



# COTA AUSTRALIA POLICY NEWSLETTER

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## AGED CARE REFORM

### BODIES TO DRIVE REFORM ESTABLISHED

Government has started implementation of its Living Longer Living Better aged care reform package. One of the main priorities has been establishing the three main bodies that will drive implementation:

- The Strategic Workforce Advisory Group (SWAG) is being independently chaired by Commissioner Anne Gooley, from Fair Work Australia and its membership comprises the aged care unions and providers. Initially the SWAG is developing a workforce COMPACT that will see \$1.2bn flow to improved wages for aged care workers. Once that task is complete the SWAG will look at workforce planning and training more broadly. COTA will be involved in that work to ensure the needs of consumers are front and centre in all workforce considerations.
- The Aged Care Reform Implementation Council (ACRIC) is being independently chaired by Peter Shergold AC, an Australian academic and former Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Other members of the ACRIC include Age Discrimination

Commissioner Susan Ryan AO. The ACRIC, and the Department of Health and Ageing, will draw significant advice and guidance from the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) on which COTA is a key and influential member. COTA has received three year funding to support NACA with its role in implementation of the reforms.

- The third important body is the Aged Care Financing Authority (ACFA) which will set and monitor fees and charges for all services. COTA Chief Executive Ian Yates AM has been appointed to the ACFA.

Other implementation priorities include the development of the new Home Care Packages as well as the introduction of consumer direction in all new packages (operational from 1st July 2013).

### AGED CARE FUNDING INSTRUMENT (ACFI)

Over recent weeks you may have seen media coverage and debate about changes to the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) which is used to fund residential care. The Government has moved to bring growth in expenditure on the ACFI back into line with (revised)

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budgeted growth. Departmental modelling shows that overall residential care funding will continue to grow at an average of 2.7% per annum over and above indexation. Aged care providers are contesting the accuracy of this modelling and are predicting these changes will translate into funding cuts.

COTA has been working to understand the impacts of the changes to ensure frail older people in residential care receive the best possible care and support. COTA proposed, and Government adopted, a monthly monitoring approach to ensure quick corrective action can be taken if standards of care fall. We will closely monitor this and forcefully protect the interests of aged care residents.

## COTA WA SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS

COTA Western Australia is proudly hosting the inaugural United Nations International Day for Older Persons Reception on 1 October 2012, a day that recognises the contribution of older persons and examines the issues impacting their lives. His Excellency, the Governor of Western Australia will open the reception at Frasers Restaurant in Kings Park. Dr Jane Barratt, Secretary General for International Federation on Ageing (IFA) will also be presenting.

The reception will also launch COTA WA's Human Rights Conference for Older Persons, Just Ageing, which has been supported by Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, to be held the following day. Speakers include:

- Dr Jane Barratt, Secretary General, IFA
- Prof Colleen Haywood, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Equity & Indigenous, Edith Cowan University
- Anna Brown, Director Advocacy & Strategic Litigation, Human Rights Law Centre
- Sue Ash, CEO, Uniting Care West
- Ken Marston, Executive Director, COTA WA

The international, national and local spectrum of human rights for older persons will be addressed throughout conference. Other topics include advocacy and the growing recognition of senior's rights. Facilitated discussions between delegates and individual speakers will be coordinated after key presentations. Additional speakers are to be announced shortly.

For more information on the conference or reception please contact Nicole on 08 9321 2133 or email Nicole@cotawa.org.au

## HUMAN RIGHTS - UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

COTA continues to be active in promoting the need for such a convention both through the International Federation on Ageing and here in Australia. David Craig, Acting CE of COTA Victoria, and Telmo Languillier a Victorian State MP, met with the Federal Attorney-General to discuss Australia's participation in the UN Open Ended Working Group meeting in August which Telmo will be attending. We have also identified this as an issue to be discussed at the Australian government's NGO Forum on Human Rights later in August.

