



Annual Report

July 2022 to
June 2023



Statement of Acknowledgement

Council on the Ageing Queensland knows the important role older people play in the lives of their families, their local community and in our broader society.

They are carers, our local volunteers, our source of advice, holders of knowledge and skills, and keepers of culture and tradition.

We celebrate the great diversity of culture, language, and histories of all older people in Queensland however we also recognise the special connection to this land of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Council on the Ageing Queensland acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples as the original custodians of this land.

We recognise their cultures, histories and ongoing relationship and obligations to the land, sky, and waterways.

We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

First Nations people have a deep sense of belonging,
both ancient and contemporary,
because they are part of the world's oldest surviving, living culture.

We specifically acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders play in preserving traditional culture, sacred wisdom and lore.

Elders are those who have gained recognition within their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community rather than having reached a specific age.

They are highly respected for their stories,
art, song, language, guidance, and counselling.

Strengthening the role of elders helps to empower communities not only to address social, health and economic issues but to transfer knowledge, culture, and language to future generations.

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About COTA Queensland

Council on the Ageing Queensland

COTA Queensland, a member of the national COTA Federation, is a for-purpose registered charity committed to advancing the rights, needs, interests, and futures of people as we age.

As a statewide consumer peak for older people in Queensland, our vision is that ageing is a time of possibility, opportunity, and influence.

However, we also recognise the impact of inequalities, and discrimination means that we fall short of this vision for most vulnerable older Queenslanders. There is significant under-representation of older adults in policy discussion and decision making in our communities. This is due to the pervasive use of negative stereotypes, lack of inclusive spaces and processes, assumptions of homogeneity in ageing and lack of opportunities for voices of older people. This only serves to perpetuate ageism and leads to poor policy and service outcomes.

To counter this, we connect and work directly with older Queenslanders, their families, carers, and organisations, service providers, consumer advocates, special interest groups, and our federal, state, and local governments. We engage with all of these groups to understand needs, issues, aspirations, and priorities for older people in Queensland, and work together to achieve the best outcomes for people as we age.

We draw upon these diverse relationships to advocate on key public issues affecting older people. Our work includes policy analysis, community education, representation, evaluation and research, community engagement, and cross sector collaborations to achieve systemic change.

We believe that older people need to be seen, be heard and take action together to combat ageism in our communities. As we amplify the many voices of older people, we will create age-friendly communities now and into the future, which will benefit all Queenslanders.

With the numbers of older people in Queensland set to double by 2050, the voices of older adults have never been more critical.





Chair's Report



For COTA Queensland the 2022/2023 year has been one of challenges and successes. The challenge for the organisation has always been juggling the needs of older Queenslanders with the financial constraints that underpin the operation of the organisation. The successes have been in the growth of our funding and the successful completion of a range of projects.

The board of directors have remained unchanged over this year which has been a strong contributory factor to the strategic direction and manner in which we have handled the challenges. The organisation is extremely fortunate to have a board comprising people with different skills, extensive experience and strong governance knowledge. I would like to thank them both for their hard work and commitment and for the collegiate manner in which they have approached their work.

The board also recognises that our achievements this year are as a result of our new CEO Darren Young bringing a

fresh, professional and dynamic approach to our work and our staff achieving over and above what they are required to do because of their dedication and hard work - we are very grateful.

We have been working this year to grow the organisation as a means of mitigating the volatility of funding sources. It has become self-evident that the uncertain nature of our funding often results in having insufficient staff to cover the breath of issues we need to address, and we have been successful in obtaining small grants throughout the year.

We were disappointed not to win any of the Care Finders tenders across Queensland which we believed aligned directly with our work and would continue the great work we had done with the system navigator trials we had run successfully in Bundaberg and Cairns. As with all tenders of this kind, there was an enormous amount of work entailed in completing the tender and the Board acknowledges the skill and professionalism that Darren and his team showed in the quality of the tenders.

However, the organisation continues to be highly successful in the other programs we run including the Home Care Workforce Support Program with COTA Queensland as the lead agency, partnering with Skills Hub and Skills Gen. This program has already placed hundreds of people in work in the aged care sector – an industry that is struggling to find enough staff to meet demands.

We were also delighted that our contract with the State Government as Queensland's Seniors Peak body has been renewed for another two years enabling us to continue the work we have been doing for many years.

We have been working with the Queensland Government on a number of different initiatives including the Seniors Forums run throughout the State in late 2023 and in 2024 and a series of Listening Posts which were held in late 2022 throughout Queensland. Our staff had the opportunity to talk to people across the regions, hearing their stories and opinions about the issues they face. This information is informing our work and is directly contributing to the Seniors Strategy being formulated by the Queensland Government.

As the Seniors Peak, we are invited to provide input and advice at a senior level into many major areas of reform. While much of this work is time consuming it is vital to ensure the voice of older Queenslanders are heard and under Darren's leadership, Directors are now participating in some external committees and more of this representation is being done by older people themselves on our behalf which is a great development.

As a means of streamlining our governance the Board now operates three sub committees – finance; risk and audit; and governance and financing our future which looks at new opportunities. This has meant that Directors – all of whom volunteer their services – have been working with Darren and his team productively throughout the year.

We have been reviewing our internal systems and as part of this work, ensuring

that the Constitution meets the current needs of the organisation. This has resulted in a request to members to reduce membership to Directors only and replace wider membership with the establishment of advisory groups throughout the State to provide advice and support on particular topics. These changes will be addressed at the AGM in November 2023.

COTA Queensland has been in operation since 1957 as the voice of senior Queenslanders. Over this period, we have seen tremendous changes in the way we age. Many older people work, study, travel, volunteer, run businesses and care for others. They are creative, support families and mentor young people and very often are the ones that keep community organisations alive and functioning and of course we now live longer.

Despite all that there is no getting away from the fact that getting older has its challenges. Our discussions with people throughout the State through the forums and the Listening Posts highlighted the major areas of concern - housing (a big issue at the moment); ageism and discrimination (the invisibility of old age); employment opportunities, financial security (many people worked when there was no compulsory superannuation); health services; public transport; social isolation; and, of course, digital isolation. Older people come from a time when a computer was the size of a bedroom! These are the areas of advocacy and support we have at the forefront of our work.

The organisation is fortunate to have a strong financial base including owning our office building, a reputation for integrity, an unparalleled understanding for the issues of ageing well and a dedicated staff and board.

In 2020 there were over 4.2 million Australian over the age of 65 or 16% of the population. By 2066 this number is predicted to be 22% of the population.

Older Queenslanders need a strong and informed voice, a role COTA Queensland has held for over 66 years and which the Directors and staff are committed to continuing.

Jean McRuvie
Chair
Board of Directors
COTA Queensland





This year was not a typical year in the history of Council on the Ageing Queensland.

It is important to note that this year began without **Mark Tucker-Evans**, who left the position of Chief Executive Officer in June 2022 after an extraordinary 21 years of service. I was previously in the Chief Operating Officer role having commenced with COTA Queensland in April 2022 and following a national selection process for the Chief Executive position, I came into the role July 2022.

