

46th ANNUAL REPORT 2003

including Financial Statements for the year ending 30th June 2003

***Presented at the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
18th September 2003***



The People for People over 50

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GOVERNANCE

PATRON

His Excellency the Governor of Queensland Major General Peter Arnison, AC CVO
(Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland Ms Quentin Bryce, AC — 29 July onwards)

BOARD

President

Judith Skinner OAM

(Electorate of Seniors)

Vice-President

Councillor Annette Reilly

(Electorate of Seniors)

Glenda McChesney-Clark

(Electorate of Seniors)

Treasurer

Julie Sultmann CPA

Secretary (non-voting)

Mark Tucker-Evans

(Executive Director and Public Officer)

Members

Cr June Colley*

(Electorate of Seniors)

Dr Mary Daly AM*

(Electorate of Seniors)

David Deans**

(Appointed December 2002)

Rex Freudenberg**

(Appointed December 2002)

Elizabeth (Bess) Newman*

(Service Providers Electorate)

Mary Snell

(Electorate of Seniors)

Jim Whalan

(Organisations of Seniors Electorate)

* Resigned from Board to transfer to the Queensland Policy Council, September 2002

** Appointed in accordance with COTA National Seniors Partnership Agreement, December 2002

AUDITORS

Business Links Australia Pty Ltd

STAFF

Executive Director

Mark Tucker-Evans

Project Officer

Melissa Bailey (p/t) Leave of absence from February 2003

Colleen Blunt (p/t) - April 2003 onwards

Diana East (p/t) - January 2003 onwards

Amar Sharan (p/t) - March-April 2003

Administration & Finance Officer

Jill Shipley

Library Resource Officer

Jane Geddes (p/t) - until September 2002

Bookkeeper

Wendy Wylie (p/t) - until September 2002

VOLUNTEERS

Seniors InfoLinks Coordinator

Sue Draffin (p/t)

Administrative Assistant

Shelly Chand (p/t)

Computermentors

Alan Rawlings***

Kevin Hortle***

Joan Daffurn***

*** The Computer programs ceased with COTAQ relocation to the CBD in August 2002

President's Report

It is with much pleasure that I present to you the forty sixth COTAQ Annual Report for the year ending June 2003.

This has been a memorable year for older people organisations in Australia.

In November 2002 the eight State and Territory COTAs entered into a partnership agreement with the National Seniors Association. It is anticipated that this relationship will progress to a full merger within this next year, and will provide a very strong voice for all older Australians.

Whilst Ageing is firmly on the Agenda of State and Territory Governments it is of great importance that older consumers are seen as partners in the decision making required to meet the many challenges that the needs and aspirations of an ageing population will present.

Another major development has been the formation of the State Policy Council.

The Policy Council brings together a diverse group of Seniors and Seniors organisations to research, develop and advocate Policy on behalf of older Queenslanders. The Council is jointly Chaired by Glenda McChesney-Clark from COTAQ and Bill Benson from NSA with the Policy Secretariat managed by COTAQ Executive Director Mark Tucker-Evans.

A number of long serving COTAQ Board members, June Colley, Dr Mary Daly AM and Bess Newman resigned from the Board to represent COTAQ on the inaugural State Policy Council. The co-chairs represent Queensland on the new National Policy Council.

As part of the change process the number of COTAQ Board members has been reduced and in the spirit of the partnership we have welcomed David Deans and Freudenberg as the NSA representatives on the COTAQ Board.

During this year there has been considerable emphasis on project management which provides the greater part of COTAQ's income. The decision was made to appoint another Project Officer to further develop and enhance our project management capacity. Two new appointments were made whilst long serving project officer Melissa Bailey is on extended leave.

One new appointment was Colleen Blunt who has made a significant contribution to achieving the goals of the HACC project, which has taken a number of new directions to better reflect a state-wide approach to consultation and communication activities.

Diana East took over management of the Safe and Confident Living Project in the early part of this year. Diana is meeting the challenges of this successful project by using a community development approach to ensure sustainability beyond the life of the funded project.