## ACTIVE AGEING - WELLBEING: BODY AND MIND

COTA has called for a national older persons' preventive health strategy. To help progress this agenda we made it the theme of our National Policy Forum in May this year. This Forum brought together researchers, practitioners and consumers to help identify the key components of such a strategy.

The presentations covered the work of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, evidence on what works in terms of promoting active ageing and a look at the risk factors for dementia and how they overlap with the risk factors for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and cancer.

The Forum looked at what is currently being delivered to older people. It looked at how beyondblue is getting the message out to older people that depression and anxiety are not a normal part of ageing and about the National Dementia Health Preventive Policy.

A number of the COTAs presented on the work they are doing with older people to promote wellbeing. These initiatives include:

- Positive Outcomes Program in ACT to promote the benefits of making health lifestyle choices to older people.
- Living Longer Living Stronger program in WA and the Strength for Life program in South Australia to encourage physical activity
- The OM: NI groups in Victoria aim to enhance the health and well being of older men by encouraging structured discussion groups led by older men.

There were two key messages from the Forum. The first is that active ageing physical and mental wellbeing are indivisible and that it is never too late for people to get benefit from changing their lifestyle. The second is the

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need to ensure older people are actively engaged in the process of developing and disseminating the messages and that the COTA's should play an important role in this process.

**Presentations from the Forum are at [www.cota.org.au](http://www.cota.org.au)**

## **NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH STRATEGY (2012-2016).**

The Australian National Preventive Health Agency has called for submissions on its National Preventive Health Research Strategy (2012-2016). COTA will be putting in a submission to ensure the research strategy includes the needs of older people. We will use the discussions at the Forum to inform that submission.

## **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO TURNING GREY TO GOLD REPORT**

COTA welcomed the Commonwealth Government's commitment to establish an Advisory Panel on Positive Ageing and to develop a 10 year Active Ageing Plan. We will be looking at ways we can interact with the Panel and have input into the development of the Action Plan.

## **SUPERANNUATION CONSUMER SUPERANNUATION ROUNDTABLE**

COTA convened a Consumer Roundtable on superannuation to identify areas of common interest for consumer groups representing older people and look at possible ways of to progress these issues with the Hon Bill Shorten, Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation and others on his Superannuation Roundtable. There were representatives from the Association of Independent Retirees, COTA, National Foundation of Australian Women and ACOSS.

There was agreement that the primary objective of any proposed reforms of superannuation should be to ensure a secure retirement income stream for individuals to enable them to live an acceptable life in retirement.

There was agreement that any reforms affecting the accumulation phase need to increase equity and assist low and middle income earners to increase their superannuation contributions.

There has not been sufficient attention paid to the draw down phase with the key challenge being to ensure that superannuation provides a stream of income over the increasing period of life after retirement.

## **RETIREMENT INCOME STANDARD BENCHMARKS**

We have started discussion with the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia about some collaboration in their research agenda. We are particularly interested in their retirement income standard benchmarks and their disaggregation of the retirement population by age. There is more work needed on how expenditure patterns change as people age and this will need to take account of the reforms to user contributions for aged care as they are implemented.

## **RESPECT AND CHOICE AGED DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER SAYS RESPECT AND CHOICE INTEGRAL TO AGED CARE**

Age Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Ryan released the Australian Human Rights Commission's paper Respect and choice: A human rights approach for ageing and health on 8 August. This paper outlines a human rights approach for the implementation of the Living Longer Living Better package of aged care reforms. The fundamental principle is that older people have a right to quality care, choice and respect as they age. To meet that goal services need to be available, accessible, affordable and appropriate. COTA takes a rights approach to all of its work and commends the Age Discrimination Commissioner for providing this framework and will continue to work towards an aged care system that guarantees older people get the care they want and need.