The **Home Care Workforce Support Program** is the largest project that COTA Queensland has taken on in recent years. To enable people to receive the services needed to live independently in their homes, we have led a consortium with Skills Generation and Skills Hubs to increase the numbers of Personal Care Workers in Home Care across Queensland. Commencing in April 2022, the project was set up quickly and has had a steady trajectory of increasing monthly

the numbers of new starters to employment.

To date, our performance has exceeded the other states thanks to strong regional relationships being built between RTOs, aged providers, and the new candidates. COTA

Queensland leads the evaluation component in this project and has been developing 'lived experience' strategies to improve quality of care. These strategies have included mentoring, the development of podcasts and sector resources, and bringing the sector together in key issues such as diversity.

Our **CHSP Sector Support and Development Program** supports Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) service providers in navigated CHSP reforms, in preparation for a new in-home aged care system commencing July 2025. COTA Queensland delivers Sector Support and Development (SSD) statewide with a particular focus on regional, rural, and remote communities. I am really proud of the team who had more than 1,000 interactions this year via workshops, communities of practice and individualised support. The team remains strong collaborators, this year being a key member of the CHSP National Conference organising committee.

After delivering the **Aged Care Service Navigation Trial** (ACSN) in Bundaberg and then delivery in Cairns until December 2022, we noted exceptionally positive community feedback.

A key objective from the Board was to seek to build our capability to continue ACSN's important work via the new Care Finders opportunities in Queensland. We strengthened our competitive position by partnering with the Queensland Council for LGBTI Health, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, and Micah Projects Lotus Place. Unfortunately, after an eight-month period of tendering, we were unsuccessful. We took away many positives from our experiences, adjusted our strategy and moved to identify other ways we can be impactful as an organisation.

This year, the **Queensland government provided grants on three key initiatives** which strengthened and will continue to strengthen our Seniors' Peak function:

1. Listening Post – we sought to amplify the voice of older Queenslanders through unfiltered, honest, open storytelling and the sharing of insights and ideas to find out what is working well and not working well in local communities. We created 46 'Listening Posts' in 10 regions, reaching 389 people across diverse community locations. Finalised into a report, the Listening Post strategy has proven to be an effective tool to build understanding of older people's views which can be used to influence priorities and strategies for government and other key stakeholders.

2. Ageing Well Survey – quality data on 'ageing well' is critical to build our understanding of the experiences and preferences of older people, and influence policy into the future. Together with the Australian Catholic University (ACU), a survey tool was created which can be primarily used online, accessed via a QR code, and provides the end user with the

ability to upload photos, videos, sound, and text. The survey has utilised the ESRI platform – a Geographic Information System (GIS) using the science of geographical intelligence to analyse multiple, complex datasets layered over defined territories, revealing hidden trends and patterns. Once established, we will be able to compare data over time to understand the impact and effectiveness of policy changes, understand data in local regions and in parts of the survey, and offer international comparisons.

3. Engagement Framework – this work supports the transition away from a membership model, towards utilising information from supporters and seeks to engage communities in diverse ways to inform policy and priorities. Entitled 'Engaging Older Queenslanders to Influence Social Change', this work clarifies our Theory of Change, defines our strategic approach, and defines our priorities over the coming years. Whilst acknowledging our resources for engagement are quite limited, having a framework articulated means we can consider - in the development of any future funded activities that we may do on behalf of the Queensland government – improving the quality of engagement and gaining better quality information which can be utilised in multiple policy and service delivery contexts.

During the year, we grappled with the potential for **data and privacy security risks** for our organisation. The failure to manage data appropriately, and the negative impacts of experiencing a data breach has long term implications and can even be a catastrophic event for a charitable organisation.

The Board fully supported mitigating this risk, leading to a wide range of activities to strengthen our information systems controls to a higher standard.

In February 2023, COTA Queensland hosted the **Executive Coordination Group**, a gathering of all the state and Territory COTAs, including COTA Australia. Following significant change of leadership in our organisations, this meeting was pivotal to commence building new relationships and agreed ways of working in the interests of the COTA Federation. It was evident that each of the COTAs have evolved very differently over recent years however collaboration continues on key policy and advocacy initiatives. With common objectives, there remains a strong intention to maintain communication and collaboration within the Federation.

In June 2023, the COTA Queensland Board endorsed the **new Strategic Plan for COTA Queensland** for the next three years. This plan promotes a defined a **long term 'Strategic Agenda'** for ageing well in Queensland, and specifically highlights **six key priority areas** for our organisation:

1. Engagement strategies to build our supporter base across Queensland
2. Diversity of communities to be reflected in our engagement
3. Partnerships to build expertise and influence
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's partnerships and relationships
5. Clarifying our role and value as a Seniors Peak

6. Seeking opportunities to extend our social impact.

A human services organisation relies on the strength and quality of its people. I remain in awe of the talented and committed **COTA Queensland team**, many are long standing employees, who have made a fantastic contribution to our business and finance administration including quality management, policy work, CHSP sector development, Seniors Month activities and the Home Care Workforce Support Project. I thank our **volunteers** who have participated in our programs and supported our office over many years, all with the commitment to make Queensland a better place for older people.

I thank the **Chair of the Board**, Jean McRuvie for her time and involvement with the work of COTA Queensland, and for effectively leading the organisation through a significant time of change. I also thank the Chairs of the Board Sub-Committees - Sandra Nugent, Stuart Anderson and Steve Kanowski – for their support and advice throughout the year. The COTA Queensland Board, all professional and experienced Board Directors, continue to be committed to strong governance processes, ensuring compliance and have both pragmatic and strategic thinking – I also thank them for their valuable support.

Lastly, I would like to **acknowledge our membership**. Earlier this year, COTA Queensland signalled a move away from membership to a supporter model.

This change reflects diminished participation in membership generally in our community groups over the last two decades, as well as the natural development of governance arrangements not dependent on membership in maturing community-based organisations. As we make this change, we must honour those who have strongly supported COTA Queensland as members, but we also look to make this support much wider.

Our community is ageing and within 30 years, Queensland's population of those over 65 years will have doubled. Our communities, policy processes and social infrastructure must be ready to meet both demands and expectations.

In my view, there has never been a more important time to **ensure older people have a voice** in their communities.

Darren Young
Chief Executive Officer
COTA Queensland





Changing the Future of Ageing

Our Theory of Change

Our Long-Term
Strategic Agenda



Our Theory of Change

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a significant underrepresentation of older adults in policy discussions and decision making, due to pervasive use of stereotypes, lack of inclusive spaces, assumptions of homogeneity and lack of amplification of older voices, particularly of the most vulnerable. This practice perpetuates ageism, overlooks the unique challenges faced by older adults, and fails to leverage their insights for designing effective policies that address their unique needs and promote intergenerational equity. Consequently, policy outcomes often fall short of achieving comprehensive and inclusive solutions.

