

COTA Queensland Board

Lyn Kelman AM (President and Chair of Board)
Neale Condon (Deputy Chair)
Tom Cerrato (Treasurer)
Kathy Dodd
Professor Jeff Giddings
Ian Reed
Mark Tucker-Evans (Chief Executive and Public Officer)

Governance and Audit Committee

Professor Jeff Giddings (Chair)
Neale Condon
Mark Tucker-Evans

Finance and Risk Committee

Tom Cerrato (Chair)
Kathy Dodd
Lyn Kelman AM
Mark Tucker-Evans (Chief Executive)
Jill Shipley (Finance Officer)

Queensland Policy Council

Lyn Kelman (Chair)
Jenny Davidson
Jo-Anne Everingham
Di McEwan (Leave of Absence)
Bess Newman
Ian Reed (Leave of Absence)
Captain Garold W. Simmers
Dr Rick Swindell AM
Russel Withers
Mark Tucker-Evans (Chief Executive)
Damien Te Whiu (Policy Officer)

Staff and office volunteers

Mark Tucker-Evans (Chief Executive)
Lyn Auger (Medicines Peer Education Coordinator)
Sue Bowles (Administration Volunteer)
Suzy Clarke (Information and Education Officer)
Diana East (Medicines Peer Education Coordinator - resigned August 2008)
Laraine Hinds (Safe and Confident Living Coordinator)
Cameron Ljubic (Policy Volunteer)
Tamara Nikolaou (Marketing & Communications Officer)
Margaret Robertson (Community Education Coordinator – commenced November 2008)
Pat Ryan (Policy Research Officer – resigned April 2009)
Jodie Sanders (Administration Trainee)
Jill Shipley (Finance Officer)
Leonie Swainston (*beyond maturity* blues coordinator)
Damien Te Whiu (Policy Officer)
Marianne Wright (Administration Officer – Community Education)

Auditor

Patrick Hoiberg, Charter Accountant

president's report



Left to right Tom Cerrato (Treasurer); Lyn Kelman AM (President and Chair, Queensland Policy Council), Neale Condon (Board Deputy Chair), Ian Reed, Kathy Dodd and Professor Jeff Giddings.

I am pleased to report that COTA Queensland performed strongly in a tough economic climate. We have been able to build on our position of a leader in the provision of policy solutions to meet the needs of Queensland's ageing population; a provider of community education sessions targeted at the over 50s and linking seniors to relevant information.

Your Board (above) met monthly to oversee and guide the work of COTA Queensland to ensure our resources were focused on meeting the needs of our constituents. In addition the Finance and Risk Committee met monthly to review the income and expenditure and monitor risk; the Governance Committee met regarding the Articles of Association to ensure that they remain contemporary and relevant to COTA Queensland's needs; and the Queensland Policy Council met monthly to identify issues for COTA policy focus (local, state and national) and determine COTA policies based on members' input, research and consultation.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge our funders, Home and Community Care, a joint Commonwealth and State/ Territory program which has enabled us to consult with current and potential users of HACC services throughout the state; *beyond blue*, the national depression initiative, the National Prescribing Services Limited, and the Queensland Government who provided project funding for the Suicide Prevention Initiative for Older Men in Rural and Remote Areas and Eat Well Be Active community education programs and the Safe & Confident Living project. Income from COTA Insurance and Membership Services has enabled COTA Queensland to expand our staff and services to members.

In January this year the Board, CEO and senior staff met with a small group of community, business and government leaders to conduct a mid-term review of COTA Queensland's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. The impact of potential changes within the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legislative arenas were considered. This review confirmed that our major focus would continue to be to:

- Take action on seniors issues;
- Assist seniors to enhance their wellbeing;
- Link seniors to relevant information; and
- Promote safe and confident living.

