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MEDIA RELEASE

Seniors at 'breaking point': COTA Queensland launches Election Priorities

COTA Queensland, the seniors peak body, has invited all parties contesting the State Election to make ageing a policy priority.

"Seniors have told us they have reached breaking point regarding the cost of living," said COTA Queensland Chief Executive, Mark Tucker-Evans.

"Older people are consistently finding it difficult to make ends meet against high energy, water, and transport costs. All political candidates need to take the pledge to work for an age-friendly Queensland."

A pre-election COTA Queensland survey of 128 older residents conducted in November and December 2014 identified three recurring concerns - health, cost of living, and transport.

"The survey confirms previous research into seniors and social isolation. Older people are concerned about how they will afford and access health and home care, as well as the pressures they feel as carers, grandparents, and members of the community."

Mr Tucker-Evans has launched COTA Queensland's Election Priorities as voters prepare to go to the polls in the coming weeks.

COTA Queensland's Election Priorities has recommended the new Government should:

- increase funding to financial counselling services as well as the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Queensland to assist households living in 'fuel poverty'
- provide a pensioner rebate for users of LPG bottled gas
- provide Electricity, Gas, Water, and Transport concessions to low income Health Care Card holders
- improve energy efficiency in public housing, as well as incentives for better energy efficiency in rental premises
- establish a Seniors' Housing Centre to provide free and independent advice to Queenslanders preparing for retirement
- introduce an affordable yearly ticket for Translink passengers aged 75 years and older
- increase support for telehealth services and patient travel

- fund a public education campaign around end-of-life care
- convene a summit to increase employment of Queenslanders over 50 years of age
- develop a register of vulnerable seniors to provide assistance before, during, and after natural disasters.

The COTA Queensland Election Priorities document is available online at: www.cotaqld.org.au

For more information, please contact Mr Mark Tucker-Evans, COTA Queensland Chief Executive, at mte@cotaqld.org.au or mobile 0411 389 946.

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