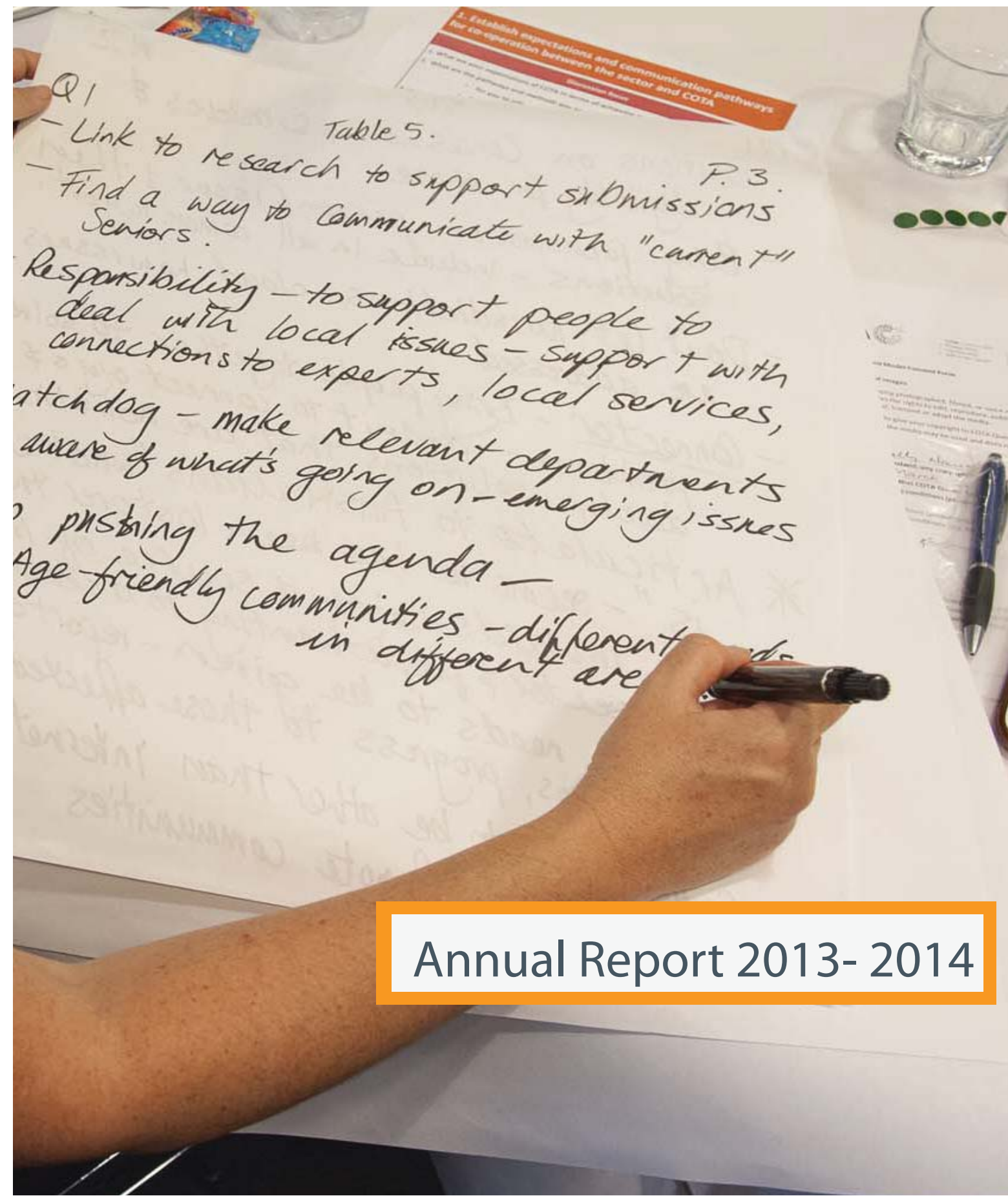


COTA



Annual Report 2013- 2014

OUR VISION

COTA Queensland advances the rights, needs and interest of older people in Queensland.

Our vision is to help shape a more just, equitable, and humane community in which Seniors, through interaction with other generations, grow to their fullest capacity, contribute to their community and have access, with dignity, to appropriate care and support.