Recognising that the way seniors are depicted in the media helps or hinders the attitude the rest of the community has towards older people COTA Queensland conducted the 'Our Valued Seniors' photographic competition to encourage seniors and others to capture positive images of seniors in the

community. We received over eighty entries from around the state. I thank all those who entered and my fellow judges, Annette Densham, Bernie Mayers and John Kelman. Photos from the competition are being featured in *linkages* COTA Queensland's new quarterly communiqué with members.

Throughout the year our staff and volunteers have interacted with over ten thousand seniors and representatives of seniors' organisations in Queensland through our *Seniors Voice* Forums, HACC consultations or provision of community education sessions. This has enabled COTA Queensland to enhance our understanding and knowledge of the diverse 'whole of over-50's life' needs and wants, with particular reference to the vulnerable and disadvantaged throughout the state.

In September 2008 our Chief Executive, Mark Tucker-Evans was appointed as the Chairperson of Health Consumers Queensland, Ministerial Advisory Committee to the Queensland Health Minister. This has enabled the health needs of senior Queenslanders to be kept at the fore of not only the State Government's thinking but also in the health reform processes currently underway nationally. As HCQ Chair Mark is an Executive member of the Queensland Clinical Senate which is currently examining ways to improve the continuum of care.

Mark was also appointed Vice President of Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOS) which provides a voice for and with Queenslanders affected by poverty and inequality and leads on issues of significance to the social, health and community sectors state-wide.

We were disappointed when there wasn't a designated Minister for Seniors announced in the new Bligh Government but have been delighted by the Government's commitment to develop a new *Queensland Seniors Strategy*. We have been campaigning for this for a number of years and the fact that every Minister will be held accountable by the Premier (and Queenslanders) for meeting the needs of Queensland's ageing population is good news.

In June QCOS hosted a State Budget breakfast with COTA Queensland and other peak organisations which was addressed by the Treasurer Andrew Fraser, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, Karen Struthers, Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, Annastacia Palaszczuk and Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport Phil Reeves. COTA will continue to advocate for seniors during these challenging financial times.

During the past year COTA's leadership around Australia has met regularly to develop a united approach on policy matters and to effectively represent, engage with and provide services to seniors. The Chief Executives/ Executive Directors of the State/ Territory COTAs now meet monthly by teleconference to coordinate budgets, strategies and actions across all COTAs. COTA took a leadership role in the *Fair Go for Pensioners* campaign around Australia and has made many submissions to the Australian Government.

I take this opportunity to formally thank my fellow Board and QPC members and our Chief Executive and staff who have worked tirelessly on your behalf.

Lyn Kelman AM
President and QPC Chair



operations report 2008-2009

COTA Queensland delivers value-for-money membership



membership

COTA Queensland's membership continues to grow as the community becomes more concerned about ageing issues. Membership is offered to all people who value COTA Queensland's extensive work in promoting and protecting the wellbeing of seniors in our community.

In addition to our extensive project, policy and advocacy, community education and information and referral service COTA provides a wide range of benefits available exclusively to members. COTA members receive a membership card which entitles them to extensive savings throughout Australia and New Zealand through the Ambassador Card Members' Savings program.

COTA Insurance offers members guaranteed renewal, regardless of age or claims history. Our range of insurance products includes:

- Home Insurance
- Contents Insurance
- Travel Insurance
- Motor Vehicle Insurance
- Landlords Insurance
- Caravan and Trailer Insurance

COTA Queensland continues to provide support to the many seniors' organisations throughout Queensland. An annual Seniors Club Directory is produced to assist clubs to arrange exchange visits with other clubs. This is distributed to all member clubs. Clubs can also access Public Liability Insurance under COTA's group insurance scheme.

Individual and Organisational members receive *'linkages'* COTA Queensland's quarterly communiqué which provides updates on COTA's activities, news, articles and more. Members can also sign up to receive our regular *e*-newsletter 'seniors voice' which is sent to our key stakeholders.



COTA Queensland takes action on seniors' issues

policy and advocacy

Three major issues are confronting Queensland as a society:

1. the Global Economic Crisis;
2. the Sustainability of our Environment; and
3. the Ageing of our Population.