COTAQ acknowledges the funding provided by Queensland Health and Department of Families. It is much appreciated.

President's Report

Diana also managed and coordinated the statewide consultations for the National Grandparenting Project with the support and assistance of Board member Mary Snell.

COTA has been a leader at a national level in voicing concerns with regard to Mature Age Employment. In Queensland this year as part of a National education project COTAQ was pleased to arrange and host one of the series of national workshops in Logan.

Quarterly Seniors Forums throughout the year have been very successful in enabling an exchange of views, information sharing and ideas that can be channelled through to the Policy Council. Although aimed at our organisational members they were also well supported by individuals from both COTA and National Seniors.

COTAQ's educational activities have largely centred around the Quality Use of Medicines amongst older people and I sincerely thank Mary Snell for her wonderful effort in maintaining this important activity.

The year 2002 was sadly the last year for the Festival of Music and Song which Vera Evans OAM had been the heart and soul of for many years. We once again thank Vera and also Royce Perkins who was Festival compere for most of its 20 years.

COTAQ also acknowledges the involvement as Patron of Major General Peter Arnison during his term as Governor of Queensland. We take this opportunity to welcome our new Patron Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC Governor of Queensland.

This is my last annual report and I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow board members for their support and participation not only for this year but throughout my years as a board member and as President of COTAQ.

On behalf of the Board out thanks and appreciation to Executive Director Mark Tucker -Evans and we acknowledge the hard work and support both professional and personal of all of COTAQ's staff and volunteers.

Judith Skinner OAM
President

2003-2003: Year in Review

Working through the issues leading up to the COTA National Seniors Partnership and now moving to a merged organisation has been a major focus for COTAQ over the past twelve months.

Nevertheless at COTAQ we have continued to build on our current strengths to develop an organisation which facilitates resources, support and services for older people throughout Queensland that meets the needs identified by members and stakeholders.

We are doing this by:

1. Ensuring that policies based on consultation and research are developed to advance the well-being of older people
2. Responding to the identified information needs of organisations and individuals through seminars, talks, etc.
3. Working in collaboration with stakeholders to continue to develop “big picture” perspectives/ an overarching view of the issues and sharing this with others.

Membership

Individual

With the signing of the Partnership Agreement individual COTAQ members are now entitled to the combined benefits of COTA and National Seniors providing a better deal for the over 50's.

Seniors Organisations

COTAQ claims to be the peak body for seniors' organisations with over 270 organisational members and is strategically placed to provide vital leadership, advocacy and research support to meet the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

Communication

We recognise that in addition to face-to-face, telephone, fax, etc. that we need to utilise a mix of both print and electronic media to communicate with our membership throughout Queensland.

50 something extra NEWS

With the Partnership *COTA News* was replaced by *50 something* with an 8-page tabloid insert *extra NEWS* shared with the Queensland office of National Seniors Association.

www.cotaq.org.au

With funding from CMS and the Fred P Archer Charitable Trust, the COTAQ website has been redesigned and now provides relevant advice for seniors and seniors organisations through a dynamic information management retrieval system. The website will be updated weekly.

As part of the revised COTAQ website we have been developing an *e*-magazine which will initially be updated quarterly to provide insightful articles for volunteer Boards and managers of seniors organisations.

2002-2003: Year in Review

Policy and Advocacy

The Queensland Policy Council (QPC) was brought together for the first time on 14 May 2003. Since this inaugural meeting it has met via teleconference and has been developing the Partnership's State Pre-Budget/ Pre-Election Submission.

A Policy Executive comprising the two Co-Chairs and the Executive Director meet regularly to coordinate responses to State and input into National issues.

Committees on the Ageing/ NSA Branches and Zones provide the Partnership with the opportunity to be well informed about local issues. We have also introduced a *Have Your Say electronic Forum* to enable members throughout the state to participate in our policy making processes.

Seniors Organisations Forums

It is intended to meet with Statewide Seniors Organisations on a regular basis to discuss issues of common interest and enable input into our policy processes. Ultimately this Forum will elect the two representatives to the QPC.

