



ANNUAL REPORT BY CEO **2016 – 2017**

COTA NT is the peak body in the Northern Territory advocating and leading work for a just, age-friendly, inclusive and equitable society for all senior Territorians. Throughout the last year we have work hard to promote policies, practices and services that advance the well-being of seniors. Against this background COTA NT has persistently advocated about the key concerns of and issues affecting seniors. We have also committed considerable resources and effort to developing, implementing and reviewing systems, policies and practices for the benefit of seniors which directly reflect our organisational values and community expectations

This work also creates opportunities and support for senior Territorians to participate in their community through our events and volunteer programs.

OVERVIEW for 2016/2017

As the new CEO from February 2017, it was right into the fray with big shoes to fill by the former CEO, Mr Graeme Bevis.

The NT government has again part-funded COTA NT's work to help us achieve the development of parameters for an inclusive society in which seniors have productive and fulfilling lives as valued members of their communities.

The Board of Management have met regularly throughout the year to review and consider the strategic directions, policy development and commitment of finances and resources to the visions, charter and mission of the organisation as it relates directly to the advancement of the "lot" of senior Territorians.

COTA NT has continued to play a predominant role in the deliberations of the Ministerial Advisory Council – Senior Territorians (MAC-ST) and the concurrent meetings of the Independent Seniors Roundtable. COTA NT organised two meetings of the Independent Seniors Round Table (ISRT).

A solid year of achievement especially through the dedicated work of Multicultural Affairs Manager Lina Paselli and Events Manager Stephanie Kendall have been comprehensively recorded in separate reports attached to this document. The work of these two totally dedicated and committed staff has again this year been outstanding and each of them must be recognised as most valuable assets to the organisation.

Stephanie Kendall while relocating to Cairns, will still be part of COTA NT's team and will continue in her role of Events and Communications Manager remotely from Cairns.

Our third successful Seniors Expo was held on the 2nd June and is only possible with the outstanding efforts of staff and volunteers. Over 1,000 seniors attended this Expo, with over 70 stallholders which is evidence that this type of forum provides much needed information for Territory Seniors.

The Minister for Senior's, the Hon. Dale Wakefield officially opened the Expo. This Expo also provided tremendous public promotion for COTA NT and will now continue to be an annual hallmark event into the future.

SENIORS MONTH and SENIORS CALENDAR

COTA NT for the first time, was contracted by the NT government to produce the Seniors Month Calendar. This was published for print and online distribution and involved new website development for functionality, design, content and hosting of the new online community calendar. Extensive promotional and marketing work was undertaken to notify stakeholders how the calendar would be made available. Huge congratulations must go to Steph Kendall once again on a terrific effort for the calendar. The calendar is now a permanent feature on COTA NT's website and allows all senior organisations who have events to enter them on this yearly calendar.

Seniors Month 2017 featured 30 events and activities. Only two grant applications were made by COTA NT to fund events, with one being a multicultural luncheon with over 130 people in attendance. COTA NT also auspiced COTA Coomalie with their seniors' picnic grant application.

SENIORS LAUNCHED PUBLIC PETITION REGARDING THE REVIEW OF THE NTPCCS, coupled with AIR, NATIONAL SENIORS AND PALMERSTON AND RURAL OF NTPCCS

Members may recall that COTA NT initially called for a review of the NTPCCS in 2014, when the previous government changed the conditions of entitlement for the NTPCCS. Well the review was at last started in late July 2017 with forums and a leaflet organised by the OTF.

All participating senior organisations stressed their frustration on the way the review was being handled. The petition received over 6,500 signatures and overall the response rate for the "Have your Say" online and which was also posted out by MLA's, was another 4,000. This was an overwhelming response and is the biggest response that any government in the NT has received. With the ABS figures showing that the NT has the biggest growth of over 65's – 35% - bigger than NSW who is at 34%, seniors proved without a doubt that they are a force to be reckoned with.

Loss of concessions clearly impacts on the future viability of seniors and their ability to continue to stay in the Territory given the unique cost structures here. COTA NT has accepted the clear message from its member's friends and supporters – we will continue to pursue the senior's concessions issue to secure an outcome which adequately recognizes the valuable contribution of all seniors to the Territory community and economy.

AGE FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES.

Organisations' age friendly cities (WHO 2007) which promotes policies services settings and structures to support and enable people to age actively. Against this back-ground the principal aim of COTA NT lobbying is to provide policy makers in the NT with information for developing age friendly communities and deliver a research base-line for the strategic planning of services and infrastructure by government service providers and others. This concept is now the major policy issue for pursuit by COTA NT, and COTA NT attended the strategic planning form organised by Territory Housing regarding housing issues for Seniors.

With a 9 year wait list just in the greater Darwin area for Seniors Housing, it is pleasing to note that the Territory Housing has gone out to the private sector, who now have a vacancy rate of 7%, to assist with the shortfall of appropriate housing.