All three impact on COTA Queensland's constituency. We are committed to representing the needs of Queensland seniors and in particular advocating on behalf of disadvantaged and vulnerable Queensland seniors.

Our main policy work over the past twelve months has focussed on:

- Health;
- Aged Care;
- Community Care;
- Housing, Urban Design and Homelessness (theme for Seniors Week 2009 symposium);
- Mature Aged Employment;
- Retirement Incomes including appropriate concessions;
- Energy and utilities;
- Transport;
- Safe and Confident Living
- Seniors Diversity; and
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (national conference November 09).

COTA Queensland's Policy Council (QPC) has met monthly alternating between face-to-face meetings and teleconferences. Monthly teleconferences are also conducted to identify policy issues from associates in regional locations including Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mt Isa, Gatton, Logan, Redlands, Mackay and Townsville. This network, which includes Committees on the Ageing, will be expanded to incorporate Policy Advisors from Regional, Rural and Remote Queensland.

Member and stakeholder forums were held around the state to allow seniors and representatives of seniors' organisations to have their say about issues impacting on their quality of life. These *Seniors Voice* forums enable COTA to hear first-hand the different needs of seniors across the state. What we hear informs our submissions to government.

Submissions are made in response to Government Enquiries and an annual submission advocating the needs of seniors is made to the State Government prior to the finalisation of the State Budget.

COTA Queensland is represented on a broad range of Government and non-Government Advisory Committees and Work Groups, e.g. COTA is a founding member of the Queensland Community Services Futures Forum, a coalition of over 45 statewide human services, peak organisations, service providers and networks which identify issues of concern for the sector and explores collaborative action to address identified issues. The Futures Forum has developed a Compact with the State Government to guide the relationship between the Non-Profit Community Services Sector and the Queensland Government. Another example is that COTA works with BoysTown, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Centre for Social Justice UnitingCare, Culture Regeneration Research Society, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, Mission Australia, MultiLink Community Services Inc., QCOSS, Red Cross and Welfare Rights Centre to coordinate Anti-Poverty Week activities across Queensland.

Left to right: Val French (OPSO), Sally Jones (OWN), Helen Sava (AIR), Mark Tucker-Evans (COTA), Premier Anna Bligh, Vera Somerwil (NSA), Damien Te Whiu (COTA), Ray Fergerson (APSL), Minister for Community Services, Housing and Women Karen Struthers, and Serg Voloschenko (ECCQ)



Senior Sector Roundtable

The Queensland Seniors Sector Roundtable (SSR) brings together 8 key statewide seniors organisations to advocate on shared policy issues and through an annual joint state pre budget submission. Members include Association of Independent Retirees, Queensland Division, Australian Pensioners & Superannuants League, Queensland, COTA Queensland, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, National Seniors Australia, Older People Speak Out, Older Women's Network Queensland and Queensland Retired Teachers Association. The SSR meets monthly in COTA's Boardroom.

Prior to this year's State Election the SSR developed a 10-point Plan for the new Government. One of the points was the need for a *Queensland Seniors Strategy*. We are now working with the State Government to ensure the strategy and accompanying Action Plan is focussed on meeting the needs of seniors throughout the state.

COTA Queensland contributes to Australia-wide seniors issues through the COTA National Policy Council.



COTA Queensland assists seniors to enhance their wellbeing

community education

The past year has been marked by considerable growth and change in our Community Education area.

Additional funding was received from HACC to enable the appointment of a full-time Community Education Coordinator and expansion of our team of volunteer peer educators (PEs) to further assist seniors to enhance their wellbeing.

PE Coordinator Diana East resigned in August 2008 and a new team structure was created to include *beyond maturityblues* Coordinator Leonie Swainston, *Medicines* programs Coordinator, Lyn Auger who commenced in October 2008 and a Community Education Coordinator, Margaret Robertson who commenced in November 2008.