Local Seniors Organisations

Queensland's geography means regular face-to-face meetings for local seniors organisations are cost prohibitive so we must continuously develop appropriate mechanisms to provide equitable access to our policy-making processes. One proposal is to develop a regional structure which could be linked to the HACC state consultation mechanism.

Annual State Forum

It is hoped that local seniors organisations will see the value of attending an Annual State Forum linked to the QPC's annual State Budget submission process.

Quarterly Seniors Forums

When we reintroduced quarterly Seniors Forums earlier this year we attracted COTAQ and NSA individual members and some of COTAQ's organisational members. We managed this by separating the different types of participants in the breakout sessions to monitor any differences in issues or priorities.

Service Providers Forum

In June 2002 Service Providers (and Local Government) members were made associate members of COTAQ in line with the Partnership's consumer role. It is intended to establish Service Provider Forums in early 2004.

Projects

COTAQ has been involved in a number of exciting projects (see Projects Reports) during the past year. These projects have also informed our policy processes.

Government Relations

We have been developing effective relationships with the public service and to a lesser degree Government Ministers and Shadow Ministers. This is an area we will be addressing through the QPC.

2002-2003: Year in Review

Public Relations

We have been promoting COTAQ, and latterly the Partnership, to the community, policy makers and government by building our relations with the media. We will be developing additional strategies including the redesigned website, Annual State Forum, etc. to communicate our messages to the wider public.

We have also been working with other organisations such as QCOSS and Volunteering Queensland to develop long-term viability of COTAQ through strategic alliances. This needs to be developed further.

Education and Information

Mary Snell and the Education and Information Committee have met throughout the year to develop and support the Talks program.

Considerable work has been undertaken to establish a framework for supporting a Peer Educators Network. (Re)Training of peer educators is planned for later this year.

Administration and Financial Management

Staff

Steady progress has been made inspite of illness of key staff members. We have appointed Sue Draffin to the volunteer position of Seniors InfoLink Co-ordinator and extended our voluntary staff with the appointment of a Web Manager and a further Administrative Assistant to support our Administration and Finance Office.

COTAQ's two Project Officer, Diana East and Colleen Blunt are rising to the challenges of managing demanding projects within a small team environment. Their wealth of experience in community development is enhancing COTAQ's project management reputation.

Computers

It has now been recognised that COTAQ's computer system is inadequate to meet our growing needs. We were unsuccessful in gaining a grant from the Gaming Machine Fund and so are applying "band aid" leading up to a review of the combined COTA National Seniors IT needs.

Premises

COTAQ relocated to Rowes Arcade in August 2002 which has enabled us to work more closely with Government and alongside NSA's Queensland office. It is intended to combine the offices at the end of our current leases.

Finances

Our strategy is to ensure that our core business areas are integrated so that achievements in one area help build success in others. We will achieve this by ensuring that:

- Our programs are complimentary
- Fresh strategies are explored to realise our goals, and
- Our resources are mobilised to maximise priority results.

We continue to invest reserves to build our capacity to undertake policy and project work and to play an important role in development of the sector .

Projects & Programs 2002-2003

Inner Brisbane Suburbs Safe & Confident Living

At the end of last year Melissa Bailey the Project Officer who had coordinated the Safe & Confident Living project for over 5-years was transferred to another project but has subsequently taken a twelve month leave of absence.

The Service Agreement with the Department of Families was renegotiated following an environmental scan to explore possible future project development. The focus of the project has thus shifted from a case management approach to one of community education/ community capacity building to address personal and community safety issues in order to enable older people to live and participate confidently in their community.