HYPOTHESIS

By COTA Queensland more actively involving older adults in engagement activities to influence policy discussions and debates, the representation and influence of older adults will be significantly enhanced. Combined with increasing diversity of representation, this will lead to a greater recognition of their unique perspectives, needs, and contributions by policymakers, resulting in the development and implementation of more inclusive and effective policies that address the concerns and priorities of older adults. This is becoming more important as our society ages over the coming decades. The impact on society will be a strengthened social cohesion, and more equitable and sustainable policy outcomes.

MISSION

We advance the rights, needs, interests and futures of Queenslanders as we age.

TARGET GROUP

Older adults living in Queensland.

MEASURE, EVALUATE, REVIEW, ADAPT

INPUTS

What resources do we need?

ACTIVITIES

What are we going to do?

OUTPUTS

What will that generate?

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

What changes will happen?

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

What changes will happen?

IMPACT

What's our stamp on the world?



- COTA Queensland network of advocates and leaders
- COTA Queensland network of supporters and champions
- Partnerships with seniors' organisations
- Seniors Interested Community Groups
- COTA Federation organisations
- University relationships
- Intergenerational collaborations
- Direct contributions from older people
- Listening through scheduled community engagement
- Community Awareness campaigns
- Online, face to face and print communications
- Projects to demonstrate or lever change
- Consumer Advocates for older people
- Submissions and advice to governments
- Annual Policy Charter
- # older adults with lived experience involved in engagement activities
- # of targeted communications delivered
- # of submissions to Government
- # of new supporters engaged and participating in activities
- # of campaigns and related events
- # of projects delivered
- # of people reached through our online engagement
- Older adults feel that their voice has been heard to influence policy decisions
- Older adults have greater confidence that their involvement in the engagement activities is being seen and heard
- Policy submissions delivered to government will more strongly represent the diverse perspectives of older adults in Queensland
- Government, services and community are more attuned to the need of being inclusive of older people in their decision-making processes
- Older adults feel empowered to share their views and opinions to influence policy discussions and debates
- Increased representation of diverse older adults in policy decision-making processes
- Government, services and community have increased understanding of the needs, perspectives and diversity of older adults in Queensland
- Policy outcomes better reflect the concerns and priorities of older adults in areas such as healthcare, social services, and age-friendly infrastructure

Older adults are seen, heard and take action together, to combat ageism.

Our Long-Term Strategic Agenda

Be Seen, Be Heard, Take Action - Together

Engaging diverse community voices to form independent evidence-based insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for older people and their supporters to be engaged in all areas that matter Strengthen and expand COTA Queensland's network of older Queenslanders Build capability of service sectors to engage with older people and their supporters Break down barriers affecting groups that struggle to be heard, due to prejudice, ignorance and/or system inadequacies Expand COTA Queensland's activities in ways that strengthen the voice of older Queenslanders Inform Queensland government policies to protect and uphold the rights, needs and interests of older Queenslanders.
Collaborating with local, national and international experts and networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build focused collaborations and partnerships with seniors interested organisations Build and grow COTA Queensland policy, advocacy, research and evaluation capability through effective partnerships with universities and related organisations Develop the capacity of an independent vehicle for new collaborations beyond Queensland, which builds knowledge, capability and learning for those involved in ageing and aged care activities Strengthen relationships that support COTA Queensland's unique consumer peak role to improve community access to voice and advocacy Form partnerships to enhance responses to the unique needs of older Queenslanders who identify as LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or from diverse cultural, linguistic and/or religious backgrounds.
Creating innovative and real impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the development of age-friendly environments Improve opportunities for social inclusion and community connectedness Advocate for improved quality, accessibility and integration of health and social care Advocate for older Queenslanders to age well through adequate income, housing and social entitlements Strengthen early intervention and health promotion activities Improve service responsiveness to regional, rural and remote areas Advocate for and support unpaid carers Encourage opportunities for lifelong learning Remove barriers for active participation in volunteering Foster opportunities for intergenerational activities Reduce the digital divide for older people Promote the development of age friendly workplaces and reimagine retirement Challenge ageism, discrimination and support improved responses to reduce elder abuse Promote involvement and safeguards for older people in times of emergencies and disasters.

Our Highlights

for 2022 to 2023

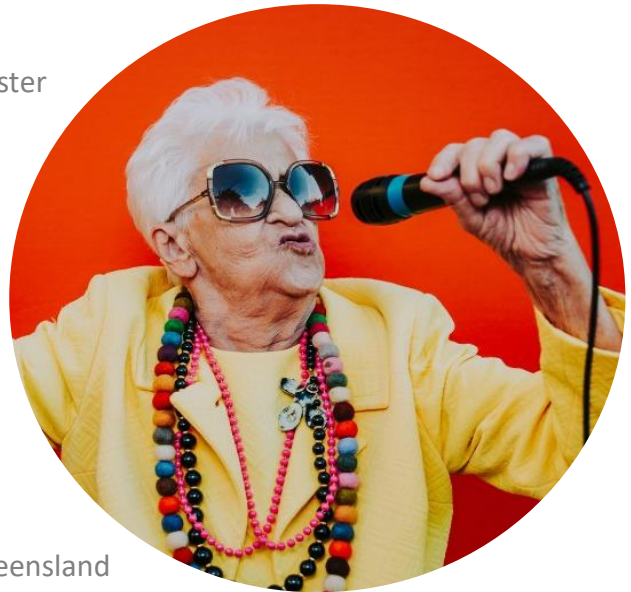


Seniors Month - Queensland Seniors Month provides opportunities to promote positive community attitudes towards older people, facilitating community participation, and enhance community and social connections. Seniors Month helps to build our vision of Age-Friendly communities in Queensland.

COTA Queensland is funded each year to administer a grants program for Seniors Month totaling \$100,000. It encourages community groups to host events and activities that foster social inclusion.

Here are some key Seniors Month facts from this year:

- In total, Seniors Month delivered **1,581** events and activities with an estimated participation of **146,171** people.
- The funding of **\$100,000** provided by the Queensland Government has enabled 108 successful applicants to host **139** events and they engaged with **10,575** people. Approximately 7.5% of the calendar is funded through the Seniors Month government subsidy program.
- COTA Queensland hosted a statewide activity called **Queensland's Largest Sunday Roast** which aimed to combat social isolation and loneliness through a shared meal on Sunday 16 October 2022 connecting more than **1,100** diners.
- Of the 1,581 registered events: **92** events were culturally inclusive events connecting an estimated **29,293** people; **102** events were inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community; **1,216** events were FREE to attend; and entry into **132** events was \$5 and under.
- During Seniors Month, **65** funded events were held to enable **7,388** Queenslanders to live active and healthy lives with improved physical and mental wellbeing.
- **21** expos took place providing the opportunity for an estimated **7,610** people to connect with local supports and services to stay healthy, active, and independent.
- **356** Health and Wellbeing events were held, assisting to increase people's physical and mental wellbeing. Events ranged from breath and balance classes to fitness checks, yoga and Tai Chi, to getting connected with My Aged Care, reaching an estimated **11,135** people of which **112** events were funded and reached **8,075** people.
- **215** events registered in the online event calendar took place in parks and parklands connecting an estimated **16,740** people.
- **34** walks were held tackling big conversations like men's mental health, providing opportunities to get active and explore local surrounds, and connect generations.
- **25** events were held during Get Online Week, 17-23 October and ranged from accessing services and supports through My Aged Care, to how to spot a scam, shop online safely, in addition to art classes and movie screenings.



Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) - The primary objective of the CHSP Sector Support and Development (SSD) program is to support the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) service providers through navigation of reforms, in preparation for a new in-home aged care system commencing July 2025. COTA Queensland delivers SSD statewide with a particular focus on regional, rural, and remote communities.

Key activities include raising awareness, sharing information, building capability, developing and supporting collaborative partnerships, and informing in-home aged care reform. The CHSP Sector Support and Development team support providers in building knowledge, capability, and connections. This was achieved in 2022 - 2023 through:

- **13** workshops and webinars, **6** Community of Practice sessions, and **92** individual support services, accumulating in over **1,000** interactions of support for CHSP providers
- expanding our engagement across Queensland, particularly with providers supporting people in rural, remote and outer regional locations
- establishing and maintaining a CHSP Online Resource Hub which receives over **2,500** total page views and over **550** unique visitors per month
- leading and co-delivering the COTA Queensland Diversity Forum in Cairns in partnership with the Home Care Workforce Support Project and in collaboration with Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) (with **70** attendees)
- presenting at the Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) national conference with Age of Disruption: *How communities across Queensland are rising to the challenge to better support their older residents.*



The CHSP SSD team proactively supports and facilitates collaborative partnerships between CHSP providers, as well as with other Queensland and national SSD providers and key stakeholders. COTA Queensland SSD:

- is a key member of the CHSP National Conference organising committee. The CHSP National Conference brings together experts, community members/advocates, researchers, Government and Peak bodies. COTA Queensland has focused on and ensured the centrality of consumer and community voices throughout program development. This conference had over **400** participating delegates, **40** speakers and a community panel with six diverse older Australians at the 2022 conference

- participate in and contribute to the development of the National CHSP SSD Network and co-facilitate the Queensland representative group
- are one of the peak organisation representative bodies on the Brisbane North Primary Health Network (PHN) healthy@home consortium, an innovative collaborative model in community aged care
- joined the Western Queensland Primary Health Network (PHN) road trips through rural and remote communities, presenting at forums and meeting one-to-one with providers in communities along the way.

The team contributes to the **in-home aged care reform process** through staying up to date with the reforms impacting CHSP providers. This involves:

- continuously share information and encourage providers to participate in Department of Health and Aged Care and Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission consultations.
- participation in Department and Commission consultations including responses to the new In-Home Aged Care Discussion Paper
- First Nations engagement - COTA Queensland reached out to the Department of Health and Ageing in February 2023 to explore opportunities for connecting Queensland based CHSP providers into the Department's First Nations consultations. The consultations were aimed at informing the future Assessment Model and Support at Home Program. As a result, and through COTA Queensland's relationships and connections with CHSP providers across the state, 12 providers delivering care and support for First Nations People expressed interest in contributing to the Department's consultation through Winingali
- In addition, COTA Queensland took the opportunity to hear directly from three providers who deliver services to First Nations people on the Cape. These providers had travelled to Cairns to participate in COTA Queensland's Planning for Success Bootcamp on 21 March followed by our Exploring Diversity Forum the following day. We asked these providers what they would like to share with the Department for informing the future assessment model and in-home care and support program.

COTA Queensland collated and formally provided a summary of these providers' responses followed by some of their recommendations (27 April 2023).



Home Care Workforce Support Program – On 1 March 2021, the Final Report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was published. As part of the initial response, the Government announced the funding for the Home Care Workforce Support Program (HCWSP) which provided \$91 million in grant funding over two years from 2021 - 22 for targeted support to assist the aged care sector to increase the size of the personal care workforce.

The Council on the Ageing Consortium (comprised of COTA Queensland, Skills Hubs and Skills Generation) received a grant to attract, train and support the retention in employment of **2,272** new Personal Care Workers (PCWs) in Queensland by March 31, 2024. The Consortium's methodology for achieving success in this project approach features the following strategies:

1. A multi-channel attraction pipeline to encourage strong engagement with potential PCWs.
2. Place-based engagement across Queensland.
3. Sector development to build care provider capability and capacity.
4. Encouraging the adoption of a person-centred approach to providing care to clients.
5. The Queensland consortium continues to support individual organisations' review their recruitment methodology and onboarding.

The Consortium had placed **1,337** new PCWs with Home Care Providers by 30 June 2023 and is on track to meet program objectives.

- **70 %** of those attracted to the program are women.
- The male take-up has also been higher than expected.
- Approximately, **56%** of new PCWs are between **46-65** years.
- The oldest recruited to-date is **82** years of age.
- The tight labour market has encouraged providers to accept mature-aged workers.
- **5%** of new PCWs have identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and this level of participation is expected to grow over the next 12 months.
- **24%** identify as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.



On 6 June 2023, a Community Diversity Forum *Strengthening Home Care through Cultural Diversity* was held at the Caboolture Hub, bringing together the Home Care Workforce Support Program (Queensland) Consortium, in collaboration with Moreton Bay Regional Council, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) and Caboolture Neighbourhood Centre Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS) Program.

Outcomes of the day included:

- Over **60** participants from diverse backgrounds, organisations, positions, perspectives and lived experience attended and shared their insights on the barriers to accessing and receiving care.
- Languages spoken on the day included Nepalese, Spanish, Fijian, Hindi, Punjabi, and Mandarin.
- Successful partnership working and collaborating with key community groups, organisations, and volunteers and reaching the target audience.
- Commitment from participants to share, explore and collaborate.



Research into the barriers to placing people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds and men in the home care workforce has commenced, with the aim of developing a series of recommendations based on leading practice to support diversity in the home care sector.

A key component of COTA Queensland's work is the promotion of person-centred care in Home Care. A ten-episode podcast series titled SNACK (Some New Aged Care Knowledge) has been produced focussing on the real experiences of providing, and receiving, person-centred care. The series includes topics such as what is person-centred care, cross-cultural care, and building functional care relationships, and has been designed for home care staff, people training or planning to join the home care workforce.

Further resources will be developed in the 2023 - 2024 financial year in partnerships with Queensland Positive People, Queensland Council for LGBTI Health, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, and a group of Torres Strait Islanders who are exploring the development of a podcast series on supporting people in the home care sector. The aim of this podcast is to introduce home care workers to Torres Strait Islander culture, the role of elders in the community, and what is important to them when receiving home care.

Further sector development for this period includes:

- 17 webinars
- 4 articles in the Australian Ageing Agenda
- Series of 13 forums which were held for providers around Queensland contributing to the promotion of person-centred care and the importance of building a skilled home care workforce.