OUR MISSION

COTA Queensland's mission is to protect and promote the wellbeing of Seniors in Queensland. To this end, we aim to mobilise Seniors, those who work with them, Government and the community as a whole towards achieving wellbeing and social justice for Seniors.

OUR VALUES

The Board, Management and staff at COTA value:

- Diversity and Human Rights
- Respect for the individual
- Learning and innovation
- Collaboration
- Being proactive and responsive.

COTA Queensland supports the values outlined in the Queensland Community Services Sector Charter.



HIGHLIGHTS

213 Seniors Week Partner organisations

320 events registered during Seniors Week

228 items in the media for a circulation total of 4.6 million

25 is the number of networks and groups COTA Queensland has representation on

17 is the number of forums we participated in, with two held specifically for the Seniors Peak Service, with a total of 240 participants

3 partnerships for research studies

4 surveys were undertaken last year

5 submissions and policy papers were produced

25 emerging issues identified

58% increase in participation for a total of 449 Consumer Reference Network Members

10 HCQ workshops were delivered to health consumers and health professionals throughout the state

37 Volunteer Peer Educators delivered 72 community education sessions

62 organisations received peer education sessions on two topics in 17 local government areas

1000 was the number of attendees at the community education sessions

7 Bridge Works volunteers were placed with us resulting in five progressing into paid work

1494 is the amount of hours our volunteers contributed to our office

CHAIR'S REPORT: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

COTA Queensland has had another busy year “advancing the rights, needs, and interests of people in Queensland as they age”. These simple words from our vision statement translate into a wide variety of activities, projects and programs across many groups with differing needs and interests in our community.

Our small but dedicated team of employees and volunteers continue to work tirelessly with these groups and other stakeholders, including governments at all levels, as well as private and social enterprises to deliver outcomes in a challenging environment.

Many challenges faced by COTA Queensland reflect the issues confronting not only Queensland but also Australia and the wider world. As populations grow, and particularly as the older populations increases, the need for new approaches, resources and facilities grows. Growth and development have brought new opportunities, but not everyone has benefited. Governments at all levels, as well as social advocates, are calling for meaningful conversations on the affordability and sustainability of benefits and services where diverse interests compete for a limited pool of funds.

The core of COTA Queensland's work has always been ensuring the voices of older people are heard when changes are considered and solutions discussed. We particularly focus on representing those people who are forgotten or overlooked so that our society can be truly inclusive. We take a long term pragmatic approach to these discussions, affirming that real change requires commitment over time and an appreciation of the valid aspirations and constraints of the various stakeholders.

In practice this means consultation and advocacy based on well-researched positions. Much of this happens in the background, and draws on extensive engagement with members, older people, researchers and like-minded organisations. COTA Queensland participates in a wide range of committees and forums



through the participation of staff, volunteers and Board members. We also make submissions to influence the priorities of State Government budgets, as well as on a range of policy areas such as energy, transport, health, home care, concessions and housing.

However there are times when we need to raise our voices on issues that are too urgent or too important to be dealt with quietly. We took up with the State Government the issue of concessions for Pensioner Concession Card holders, previously funded under the National Partnership Agreement, to help ensure these benefits were retained. Through our association with COTA Australia we are currently leading discussions, as part of the “Hands off the pension” campaign, on Federal Budget measures affecting the pension. We will continue to work constructively and respectfully in the public arena, where appropriate, to ensure pensioners are not disadvantaged relative to other groups in the community.

I will leave it to our CEO Mark Tucker-Evans to update you on the full review of our activities for the year, but I will touch on a couple of notable achievements. Our coordination of Seniors Week built even further on the success of last year. In 2013 we worked with 213 partners to plan and organise over 320 events throughout Queensland to celebrate the achievements and ongoing contribution of older people.

The Queensland Government also appointed COTA Queensland to the important role of Seniors Peak Service with funding for the next three years. This will help build the capacity of non-government organisations to deliver quality services for older people, improve the dissemination of information on Queensland Government initiatives for older people, and provide input into the development and implementation of policies. These initiatives provide COTA Queensland with a well-deserved public profile and extend our opportunity to work for older Queenslanders. But it is important to remember that this work is built on the many hours of hard professional work undertaken by our team, often behind the scenes, and a long history as a credible advocacy organisation in the community.