**The respect and choice paper is available at [www.humanrights.gov.au/age/ageing/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/age/ageing/)**

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

The final report of the Advisory Panel into the Economic Potential of Senior Australians identified travel insurance as one of the areas needing some attention (Recommendation 31). The Insurance Reform Advisory Group chaired by Minister Shorten is looking at this issue and convened a roundtable to discuss it in August. To inform the deliberations of that group COTA Australia and National Seniors got together to collect some evidence on how older people view the travel insurance industry.

There was an online survey and a call for people to send in their stories about their experiences with travel insurance.

The stories from older people did not throw up any surprises. Older Australians are frequent travellers, particularly to overseas destinations, and they are travelling, and expecting to continue to travel, well into their 80s and 90s.

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The response rate and the strength of feeling in some of the comments indicated that a significant number of people felt that insurance companies were not treating them fairly.

Three key issues emerge from these stories. The first is that there needs to be a more transparent approach on the evidence for higher risk and therefore higher premiums as people age. There seems to be an assumption by travel insurance companies that all people over certain ages are unwell and the evidence we received certainly contradicts that view. The age limits they are using also do not seem to reflect the increase in longevity and perhaps need adjusting.

The second issue is the need for a more consistent approach to age related premiums and conditions. The vast array of restrictions and limits was confusing and the main reason people queried the evidence.

The third issue is around the treatment of pre-existing conditions. There was a feeling that the insurance companies have not kept up with medical treatment and did not allow for the medical control of pre-existing conditions that have made them a lesser risk.

**The report is available at [www.cota.org.au](http://www.cota.org.au)**

## 2012 - LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

- March** Senate Inquiry into Palliative Care
- May** House Standing Committee inquiry into Dementia: early diagnosis and intervention
- June** Senate Inquiry into the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Improved Access to Television Services) Bill 2012 [Provisions]
- July** Joint ASIC Consumer Groups submission on Report on Compensation Arrangements for Consumers of Financial Services
- Aug** Senate Inquiry into the Adequacy of the Allowance Payment System

**All COTA submissions are at [www.cotaustralia.org.au](http://www.cotaustralia.org.au)**

We also supported the Queensland Consumers Association Submission to Treasury's Regulation Implementation Review of the Grocery Unit Pricing Code.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

### **National Affordable Housing Exchange**

IOU an ILU: the who, what, when for delivering Independent Living Units. *Jo Root*

### **ACSA National Community Care Conference**

"Aged Care Reform", Workshop. *Pat Sparrow*

"That's What I Want", Plenary Panel. *Pat Sparrow*

"Setting the Agenda", Plenary Panel. *Ian Yates*

### **NIMAC Annual Conference** Living Longer. Living Better.

From the Consumer Point of View. *Pat Sparrow*

### **Aged Rights Advocacy Service, World Elder Abuse Day**

**Conference** - Getting Abuse of Older Australians on the

National Ageing Agenda. *Ian Yates*

### **Modelling Best Practice in Aged Care Training**

Greater consumer engagement. *Ian Yates*

### **Infrastructure Australia**

"Our Cities" Workshop. *Ian Yates*

### **Australian College of Health Service Management**

**Conference** "Old Roads, New Pathways", panel session on Price, Volume and Quality. *Ian Yates*

### **National Aged care Conference 2012**

Panel: Aged Care in the Future - Where are we going?

Panel: Navigating the Aged care System – Challenges and Opportunities. *Ian Yates*

## 2012 - WHAT'S COMING UP

**30 -31 Aug**

**National Aged Care Alliance Meeting**

**3 September**

**Age Discrimination Commissioner**  
Older workers and business growth Strategy forum

**2-5 September**

**ACSA National conference**  
Through the Looking Glass searching for Wonderland

**2 October**

**COTA WA Human Rights Conference**

**20-23 November**

**AAG National Conference**  
Ageing, Challenging the Boundaries

**12 November**

**COTA Workshop on Age-Friendly Cities**

**13-14 November**

**COTA National Policy Council**

**27-28 November**

**National Aged Care Alliance Meeting**

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