While having a strong focus on major population centres, our work also has strong ties with rural and remote communities by building the capacity of local community members through the delivery of training programs. This occurred in rural areas through the provision of units of competency to enable locals to provide in-home support in their communities, and involved a collaborative model between Approved Home Care Providers and local community associations, with training provided.

The Consortium is placing a strong emphasis on post placement support for PCWs and ongoing contact during their employment. This support is being strengthened through the piloting of a Volunteer PCW Mentor project. Five individuals with both experience in the sector coupled with life experience are available to offer support to new Personal Care Workers and people considering a career in care.

Listening Post - The Listening Post was an opportunity to hear people's stories and amplify their voices about what ageing well means in metropolitan, regional, and rural communities. Travelling over **12,000kms** from October to December 2022, COTA Queensland heard from people aged **50 - 97** years of age across the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Gympie, Ipswich, Logan, Maranoa, Moreton Bay, Mount Isa, Scenic Rim, and Townsville regions.

We created **46 Listening Posts** (at physical sites) over **33** locations. We had over **150 hours** of conversation at libraries, shopping centres, community and neighbourhood centres, cafes, community events, community clubs, and independent groups. For those we could not reach in person, we connected via videocalls and phone calls.

COTA Queensland listened to approximately **389 Queenslanders** about the positives and challenges to ageing well. These Queenslanders included culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, veterans, people living with disabilities and changing capacities, and diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Many people cared for family members or loved ones of all ages who had chronic health conditions or disabilities or cared for them in later life.

Some older adults were living with conditions which impacted mental, physical, or psychological health, and some were living with neurological impairments due to injuries or conditions. Despite females outnumbering males, we had quality conversations with men.



On their top five list of challenges were:

1. Affordable, accessible, available health care and aged care
2. Affordable and accessible transport
3. Affordable, secure, and appropriate housing
4. To be heard and receive clear information
5. To voice challenges and receive confidential support.

The Listening Post project was funded by the Queensland Government and reinforced the information gained from their surveys and Seniors Expos held across the state. The state government is committed to creating age-friendly communities which means older people are connected, cared for and supported, contributing to and living in their local communities how they wish, and they are celebrated.



COTA Queensland has subsequently created three resources to continue the conversation around how people are ageing well and sustaining age-friendly communities across the state (and the barriers and challenges they encounter) through the main themes of connected, cared for and caring for others, and celebrated.

These resources include a postcard with a QR Code which prompts people to visit the COTA Queensland Engagement Hub to share their insights and learn more about the Listening Post project, a booklet which outlines the main findings from the project and acts as a reflective tool for communities, and a video which showcases COTA Queensland's work and vision for age-friendly communities in addition to main findings from the Listening Post project. Through the Listening Post we reaffirmed that older Queenslanders are immensely diverse and reside in communities with unique needs, strengths, challenges, and innovations for ageing well

Engagement — The COTA Queensland Board took the decision to move away from a paid membership model in 2023 and move towards a no-fee supporter model. This decision was a primary catalyst for the review of the organisation's approach to engagement and was supported at the COTA Queensland AGM on the 14th October 2023.

With funding from the Queensland government, COTA Queensland contracted social enterprise consultants, Social Scaffolding, to undertake an exploration of successful and sustainable engagement models through consultation with experts and like-minded organisations and people.

Social Scaffolding worked closely with COTA Queensland to develop an engagement framework based on a Theory of Change for the organisation. Subsequently, COTA Queensland developed a comprehensive engagement framework.

Underpinning this engagement, are four-tiered groups including Core, Committed, Crowd and Community. The core groups form the heart of our strategic approach, comprising the Connected 50 and Over (CO50) Consumer Advocates who are the subject matter experts advocating for specific changes related to the rights and interests of older people. The committed group consists of Local Community Champions who use their personal influence and credibility in their community to advocate for change.

The Crowd represents a wider group of older people who engage intermittently, providing their diverse perspectives and extending COTA Queensland's reach. Finally, the Community represents the broadest level of engagement, encompassing older people who are sympathetic to COTA Queensland's mission and whose perceptions and experiences we consider in COTA Queensland's overarching work.

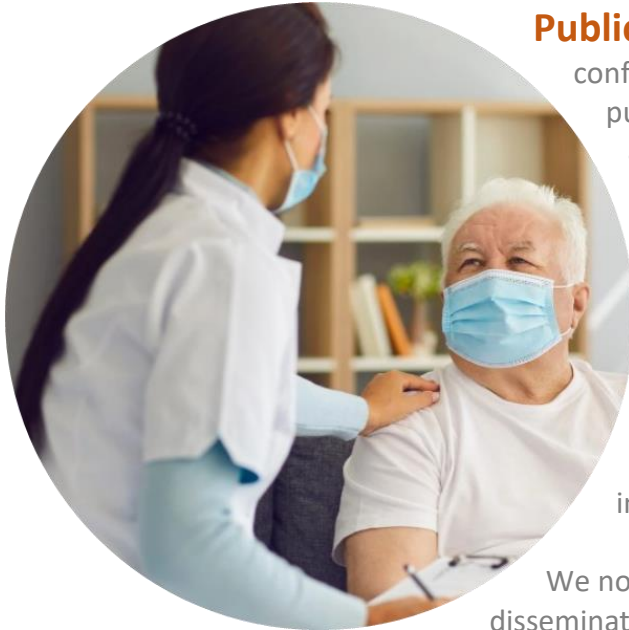
COTA Queensland's mission is to continue to contribute to the creation of age friendly spaces, fostering intergenerational collaboration, education, and information, holding listening sessions, and showcasing success in local communities to ensure that people's unique needs, preferences and barriers are taken into consideration in advocacy and policy. It is critical that we engage meaningfully to understand and ensure that diverse voices are represented in current and future systems, services, and communities.

Age-Friendly - COTA Queensland continues to support and contribute to the University of Queensland's (UQ's) Age-Friendly University Steering Committee. UQ have become a global leader in setting the standard for age-friendly spaces in higher education environments but also provide learnings and insights from researchers and experts around acceptance of mainstreaming ageing, dismantling ageist attitudes and discrimination through inclusiveness in educational settings (built environments, outdoor environments, learning approaches, and removing barriers for access to higher education).

University Partnerships - A further project with UQ has been the CarFreeMe program which is a community-based education and support program developed by experts to improve outcomes for older people who retire from driving. The program utilises effective, research-based, client-centred methods to help older people manage driving cessation. Principles of the program include empowering, supporting and better understanding older adults needs and lifestyles when they transition to a non-driving lifestyle.



Ageing Well - COTA Queensland has partnered with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) on the development of an Ageing Well Survey which uses innovative geo-mapping technology to map individual data across the state. Older adults move beyond being passive respondents to actively contributing to the design of the survey tool - as they respond to questions and provide feedback, ACU researchers refine the survey tool. This data can be compared across regions which can map unique challenges and needs, and overlay with existing evidence from e.g., Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census updates, longitudinal nationwide or statewide studies, etc.