Your Board continues to work hard to ensure COTA Queensland is well managed in the interest of members and the wider community we serve. We continue to monitor and review strategy and believe the organisation is well positioned to deliver on agreed outcomes. The Board retains clear focus on ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the organisation as a social enterprise. Conversion to a Company Limited by Guarantee was completed during this year as part of our governance program. Board members took the opportunity during the year to participate in a training program delivered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors and targeted specifically for COTA Queensland's needs.

Our thanks as always must go to our members, supporters, funders of programs and activities, and sector colleagues for making our work possible. Our volunteers and staff, ably lead by Mark Tucker-Evans, continue to do us and themselves proud. I want to also thank the Board members who volunteer their time and generously provide their expertise and experience. All of these contributions are essential to current and future success.

There is of course plenty of hard work still to be done. We will continue to speak out on issues, such as proposed changes to the pension, on behalf of older people. In addition, we have been appointed to host the IFA Global Conference on Ageing in 2016 and preparations will be well underway by this time next year. We like a challenge! The focus of the conference will be *Disasters in an Ageing World: Readiness, Resilience and Recovery* which will provide an excellent opportunity to link Queensland with regional and global organisations researching and working on ageing issues.

Peter Howells
Chair

QUALITY OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE AS THEY AGE

Continuing to develop and enhance services that enrich the lives of people as they age

In December 2013 the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services approved funding under the Seniors Advocacy and Research Initiative. This appointment as the provider of the Seniors Peak Service builds on the work we have done over many years with the sector and with government at all levels.

In addition to our usual engagement practices (e.g. our Consumer Reference Network) we held two Seniors Stakeholder Forums - one in Brisbane (March) and the other in Townsville (June) to identify priorities for seniors and the organisations which work with them. We have met with the Office for Seniors to discuss the outcomes from the Forums and will continue to work with the State Government to address key issues.

We played an active role in the development of *The Queensland Plan - Queenslanders' 30-year vision*. Throughout the process we advocated that with an ageing population it was vital that there was a commitment to create an Age-friendly Queensland.



The aged care system touches the lives of millions of Australians and COTA has continued to play a critical role in the development of Aged Care Reforms. We work with consumers and service providers and continue to represent the needs and views of older people and consumers through the:

- Aged Care Gateway Advisory Group
- Home Care and Consumer Directed Care Advisory Group
- Home Support Program Advisory Group
- Quality Indicators Advisory Group
- Specific Care and Service Reference Group.

services

Aged Care Reform has changed the way that home care is delivered in Australia giving older people more choice and control over the services they receive and how they are delivered. We are currently providing community education sessions entitled *Controlling My Own Life: Making the most of Consumer Directed Care* to enable people to make informed choices.

We provide the secretariat for the Home and Community Care Statewide Information Education and Training Roundtable. We work with other funded organisations to collaboratively develop, promote and provide consumer focused service delivery through policy, information, education and training to consumers, service providers, funders and policy makers. Resources were distributed to more than 38,000 people.

After many years the *beyond maturityblues* community education program came to an end. We take this opportunity to thank *beyondblue* which funded the program, the coordinators, and the many volunteer Peer Educators who helped deliver these sessions.

MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In addition we have connected with members and Stakeholders through specialised forums, as well as through existing committees, reference groups, and networks which we support and participate in, and increasingly through social media.

Older people continue to express their concerns about cost of living, employment, access to transport and medical services, end of life care, elder abuse, and housing security, as well as the implications of wider reforms such as aged care, community care, disability support, retirement incomes, and health and hospital services.

The key issues identified from forums in Brisbane and Townsville were:

- Aged Care: Imbalances in demand versus availability of services (which appear to be worse in regional and rural communities); confusion over the availability of assistance and entitlements.
- Health: a lack of awareness of issues, availability of assistance and entitlements.
- Housing: 'Ageing in place' and the disconnect between housing developers and the end-users.
- Mature Aged Employment: the challenge of using policy to align employee and employer interests.
- Transport: affordability, large distances and travel time involved, availability, reliability and cost (concern was also expressed in regard to the lack of coordination between many transport services).
- Cost of Living: the sensitivity of seniors' income streams to external pressure and the lack of impartial financial advice (strong concern over potential cuts in pensioners concessions, insurance cost hikes that are unsustainable, increases in transport, energy and retail costs).
- Community Safety: concern about the breakdown in traditional structures and values within communities coupled with the perception of increased crime and violence towards seniors.