Cohesive communities are better able to deal with local crime issues and problems and are more able to provide mutual support and assistance required to alleviate concerns about personal safety. As Community/Neighbourhood Centres are focal points for the various communities covered by the project one approach is now to build linkages with these Centres and help to build their capacity to provide the support and assistance older people require in order to deal with their safety concerns. This has included working collaboratively with East Brisbane Community Centre to pilot a "Living Confidently in Your Community: Exploring the Issues" approach to involving local community members of all ages in developing their own solutions to safe and confident living issues. This intergenerational program aims to assist participants to:

- Learn about and reflect on factors which prevent people from feeling confident about living and participating in their community
- Develop skills and take action to enhance personal confidence and well-being
- To identify and act on strategies that will assist a wider group of community members to address safe and confident living issues
- Where older people undergoing particular stresses as a result of feeling unsafe can be identified to provide them with relevant information and support

Other collaborative approaches have included:

- Participating in a small working group to develop a storytelling project at New Farm Neighbourhood Centre that is aimed at assisting local residents to feel a sense of belonging and begin to get involved with their community. It is part of a wider strategy to address community safety in its broadest sense and to build social capital for people.
- Working with staff from West End Neighbourhood House to develop a local community safety project which has a number of components including workshops to address safety and confident living issues relating to older people (particularly those with mental health problems).
- Joining the Reference Group for the Multicultural Development Association's "Learning is for Life" project. This has focused on the needs of older people from the Latin American, Iranian and Bosnian communities within the Brisbane area and aims to promote cultural exchange learning and friendship as a way for older people to feel safe, engage more confidently within their community and to develop a sense of well-being

Projects & Programs 2002-2003

Involvement with the Inner City LINC (Leadership, Inclusion, Networks, Community) Working Group based at New Farm Neighbourhood Centre has led to the production of an inventive Snakes and Ladders game that can be easily transported to, and quickly set up, in public spaces such as parks and large halls. The game is a novel approach to providing a fun and memorable learning experience for all participants about safe and confident living concepts. It utilises adult learning principles in creative approach that involves:

- People of all ages but particularly older people as players and 'markers'
- Queensland Police Service and COTAQ staff as resource persons, ready to provide additional information, brochures, etc.
- A skilled facilitator who can assist the markers to not only move around the board but also to encourage the players to reflect on the meaning/ implications of the written comments as they go up ladders or slither down snakes. The game also acts as an 'attention grabber' so that people gather round to watch its progress and can be drawn into actively participating.

Collaboration is seen to be the critical factor in responding positively to the priority issues identified by the Safe and Confident Living Project and is the foundation for all the strategies currently being utilised. Taking a clear community development/ community capacity building approach to these and other challenges and opportunities means that many aspects of the project will hopefully be sustainable.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Early in 2003 the Commonwealth Minister for Children and Youth Services, Hon. Larry Anthony commissioned COTA National Seniors to work with grandparents and their support groups to identify financial and legal issues facing grandparents; existing support mechanisms and additional supports that may be required; any parenting concerns that grandparents may have. The target group was grandparents of grandchildren considered to be at risk when their parents have a mental illness or an addiction or, for some other reason, are periodically not able to care for their children. COTA National Seniors worked with COTAs in Queensland, NSW, SA and WA and grandparents to collect information, ideas and recommendations to go into the report which was presented to the Minister in mid-July.

Many of the issues identified, both Queensland-wide and nationally are common to those already identified by groups such as OPSO, GAGS and COGS. Some of these are about the need to provide a non-parental guardianship allowance that is equitable across all states as well as the provision of other financial assistance for a range of educational activities; improved access to legal aid services for grandparents; increased opportunities for grandchildren to participate in recreational and life skills enhancing programs, providing increased life enjoyment for the grandchildren and much needed respite for their grandparents; improved access to family support services, including counselling services, critical incident response services, specialist services for grandchildren with special needs and other health problems; respite care; improved information about existing entitlements and services and more coordinated delivery and better targeting of such information; resourcing the development of more grandparents support groups.

Projects & Programs 2002-2003

Due to Queensland's unique situation of various groups having worked on grandparenting issues over a long period of time, a number of support group representatives were invited to a special meeting early in July to discuss the draft report with Margot Fitzpatrick, National Grandparenting Project Worker and Angela O'Neill, FACS and to help shape some recommendations. Attendees were very mindful that these recommendations needed to be Australia-wide and worked hard to develop those that were incorporated into the final report.