Public Health - COTA Queensland contributed in 2022 to a confidential consultation regarding COVID-19 in relation to public health direction and the impact to care recipients and families and support networks navigating a myriad of information and updates, particularly in primary health care and aged care settings.

We advocated for a more comprehensive awareness campaign to tackle complacency around COVID and the potential impact to immunocompromised cohorts in a situation of increasing rates of influenza, despite the increase in the rate of vaccinations for influenza (at that time) for Queensland.

We noted the ongoing importance of how health advice is disseminated including how the epidemiology of the virus/es is communicated to the public. Health promotion is particularly required during peak periods of all viruses and increased protection of those who are immunocompromised and more vulnerable, such as older adults over 65 years of age needed to be prioritised. Finally, we advocated for greater clarification regarding the eligibility, benefits, and access to anti-viral medications, which may have significant benefits for priority cohorts and vulnerable older cohorts.

Social Isolation - Since its submission to the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness in 2021, COTA Queensland has run an online survey through the Engagement Hub, which has captured rich qualitative insights into how older adults experience social isolation and loneliness in their communities.

As part of our policy and advocacy work, COTA Queensland also connects with community members through phone and email queries and at local community expos or events, where older adults with lived experience of housing stress or housing insecurity have shared their stories with COTA Queensland. These have predominantly been older women. Many of these women have been lifelong advocates for themselves and others. COTA Queensland is also working with organisations such as QShelter and the Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) for better outcomes for older women who are at risk of homelessness.

Mental Health - COTA Queensland was involved from 2022 – 2023 in the consultation and review of the updated Shifting Minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023. Our team emphasised and highlighted older adult perspectives including unique needs of diverse ageing cohorts and age-related considerations in mental health supports. As a result, older adults were better highlighted in the resultant renewed strategy.

Elder Abuse - COTA Queensland has been involved in the state government's elder abuse workshops and reshaping of a ten-year strategy and campaign for tackling elder abuse. In addition, through insights from direct queries and insights collated over the phone, via email and face to face at engagements, and via the Listening Post project, and through becoming a member of the Regional and Rural Community Engagement Reference Group hosted by Uniting Care Elder Abuse Prevention Unit team, COTA Queensland is part of the organisations who are actively investigating ongoing gaps in information, knowledge and supports for local communities and particularly vulnerable older adult cohorts.



This work complements the initial work undertaken through the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Toolkit - the creation of which was led by COTA Queensland, and which has since been adopted by organisations and provided foundation for other bodies to develop further as the campaign develops over time. This toolkit has been utilised in local communities to raise awareness around elder abuse.

State of the Older Nation Report (SOTON) - The SOTON research was commissioned by the Federation of nine Councils on the Ageing (COTA) across Australia – including all eight COTA state and territory organisations and COTA Australia – in order to understand the views, life experiences and needs of Australians aged 50 years and over.

The contents of this report present an opportunity for policy makers to represent Older Australians in their interventions. Older Australians are increasingly feeling like things are getting worse for them, fewer feel financially secure, and more are reporting difficulties accessing health services – with experiences even worse among vulnerable people. The COTA Federation is proud to present the information in this report to inform policy debates now and into the future.

The full [2023 report](#) explored a range of topics including Quality of Life and Sentiment about the Future; Financial Security and Cost of Living; Employment for older workers; Ageism, Age Discrimination and Elder Abuse; Health and Health Services; Intentions to Travel; Housing; the ongoing effects of COVID-19 on older people; and older people use, skills and access to Technology.

Aged Care Navigation - COTA Queensland participated in the trial of a national network of outreach centres, information hubs and advisors to help vulnerable seniors navigate the aged care system and access services. We delivered a service in Cairns which was largely face to face engagement with individuals but included an educational group to help make people aware of how to access aged care services, and individual one-on-one support, such as to assist with My Aged Care or completing forms.

The Aged Care Service Navigation (ACSN) Trials informed the national Care Finder Program (launched in 2023) which was specifically created for vulnerable older people who needed intensive support to access aged care and other local services.

Primary Health Networks - Brisbane North Primary Health Network (PHN) provides backbone support for the healthy@home consortium. The consortium model provides the structure for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) service providers and peak organisations to work together, share, and innovate in the Brisbane North and Moreton Bay region. COTA Queensland is a member of the healthy@home consortium. COTA QLD made a contribution to the Every Word (& Gesture) Counts Language Guide - supporting inclusive language to combat ageism.





Regular External Engagements

Social Services Industry Reference Group	Facilitated by the Secretariat, Social Services Category Council, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy
Shifting Minds Reference Group	Facilitated by the QLD Mental Health Commission – shaping the new Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan
Cross River Rail Accessibility Advisory Group	Facilitated by the Cross River rail Delivery Authority – designed to support communication to improve accessibility at new stations and immediate surrounding precincts
ASIC Queensland Consumer Regulator Forum	Consumer groups and regulators forum
Aged Care Working Group – Residential Aged Care	Facilitated by QLD Health to provide expert advice on consumer perspectives around COVID-19 matters related to Residential Aged Care in Queensland.
QLD Peaks Network	Facilitated by QCOSS to improve communication and coordination amongst peak social service organisations.
Inform My Care	Facilitated by the Patient Safety and Quality, Clinical Excellence, Queensland Health to improve information access to consumers for hospital and aged care
Healthy@Home Consortium	CHSP Management group through Brisbane North PHN
QLD Dementia Ageing & Frailty Clinical Network	Facilitated by the Healthcare Improvement Unit, Clinical Excellence in Queensland Health to ensure consumer voice on improvements and changes in care related processes and standards that affect older people.
RaSS Steering Committee	Facilitated by Queensland Health for quality and choice in Residential Aged Care
TMR Accessibility Advisory	Facilitated by the Department of Transport and Main Roads to improve community accessibility.
Brisbane South PHN Older Peoples Strategy Committee	Facilitated by the Brisbane South BHN to plan and coordinate health ageing initiatives
Queensland Rail Accessibility Committee	Facilitated by Queensland Rail to improve accessibility
HCWSP National Governance	Facilitated by the Commonwealth Dept Health as part of HCWSP project
HCWSP Community of Practice	Facilitated by the Commonwealth Dept Health as part of HCWSP project
Executive Coordination Group COTA Australia	Facilitated by COTA Australia to enable coordination & collaboration in federation
COTA National Policy Council	Facilitated by COTA Australia to inform national policy
Elder Abuse Reference Group	Facilitated by Dept Seniors Disability Services & Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to improve coordination
Seniors Peak Meetings	Facilitated by Dept Seniors Disability Services & Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships as an opportunity for regular communication & updates on seniors' policy
Seniors Expos	Facilitated by Dept Seniors Disability Services & Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to reach multiple locations across QLD throughout year

COTA Queensland

Our Board



Jean McRuvie

Qualifications

Experience

Chair

FAIM, MICD

Jean has held senior leadership CEO, General Manager or Managing Director roles for the past twenty years across a range of organisations representing health and welfare services, regional development and corporate management. Jean was an elected Local Government Councillor for three years and CEO of a member based organisation in the agricultural sector. She has sat on Advisory Boards in the TAFE and University sectors and provided advice to government departments on program design. She currently holds a number of Non Executive Director positions on not for profit or for purpose organisations in the housing, disability, aged care and child care sectors in Queensland.

