside communities, families, and individuals.

**Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV)** is the key state-wide service dedicated to advancing the rights of older people and the early intervention into, or prevention of, elder abuse in our community. It is the only Community Legal Centre dedicated to preventing and responding to elder abuse within Victoria.

SRV has a team of experienced advocates, lawyers, and social workers who provide free information, advice, referral, legal advice, legal casework, and support to older people who are either at risk of or are experiencing elder abuse. SRV supports and empowers older people through the provision of legal advice directly to the older person.