In December 2008, 12-months funding was provided from the Department of Communities to develop and deliver a *Suicide Prevention Initiative for Older Men in Rural and Remote Areas* in Central Queensland. Shirley Halloran commenced as Coordinator in February 2009. The PE training package was researched and developed by Shirley and Margaret with the voluntary assistance of Dr John Bowles, in time to run the first PE training in Emerald in April. The community hand-out resources have been endorsed by Professor Diego De Leo, head of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research & Prevention.

In May 2009 Marianne Wright was employed as part-time administration officer to support the work of the Community Education team.

In June 2009 the Department of Communities provided 9-months funding to develop a peer education program on *Eat Well Be Active*, to be delivered in Townsville, Toowoomba and Wide Bay. Leonie Swainston took on the role of coordinating *Eat Well Be Active*, in addition to her part-time role coordinating the *beyond maturityblues* program.

During the year four volunteers were recruited to assist with specific tasks (database development, session marketing, recording session booking data) that have substantially improved the efficiency of our systems.

Volunteer peer educators (PEs) provided 364 sessions on *beyond maturityblues* and the three¹ *Medicines* topics in the Townsville, Wide Bay regions and South-East Queensland, with some PEs travelling extensive distances to provide sessions in places where we currently don't have volunteers. *beyond maturityblues* is funded by *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, and the *Medicines* topics are funded by the National Prescribing Service. Both are national programs managed by COTA Seniors Voice and coordinated by each State or Territory COTA.

In addition, 21 sessions were held on *Falls Prevention* through the Stay on Your Feet project in Townsville, funded by Population Health, Queensland Health, July- Dec 2008.

***COTA Queensland's Peer Education Program
awarded the 2008 Adult Learners Week Award***



There were 55 active PEs in 2008-09. Seventeen new PEs were recruited and trained during the year, expanding our teams in Wide Bay, the Sunshine Coast and Greater Brisbane. Eight PEs left, and another 11 are on hold, including 4 who are trained only in *Falls Prevention*, for which the funding has temporarily ceased.

In September 2008 COTA Queensland's Seniors Peer Education Program was awarded the Adult Learners Week Outstanding Community Learning Program for Adults Award.

Other key achievements of the year included the development of a Volunteers Policy and Volunteer Handbook for COTA Queensland, and preparation for the highly successful PE Forum in July 2009.

I take this opportunity to recognize and acknowledge all of our peer educators who devote many hours voluntarily to interact with other seniors about healthy ageing and to empower them with practical and simple strategies to age well. I also thank the Community Education team Margaret Robertson, Lyn Auger, Shirley Halloran and Leonie Swainston (and honorary member Marianne Wright). I especially thank our funders, *beyondblue*, Department of Communities, HACC, National Prescribing Service and Population Health, Queensland Health.

¹ A third medicines topic (More than Medicines Living Well) was introduced in 2009, supplementing Quality Use of Medicines and generic medicines, and is currently available in greater Brisbane.



COTA Queensland links seniors to relevant information

seniorsinfolinks

COTA Queensland is committed to improving the wellbeing of seniors in Queensland by linking them to culturally appropriate information to enable them to make well-informed decisions about their independence, wellbeing and lifestyle choices.

We are currently developing an integrated information management system to underpin our information and referral service.



COTA Queensland is funded to:

Provide information and education to HACC eligible consumers, potential consumers and their carers

COTA Queensland's **seniors**infolinks directly links seniors and their carers to culturally appropriate information to enable them to maximise their independence and wellbeing. It provides information about services and facilities including HACC, residential aged care, seniors clubs, etc. **seniors**infolinks is accessible statewide for cost of local call through **1300 738 348**. A new database is being developed to underpin this service and COTA Queensland's website.

COTA now has over 70 peer educators throughout Queensland distributing information about HACC services. We are also working with the HACC Resource Unit and other stakeholders to develop an *Eat Well Be Active* program to be delivered by peer educators.