Stuart Anderson

Qualifications

Experience

Non-Executive Director, Chair Finance & Risk Committee

BCom, BEcon, GradDipCA

Stuart is currently employed as the Chief Financial Officer of RCPA, Australia's leading supplier of concrete pipes and drainage systems. Stuart has held a variety of senior finance roles over his career, across a variety of industries including racing, manufacturing, media, telecoms, superannuation, and construction materials. Stuart is a qualified accountant (CA) and possess a dual degree in Commerce and Economics from the University of Queensland. He joined the COTA Queensland Board in November 2019, and is the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Steve Kanowski

Qualifications

Experience

Non-Executive Director

B.Bus (Econ), GradDipAgEcon, PGDip Mment, PMESA, FCILT, GAICD

Steve is an economist and for most of his 35 years plus career he has worked in consulting – mostly in Australia - also based in London (7 years) and Dublin (4 years). He spent 4 years in senior roles in the Queensland Public Service: 2013-15 – Chief Economist & Executive Director (Infrastructure Policy & Planning) with the Department of State Development and 2015-17 as Chief Economist & General Manager -Strategic Policy at Transport & Main Roads. Since 2017, he has been a Partner with Deloitte and is Brisbane office leader at Deloitte Access Economics. Steve's qualifications are in business and economics. He is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Gloria Sherlock

Qualifications

Experience

Non-Executive Director

Bachelor of Electronic Commerce (Valedictorian), GAICD, Certificate in Governance & Risk

Gloria has over 25 years of business and finance management experience, including Accountant, Business Analyst, e-Risk Consultant and Regional Administration Management. She has extensive experience and training at an executive level and has developed business skills including Project Management, System Implementations, Auditing and Governance, Policies and Procedures, Change Management, Accounting, Budgeting/Forecasting, Human Resources, Training and Administration. Gloria is genuinely interested in helping/supporting others and the Community. She works in collaboration with others in a respectful and positive/friendly manner. Gloria is a 'Children's Rights Queensland' Community Ambassador for Brisbane. Gloria is also a Director for Playgroup Australia Ltd..

Professor Ken Moores AM

Qualifications

Experience

Non-Executive Director

BBus, BEcon, MSocSc, PhD, DBus, FCPA, FCA, FAICD

Ken's extensive experience includes senior level leadership as company chairman, director, CEO, and academic. This experience, coupled with training in accounting, finance, economics and family business has developed skills that extend from corporate governance through strategic planning to financial management. Ken has applied these skills in numerous governance roles in education, training, hospitality, tourism, and wine industries and across all stages of business life cycle development including establishment, expansion, growth, consolidation, diversification, and crisis management. Following his retirement from a highly successful period as Bond University's Vice-Chancellor and President Ken has over the past 20 years also given back as a non-executive director to many member-based not-for-profit organisations.

Sandra Nugent

Qualifications

Experience

Non-Executive Director

B. Comm (Hons), M. Bus (Philanthropy & Np St), GAICD

Sandra Nugent has over 25 years executive and senior management experience in not for profit enterprises including social impact investment, agribusiness, philanthropy and health. She has extensive experience in developing business opportunities and partnerships to facilitate growth and sustainability. Sandra holds an honours undergraduate degree in commerce and a Masters of Business specialising in Philanthropy & Non-profit Studies. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Robyn Robinson

Qualifications

Experience

Non-Executive Director

B.Sc. Dip.C.Sc., MSc., GAICD.

Robyn worked in executive and senior management roles within the electricity industry in Queensland for over 20 years. She has an extensive background in IT management, business performance improvement and managing organisational change. Currently Robyn works as an independent consultant advising energy industry bodies on energy consumer policy issues and stakeholder engagement. Robyn has qualifications in science and IT, and holds a Master of Science Degree in Operations Research. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In addition to her role on the Board of COTA Queensland, Robyn is President of the Redland District Committee on the Ageing and Chair of the Redland Seniors Network.

Tamara Fowler

Qualifications

Experience

Entity Secretary

GCBus, DipBus, DipM

Tamara has over 30 years of business, finance and program support and management experience roles across Social Services, Construction/Infrastructure and Oil & Gas Industries. She has developed business skills including Finance, Budgeting/Forecasting, Project Management, System Implementations, Quality, Secretariat Duties, Change Management, Human Resources, Safety, Training and Administration. Tamara has held the Company Secretary position since 2022.

Our Staff (2022 – 2023)

Bronwyn Bidstrup	Manager – Aged & Community Care - CHSP
Sue Bowles	Volunteer
Liz Buchanan	Contractor - Communications
Paula Clancy	Project Officer - CHSP
Sherryn Davies	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Officer - CHSP
Tamara Fowler	Finance & Business Manager
Paul Gabbert	Senior Project Officer – HCWSP
Alex Green	Administrative Assistant – HCWSP
Lisa Hodgkinson	Senior Project Officer – HCWSP & Seniors Month
Kate Kleeman	Senior Project Officer - HCWSP
Eugene McAteer	Operations Manager
Dr Andrea Petriwskyj	Project Lead – Engagement & Education - HCWSP
Stephanie Power	Policy, Insights and Engagement Officer – Seniors Peak
Jolene Rait	Project Administrative Assistant - HCWSP
Jill Smith	Administrative Assistant
John Stalker	Manager - HCSWP
Pauline Walsh	Project Administrative Assistant - CHSP
Karen Wilson	Consumer Engagement Officer - HCWSP
Darren Young	Chief Executive Officer

Abbreviations

HCWSP – Home Care Workforce Support Program

CHSP – Commonwealth Home Support Programme

Funders and Supporters

***Thank you to COTA Queensland supporters in every community.
Without your support we could not even begin to strive for our vision.***

Patron

Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young PSM
Governor of Queensland

Thanks also to our funders and supporters.

Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages (ARQRV)
Australian Catholic University (*Ageing Well Survey*)
COTA Australia (*Aged Care System Navigation Trial*)
COTA Insurance and Membership
Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (*Seniors Peak, Listening Post, Engagement Development, Seniors Month, Ageing Well Survey*)
Department of Health & Aged Care (*Home Care Workforce Support Program, Commonwealth Home Support Programme*)
Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
Probus Club
Skills Generation (*Home Care Workforce Support Program*)
The COTA Federation (*comprising COTA Australia, COTA New South Wales, COTA Victoria, COTA Tasmania, COTA South Australia, COTA Tasmania, COTA Northern Territory, COTA Western Australia*)
The University of Newcastle Australia (*Home Care Workforce Support Program*)
The University of Queensland (UQ)
University of the Third Age (U3A) Network Queensland
Brisbane Seniors Online

Seniors Month Supporters

The Sunday Roast combating social isolation and loneliness was sponsored by **The Senior** and supported by **Maggie Beer** and the **Loneliness Project**. HelloCare wrote two articles about the Sunday Roast. The first was to encourage people to get involved by sharing a meal, the second was to gain insight on the impact of the event. Other media sponsorship for Seniors Month includes:

Your Time Magazine
Australian Seniors News
Seniors Today
Australian Over 50s Living and Lifestyle Guide
Senior Lifestyle Bayside

Financial Statement

Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of COTA Queensland

In common with many not-for-profit organisations, COTA Queensland has faced increasing pressures of operational and overhead expenses, revenue generation and long-term financial sustainability. As a consequence, the Company has undertaken a range of efficiency initiatives and has been proactive in seeking additional funding to strengthen our operations.