Our Consumer Reference Network continues to grow with over 450 people signing up to regularly have their say on issues through surveys, forums and other channels.

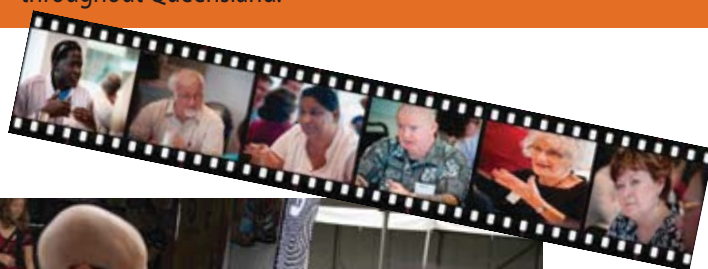


Seniors Week, August 17-25 2013

A life well lived and much more to come ... timeless

In 2013 we were appointed to coordinate Seniors Week on behalf of the Queensland Government. Seniors Week provides the opportunity to unite all Queenslanders across the state to celebrate the role seniors perform in their communities - such as engaging in paid or volunteering work, transmitting experience and knowledge, and helping their families with caring responsibilities. These contributions can only be sustained if seniors enjoy good health and if societies address their needs.

We created partnerships with 213 organisations including existing networks, service providers and local councils to ensure active participation of older people in the 320 Seniors Week events held throughout Queensland.



RESEARCH, POLICY, AND ADVOCACY

Continuing to advocate for the rights, needs and interests of people as they age in Queensland

Research

Social isolation has been identified as one of the most serious mental and physical risks facing the nation. We have continued to work with the University of Adelaide, QUT, Curtin University, Anglicare SA, Benetas, ECH, Illawarra Retirement Trust and Silver Chain on an Australia-first study to reduce social isolation among older people.

Policy Areas

Energy

Over the past twelve months energy has been a major focus for us and we are indebted to our Energy Policy Advisor Robyn Robinson for the significant work she has undertaken in this area. Robyn also represents COTA on the National Energy Consumers Roundtable.

Submissions have been made regarding the 30-year Electricity Strategy for Queensland, the Australian Energy Markets Commission review of competition, the Australian Energy Regulator's 'Framework and approach for Energex and Ergon Energy', and the Department of Energy and Water Supply's discussion paper 'Customer Engagement Strategy in the Retail Market'.

We are a member of the Queensland Competition Authority Consumer Advisory Committee, the Department of Energy and Water Supply's Consumer and Industry Reference Group, the Ergon Energy Customer Council, and the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland Advisory Council.



Health

We continue to auspice Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) which aims to be a strong and credible consumer voice as part of the planning, design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of health services across all levels.

We are represented on the Statewide Older Person's Clinical Health Network, the Queensland Clinical Senate, and the Queensland Injury Prevention Network. Together with HCQ we organised a community conversation around *When Medical Treatment is Futile* and have been actively engaged in responding to End of Life issues.

Housing

A submission *Achieving Sustainable Housing* was developed and we recommended an independent advisory service be established to assist seniors make informed decisions about their housing, equity finance, care and support options. We also co-sponsored the forum *Delivering our Housing Future: Equity and inclusion through housing design*.

Transport

We are a member of the Queensland Government Public Transport Advisory Group, the Queensland Rail and Transport and Main Roads Accessibility Reference Groups, and we participated in feedback sessions on the Translink Disability Action Plan *Improving Access to 2017*.

SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

Providing COTA Queensland's Board, management and staff with access to governance and operational systems that deliver timely and accurate data, information and knowledge to enable COTA Queensland to be sustainable and financially independent.

In July 2013, we appointed a Business Development Manager, David Edwards, to assist us to diversify our income base. This is in recognition of the tighter government and philanthropic funding environment. Nevertheless we were pleased to be appointed by the State Government as the Seniors Peak Service and to receive funds from the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation to deliver a Suicide Awareness program on the Sunshine Coast in 2014 - 15.