Develop and maintain collaborative working arrangements with other relevant organizations

COTA together with Carers and Queensland Aged & Disability Advocacy (QADA) Inc. formed a consortium in 2005 to facilitate independent consumer consultations with HACC consumers and their carers. Funding was received from HACC in 2007 to enable consumer consultations to be held across the whole State to enhance consumer input into HACC planning and service development. In 2008-2009 consultations were held on the South Coast (Broadbeach, Robina), Central Queensland (Bundaberg, Maryborough and Hervey Bay), Brisbane North (Kedron, Sandgate), Brisbane South (Wynnum, Redlands and Sunnybank Hills), Cape York Peninsula (Mapoon, Arukun, Napranum, Pormpurrav, Kowanyama, Cairns and Mareeba), Northern (Charters Towers, Richmond and Bowen), South West (Cunnamulla, Charleville), Darling Downs (Stanthorpe, Warwick) and West Moreton (Laidley, Richlands). Specific consultations were undertaken with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community.

COTA Queensland works with the other HACC-funded Statewide Information and Education services to develop collaborative arrangements between members for information exchange, coordinated outreach activities and to influence HACC planning and policy. COTA and other HACC statewide agencies participated in a HACC forum in Toowoomba and then staged an HACC Expo at the Grand Central Shopping Centre in Toowoomba.

COTA Queensland volunteers provide information at HACC Expo in Toowoomba in association with other statewide and local HACC-funded services.



Undertake service planning including development and implementation of current best practice to ensure equitable statewide access to services

During the year COTA Queensland completed a self-assessment against the Standards for Community Services developed by the Department of Communities in partnership with the community services sector as part of the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy. There are eleven standards organised into three broad focus areas:

- **People using services:** Standards 1-6 focus on ensuring that people using services receive individually tailored and culturally sensitive services that are delivered with respect for their individual rights.
- **People working in services:** Standards 7-9 focus on ensuring that client services are provided by staff and volunteers who are appropriately selected, competent and supported in performing their roles.
- **Governance:** Standards 10 and 11 focus on ensuring that client services are based on a clear vision and set of organizational values, and strong governance arrangements.

Contribute to Policy Development and Planning for the HACC Program

COTA Queensland has regularly met with the HACC Branch; participated in Area HACC Managers Forums; HACC Industry Group Partnership Forum and the HACC Workforce Stakeholder Reference Group. The report on the consultation held with HACC service users across Queensland in 2008 including a detailed section on the needs of service users in the Western Cape York Peninsula region was presented to HACC and has now been distributed to service providers and the Department of Health and Ageing.



COTA Queensland promotes safe and confident living

The artwork (left) was done by David Williams an indigenous artist with gilimbaa aboriginal design agency and evokes a sense of the nurturing spirit of Indigenous elders and the important role they hold in a community.

Safe and Confident Living

The Safe and Confident Living project funded by the Department of Communities and coordinated by COTA Queensland works with others to ensure that seniors:

- Maintain social connections with the communities
- Live with a sense of confidence and security; and
- Are aware of personal safety strategies.

The project coordinator Laraine Hinds resources community elders and seniors through:

- Visiting seniors' and community groups
- Speaking about opportunities for seniors social participation and personal safety strategies
- Networking with people, community and seniors organisations, government departments and the Queensland Police Service
- Information, newsletters, resources, activities and community events.

The project operates in Inner Brisbane and a series of very successful Members and Friends morning teas have been held in COTA Queensland's offices on level 5, 199 George Street Brisbane.

In conclusion

COTA Queensland has stepped up to the many challenges faced in the 2008-2009 financial year. We have built on Queensland's 52 years of serving seniors and seniors' organizations in Queensland. We have engaged with seniors and seniors' organizations throughout Queensland to understand their needs and we continue to utilize our resources and networks to address these needs.

We remain committed to making Queensland an age-friendly community.