This has resulted in changes to the organisational structure with many staff working part time, short-term contracting, and the utilisation of subject experts for specific projects. Operations have been streamlined and efficiencies achieved in day-to-day activities. Upgrades to systems and processes have been a feature of the year as part of our robust quality improvement strategies, leading us to remain continually accredited under ISO 9001.

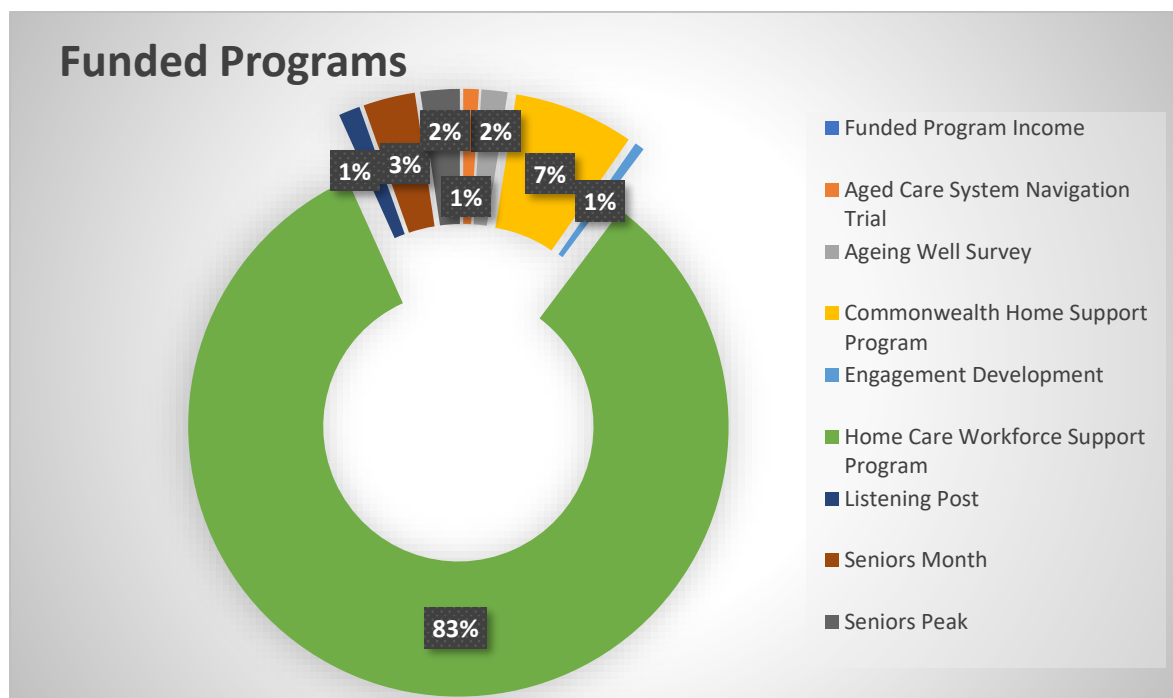
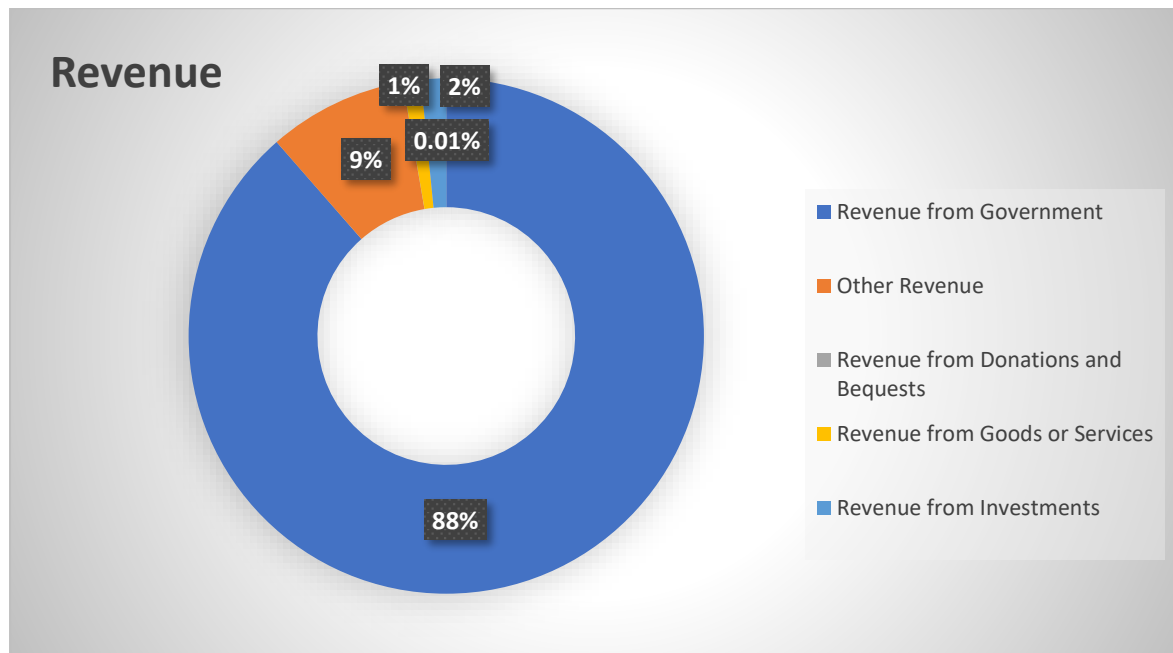
Key corporate initiatives during this time include:

- comprehensive cyber review and audit process which led to a series of actions to mitigate risks of cyber-attacks and data breaches through new IT settings and protocols, licenses, password management, and staff training
- investment into process mapping of key business functions
- investment into creation of a business manual to guide corporate functions
- staff resourcing into quality improvement processes, procedures and practices
- tailoring of Salesforce to improve our information management system capability
- introduction of a bookkeeping service to support operations
- partnering to undertake the efficient management of tenders and business opportunities
- redefinition of roles and responsibilities of some positions.

Full financial information is available on the [Australia Charities and Not for Profits Commission](#) from January 2024, however a summary of our financial revenue and program allocation is summarised in graphic form on the following pages.

Revenue

Total revenue: **\$7,681,223**



Expenses

Total expenses: **\$7,707,697.63**