COTA NT has now been nominated as a key contributor to an implementation working group which will determine all aspects of executing the new policy which has now been endorsed by Government.

COTA NT MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWALS

COTA NT increased their membership fees and also changed membership to an annual fee. This means that a cash injection in July, when our cash resources are traditionally low, would be bolstered.

The invoicing and pro-rata renewals are organised by COTA NT's bookkeeper

We also welcome a new sub branch – COTA Berry Springs. Ida Anderson has been the instigator of this new branch and welcome her and our new members to the COTA NT family.

POWER AND WATER CUSTOMER ADVISORY COUNCIL

COTA NT was invited to be a part of the Power and Waters Consumers Advisory Group which investigates future pricing for both commercial and domestic users. At the first meeting a decision was made regarding the new Smart Tech meters and a vote by the Consumer Council to charge consumers \$15.00 on a yearly basis, and not the \$500.00 up front costs as suggested by PWC.

Other topics of discussion included tariff structures for 2019-24, network capabilities and the current infrastructure.

WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT – NT GOVERNMENT

COTA NT met with Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment on strategies to have more flexibility in the NT government for seniors. COTA NT will assist with developing a list of seniors and their skills who would be interested in working in various government departments on a casual basis and on an as needs basis – i.e. policy areas etc.

MEETING WITH VARIOUS MINISTERS AND THE OPPOSITION

The CEO has met with the Health Minister, the Hon Natasha Fyles, regarding the health needs of seniors as they age and the Treasurer, the Hon Nicole Manison regarding the NTPCCS and the NT Government budget. COTA NT was also invited to be a part of the NT Treasury lock down in May.

Meetings were also held with Lia Finnocario, Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding the NTPCCS, the elder abuse and other issues that affect seniors.

SENIORS CARD

COTA NT held meetings with the CEO of the Office of Territory Family regarding COTA NT being funded to take over the advertising, delivery and production of the NT Seniors.

Initial meetings have been held and it has been confirmed that COTA NT has been offered \$302,000.00 pa for a four year term to be in charge of the NT Seniors Card.

Talks are still ongoing about privacy issues, ownership of the data base plus ownership of the proposed new web site that will contain all information pertaining to the Seniors Card plus the enhancement of the Business Directory.

ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

On the national scene COTA NT has taken an active role in the deliberations of the COTA Australia Board, the COTA A Federation meetings, the National Policy Council (NPC), the Executive Co-ordination Group (ECG) and the ongoing COTA A Renewal Project Group. The commitment of Jan Jewel as COTA- A Board representative in time and effort to the national body must be recorded with appreciation.

The COTA A Renewal project was discussed and agreed upon at the last NPC meeting in June 2017.

The Executive Consultative Group has this item on its monthly meeting agenda with progress reported regularly. Each of the three papers have been circulated and agreed on by the COTA A Board, and a way forward has been agreed upon. One of the outcomes was the development of the “Wisdom Foundation” which will be a straight benevolent fund, especially for the purpose of receiving bequests.

RECORDING OF APPRECIATION

As at the end of June 30th 2017 – I had only been at COTA NT for five months and the organisation comprises only 2.6 full time equivalent staff with just 48% of our income derived from Government. As mentioned earlier, this will change in late 2017 with COTA NT

taking over the Seniors card. With extra staff in the Darwin office and a person on the ground in Alice Springs, COTA NT will be able to increase our footprint in the regions. When we sit back and think of what has been accomplished, it is the dedication and commitment of our band of dedicated staff and volunteers. These people selflessly give generously of their time and effort to support the work of COTA NT. It is hard to gauge exactly how much time volunteers give to COTA NT as many hours go unrecorded. Not included in this tally are Board Members' time, seminar and workshop facilitators, paid instructors and presenters from other organisations: a conservative estimate is however:

Event Volunteers and Event Support	154 hours
Admin Volunteers	892 hours
Volunteer Co-ordination	143 hours
Membership	165 hours
MASP Driver Volunteers	480 hours
Volunteer / Peer Educators	90 hours

Total: 1,924 hours valued at \$86,580)

This is an increase from the same 12 month period las year, total hours **1,310 (valued at \$61,010)**

Not included above are the estimated number of volunteers hours associated with event support of COTA \s major event, Seniors EXPO. This is a conservative estimate.

Event Volunteers at EXPO	400 hours
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TOTAL: 400 (THIS IS VALUED AT \$18,000)

It is these people working and volunteering at the coal face who give the organisation its integral fabric – its heart and soul. Their efforts are so very greatly appreciated.

Appreciation must also be recorded for continuing assistance to COTA NT with its work on behalf and for seniors these people include:

- To our COTA NT staff, who at all times show their professionalism and dedication to COTA NT- Lina, Stephanie and Chrissy. I have enjoyed working with you all and look forward to the coming year. To our volunteers each week in the COTA office, Anne, Di, Manju, Jing, Batool and Sue we couldn't do it without you.

Sue Shearer

CEO

9th October 2017