A comprehensive report on the outcomes of the Queensland consultation process has also been prepared, identifying some issues additional to those addressed in the national report. While COTAQ and COGS should obviously be open to any follow-up from the national project that requires their attention and creativity it is also recommended that, at a state level, the findings of the Queensland report be adopted and supported by COTAQ and COGS and the following issues be further explored:

- The need to develop coordinated community based responses to family violence issues and exploration of the possibility of replicating/ adapting the evidence-based models that have been documented.
- The need to support the development of culturally appropriate services that allow indigenous grandmothers to work through their issues around violence and abuse.
- Fostering improved communication between stakeholders by organising a workshop to develop principles of good practice for grandparent support groups.
- Supporting the development of a more representative, effective Queensland peak body for grandparenting groups/ service providers.

A copy of the full report *Seeing Them Through* is available to any interested COTAQ members.

Mature Age Employment

Following successful pilot workshops conducted in Adelaide, Bundaberg, Brisbane and Melbourne in June 2002 COTAQ organised a workshop on the *Changing Nature of the Labour Market and Portfolio Employment* in Logan in April 2003 as part of a COTA National Seniors Australia-wide project on mature age employment issues.

Job seekers aged over 50 years were invited to participate in an interactive workshop designed to listen to their problems with finding work and to provide practical advice on finding work in today's job market.

Speakers included Veronica Sheen, deputy director, COTA National Seniors policy secretariat, Ivan Neville who heads the Labour Market Analysis Section, Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and local representatives of the Jobs Network.

The workshop:

- brought together mature age people from diverse backgrounds who were provided with information about the contemporary labour market, how it has changed the past decade and how participants might tap into new and emerging forms of employment

Projects & Programs 2002-2003

- Provided a forum for mature age people to respond to the information they were given, outline barriers they faced in finding a job and discuss their needs in terms of employment assistance
- Enabled mature age people to speak informally to representatives of seniors' organisations, employment providers and Government departments, and
- Helped link mature age people into relevant services and information that may improve their job opportunities.

The Logan Employment Task Force assisted to organise the Workshop and COTAQ has continued to work with LETF including participating in their 2003 Jobs and Business Expo which brought together job seekers with relevant departments of all levels of Government, industry, business and community organisations.

Based on the outcomes of the workshop it can be argued that existing labour market and social policy interventions will need to undergo major restructuring to cope with the ageing of the workforce and that existing institutional arrangements and policy formations are inadequate for many people in the pre-retirement age group.

We continue to work on this issue.

HACC

During the year we renegotiated the HACC Project Service Agreement with Queensland Health to identify four discrete outcomes of the HACC Project to ensure that:

- i) A quality, coordinated information and advisory service (Seniors InfoLinks) regarding access to HACC services, resources and options is available
- ii) The needs and priorities in HACC service delivery in Queensland are identified through a comprehensive, independent consultation mechanism
- iii) Older people, consumers and carers are represented by COTAQ to government
- iv) Quality and consistent services are provided through transparent, effective and accountable management systems.

The development of the consultation process has gotten off to a slow start due to ill health of two of the Project Officers engaged to manage this aspect of the project. A comprehensive Project Plan has been developed with three distinct Pilot sites being identified. They are the Redlands district, the inner suburbs of South Brisbane and the Townsville/ Thuringowa area in the north of the state. Additional funding to carry out the northern part of the Project has recently been approved, as have funds for an independent evaluation of the Project upon completion.

Through its existing services COTAQ provides an information and advisory service regarding HACC and other services to the community. Through its role to promote and protect the well-being of all older Queenslanders, COTAQ also provides policy, and advocacy, education and information and community projects.

The focus of the HACC Project has been on networking and bringing the Project to the awareness of HACC service providers, other community-based organisations, Senior Citizens Clubs, and other senior's interest groups. To this end the Project Worker has attended HACC Regional Forums in the target area as well as interagency meetings and HACC Network meetings.