We were also deeply grateful to the estate of Vera Raymer OAM for a bequest. As noted in last year's Annual Report, Vera was heavily involved on committees leading to the formation of the Older People's Welfare Council Queensland (now COTA Queensland) and on the executive committee for the Council between 1957 and 1960.

Of course the work of COTA Queensland would not be possible without the support of our members, funders, partners, Board, volunteers and dedicated staff. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone for their contribution over the past year. We live in interesting times and look forward to taking on the challenges ahead.

Mark Tucker-Evans
Chief Executive



Vera Raymer OAM
19 April 1919 - 27 April 2013

Funded by



home and community care

Funded by the Australian Government
Department of Social Services

AGE-FRIENDLY QUEENSLAND

COTA Queensland is a proud supporter of the World Health Organisation's *Age-friendly Cities and Communities* initiative.

Our vision is that all parts of Queensland are developed to enable older people to continue to play an active role in their community.

To facilitate this, we will continue to work with government on the eight elements of *Age-friendly Cities and Communities*:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services.

With funding from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services we are working with the Brisbane City Council and the Inner Brisbane Suburbs Safe & Confident Living program to incorporate the Age-friendly elements into the lives of the 11,000 older people residing in Inner Brisbane.



OUR BOARD

COTA Queensland is overseen by an active Board whose members represent different areas within the Non-Profit and Corporate sectors.

Peter Howells – Chair	Neale Condon, Deputy Chair
Maree McMahon, Chair Finance & Risk Committee	Margaret Sugden, Chair Policy Committee
Warren Males, Director	Stephen Ring, Director
Robyn Robinson, Director	Linda Rosenman, Director
Mark Tucker-Evans, Chief Executive / Secretary	

OUR STAFF

Sarah Baker – Program Coordinator	David Edwards – Business Development Manager
Melissa Fox – Policy Officer	Lisa Hodgkinson – Seniors Week Coordinator
Anna McCormack – Policy Officer (Resigned 19 August 2013)	Margaret Micale – Executive Support Officer
Kim Price – Community Engagement Officer	Debra Short – Finance & Administration Manager
John Stalker – Program Coordinator	Leonie Swainston – Seniors Peer Education Coordinator
Marianne Wright – Volunteers Coordinator	Mark Young – Policy Officer

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Peer Educators

Maria-Luisa Andrade	Glenda Bannan
Robin Bennett	Robyn Bishop
Glenda Blackwell	John Bonney
Catherine Chan	Clara Chui
Fred Cormack	Rosetta de Tina
Fay Doherty	Julie Donnan
Dale English	Steve English-Elis
Olivia Febo	Peter Galbraith
Frank Gower	Pamela Gower
Liz Grant	Marjorie Green
Margaret Greig	Valerie Hanrahan
Philippa Harris	Carol Hawkshaw
Nina Higgins	Olga Iocco
Graham Jackson	Anne Jennings
Marjorie Johnson	Sally Jones
Monique Kurki	Gabriella La Valle
Ruth Leach	Rosemary Levack
May Lin Lo	Heather Martens
Robyn Moore	Mereleen Morris
Jenny Newman	Bess Newman
Nancy Nielson	Merril O'Rourke
Trisha Osborn	David Price
Lorna Rasmussen	Coral Rizzalli
Helen Schafer	Angela Simic
Bryan Spiller	Alison Taylor
Leonie Timmerman	Anh Tuyet Nguyen
Beth Wallace	Kay Webber
Gloria Weller	Jean Williams
Leonie Williams	Jean Wortley

Policy Committee

Don Bain	Kathy Beacham
Ann-Maree Byrne	Ian Reed
Robyn Robinson	Dr Arthur Sinnatambay
Margaret Sugden	



Office & Administration Volunteers

Caroline Aldridge	Lee Booyen
Sonya Batchelor	Sue Bowles
Barbara Clay	Michele Davies
Kate Jackson	Timothy King
Elle McMahon	Rebecca Millson
Mariyana Stojceska	Lorraine Stone
Susan Wright	

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