Projects & Programs 2002-2003

Involvement in the NAIDOC Week celebrations on Stradbroke Island cemented COTAQ's relationship with a number of service providers on the Island and the gathering of information from HACC service recipients.

With a view to gathering further information on needs and priorities, other target group contacts include:

- Face-to-face meetings with the HACC Area Managers from the Northern region and Brisbane South region. Attending a gathering on the Wynnum Foreshore of Indigenous Australians from Stradbroke Island and the Wynnum area
- Consultation with Carers at Killara Place Respite Centre in Cleveland
- Consultation with Carers in Capalaba
- A meeting with the Director and staff members of Diversicare
- A meeting with the Co-ordinator of Wynnum 60 & Better
- Consultation with the Wynnum/ Manly Senior Citizens' Club
- A meeting with the Redlands District Committee on the Ageing
- A meeting with the Coordinator of the Wynnum Manly Meals on Wheels Association
- A meeting with the Manager of the Donald Simpson Centre in Cleveland
- A meeting with the Queensland Council of Carers Community Development Worker for Brisbane South region and a telephone link-up with her equivalent in the Northern region
- Consultation with the Bayside Low-vision Group on Cleveland
- A telephone interview with the President of the Coochiemudlo Island Progress Association
- Face-to-face and telephone contact with the Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing, and

A truly positive response has been received from the Northern Region with service providers and the Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing expressing their interest in participating in the project.

As with any Project, collaboration is paramount if it is to succeed.

Peer Education Program

Mary Snell Chairperson of COTAQ's Education and Information Committee and Diana East, Safe and Confident Living Project Worker have recently carried out a review of COTAQ's Peer Education Program. This has been timely as the S&CL project outcomes have also been renegotiated with the Department of Families and are now to focus on community education activities.

The review's aims were to:

- **Improve targeting and delivery of COTAQ's education program:** This will assist organisations and groups to better address many issues for older people
- **Better inform older persons:** Seniors will have a better understanding and greater awareness of particular issues, knowledge of sources of support and/ or means of coping with such issues. This may also prevent detrimental situations developing.

Projects & Programs 2002-2003

- **Develop a quality assurance approach:** A quality and responsive approach to identified learning needs will be achieved by means of a more structured program, involving the development of learning ‘packages’ (with common content) that are transferable to a number of settings and differing audiences and reassessing the range of skills required by peer educators.
- **Develop and deliver (re)training and establish a network of volunteer peer educators:** Ongoing support to peer educators will assist the sustainability of an ongoing Talks Program which is responsive to the expressed needs of older persons.

A series of learning ‘packages’ or modules have now been developed including a core module named ‘Staying Nifty Beyond Fifty’ that has a very similar aim to that of our former ‘Positive Ageing’ presentation. The content of this module includes looking at significant life changes (relating to physical health, work, family, finances, home) that are unavoidable and lead to changes in lifestyle; the connections between physical, emotional and spiritual health; coping with stress; the importance of maintaining social networks and close friendships; asking for help when it is needed and where to go to get help; busting the myths about ageing and thinking about your own death: making sure your family know your wishes and where to locate required documents.

The other core module ‘Getting Your Life into Balance’ (Retirement Lifestyle Planning) will address significant life changes (work, health, finances, family, etc.); health and well-being (connections between physical, emotional and spiritual health); loss and grief; positive stress management; looking after yourself; planning your lifestyle; realistic goals; identifying changes you can make and being positive: having the courage to be yourself.

It is considered that all the modules will be able to be adapted (with any necessary modifications) for use in any area/ community location so long as an adequate infrastructure is in place to coordinate and monitor delivery and support/ supervise the peer educators. To this end initially a network consisting of two teams of peer educators is being formed—one team for South East Queensland and one for North Queensland, with a volunteer coordinator for each team and training commencing in October 2003. All peer educators will receive training to present the two core modules. Presentation of the other modules will be dependent upon the familiarity of the individual peer educator with the subject matter and their confidence to speak on the particular topic.

These exciting development augur well for a very effective delivery of peer education to older people in the coming year.

Mark Tucker-Evans
Executive Director