

Annual Report

November 2018



President and CEO's Report

With both of us taking up our positions just a few weeks before the 2017 AGM, the last twelve months has been busy with significant change at COTA NSW.

We said goodbye to some long serving staff, welcomed new team members and students, moved from our long term office in Pitt Street to a new location in Market Street, and have worked hard at establishing a new way of engaging and communicating with older people around NSW. This means building on work we have done previously while thinking about new ways to work in the future.

We are living through a time of enormous demographic change. Our population is ageing in an unprecedented way, and that means we need to make changes to the way we organise and support our communities, and deliver a range of programs and services.

There are currently more than 2.3 million people over the age of 50 in NSW – almost one third of the population. These people are diverse – they come from all cultures and backgrounds, they live in all of our communities, from the city to the most remote parts of NSW, and they are aged from 50 to over 100 years old.

We can't treat this change as simple – it will permanently alter the face of our community. COTA NSW continues to advocate for changes to Government policy, programs and services to ensure they meet the needs of older people right around NSW.

To ensure we do this work well, we developed a [Strategic Plan \(2018-2020\)](#) to guide our advocacy and policy work so that we become the strongest voice for older people in NSW. We are changing the way we meet, talk and work with older people. We aim to continue to represent the diverse voices of older people in NSW, and most accurately reflect their needs and ambitions.

Over the year we said goodbye to staff members, including Lisa Langley and Sarah Davidson. Both had worked at COTA NSW in important executive roles for over seven years and brought enthusiasm, expertise and commitment to their roles. We wish them the very best.

At this AGM we also farewell two Board Directors, Nirmal Hansra and Colleen Cartwright. Nirmal has been an integral part of the organisation, serving for 7 years as Treasurer. We will miss his knowledge, skills and expertise. Colleen has served almost 10 years as a Board Member, and her strong policy and research expertise has been an asset to the organisation over this time. We sincerely thank them both for their significant contributions, and wish them all the best for the future.

Succession planning by the Board means that the Board continues to be strong in governance skills and experience. All Board Directors remain deeply committed to older people in NSW with an understanding of the issues concerning them through their own lived experiences and policy skills.

Over the next twelve months we will continue to build on our strategic focus areas, utilising the skills of our team and Board Directors to ensure that the needs and interests of older people in NSW are heard and acted on.

We look forward to working with you over the next twelve months towards this vision.



Joan Hughes
President



Meagan Lawson
CEO

Advocacy

Advocacy with and on behalf of the older people of NSW continues to be core business for COTA NSW, and the past twelve months have been busy.

- 18 Consumer Reference Groups (CRG) across NSW.
 - › 300+ attendees
 - › Representing 48 (51%) of NSW electorates
- Participation in the inaugural Centre for Australian Progress *Progress Lab* program to develop a consumer advocacy model for COTA NSW.
- 15 meetings with elected representatives and Ministers and advisors.
- 60 copies of *What matters to you* delivered to NSW MPs by COTA NSW members and supporters.
- Representation of older people on numerous committees, including:
 - › NSW Ageing Strategy Interdepartmental Committee (IDC)
 - › Global Access Partners Standing Committee on Productive Ageing
 - › NSW Steering Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
 - › Transport Consumer Advisory Group
 - › Older People and Mental Health
- 4 meetings of the NSW Ageing Alliance
- Establishment of Consumer Representative Program, providing consumer representatives for several committees, including:
 - › Ausgrid Consumer Advisory Group
 - › Sydney Water Customer Council
 - › NSW Health Older People and Alcohol Committee
 - › Federal Department of Health Mental Health and Aged Care Stakeholder Committee
 - › Aged Care Ministerial Roundtable (Royal Commission)



Policy

COTA NSW continues to make significant contributions to the discussion of policy issues for older people, through COTA NSW reports and events, submissions to government inquiries and processes, and participating in a wide range of committees and policy forums.



- Submissions on inquiries and planning processes, including:
 - › Inquiry into NSW Retirement Villages
 - › Everyone Can Play
 - › Greater Sydney Commission – Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan
 - › Review of road safety issues for future inquiry
 - › Department of Planning and Environment Draft Urban Design for Regional NSW
 - › Operational Framework for the One Offer Policy (Social Housing)
- 6 reports:
 - › [The twin currencies: how people in NSW spend their time and money as they age](#)
 - › [COTA NSW pre-budget submission 2018-19](#)
 - › [The super bias: an insecure future](#)
 - › [What matters to you? COTA NSW 2018 Engagement Report](#)
 - › [Now is the time: COTA NSW 2019 pre-election platform](#)
 - › [Debt, Rent and Homelessness: an insecure future](#)
- 5 Policy Advisory Group meetings – drawing on a range of academics and service providers, this group informed the development of the 2019 pre-election platform.
- 4 Policy Position Statements developed by the Board Directors:
 - › Housing options for older people
 - › End of life care and choices
 - › Public and community transport
 - › Mature age workforce participation
- 2 COTA National Policy Council meetings
- Contribution to several policy and planning forums, including:
 - › Women Staying Well initiative – Women's Housing Company
 - › EveryAge Counts campaign planning
 - › Greater Sydney Commission briefing sessions
 - › NSW Centre for Volunteering
- The State of the (Older) Nation – COTA NSW led the COTA Federation work in undertaking its first national survey of older people – the report will be launched in December 2018
- Parliamentary forum - *Why won't they hire me?* – in May at NSW Parliament House.

Services

- Legal Pathways Program – funded by NSW Legal Aid, this program continued to provide a low cost service for older people on an Aged Pension to draw up important legal documents:
 - › 875 calls for legal assistance (26% increase)
 - › 985 documents finalised
 - › 163 CALD clients (around 20%)
 - › 29 solicitors engaged
- Housing Options Information Service – funded by NSW Department of Fair Trading, this program assisted several people whose homes were found to have loose-fill asbestos insulation to find alternate accommodation and move into new homes.
- Power of Attorney seminars – partnering with the Centre for Cognitive Decline we held 10 workshops around NSW, informing people about Powers of Attorney, and produced a video of the seminar to ensure people who were not able to attend were able to get the information.
- NSW Seniors Festival – as well as participating in the NSW Seniors Expo, COTA NSW teamed up with Health Consumers NSW and the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts to present two well-attended forums:
 - › With age, art and life become one
 - › To die will be an awfully big adventure
- Spoke at and participated in a range of other forums and conferences:
 - › A Good Life to the End? A better way to die
 - › Land Lease Communities member forum
 - › Sydney University Social Work student forum
 - › Launch of the Macquarie University Retirement Village calculator
 - › Ageing on the Edge – National Housing Conference
 - › Better Practice Awards
 - › Department of Veterans Affairs webinar
 - › WEA Sydney AGM
- Media highlights:
 - › Nightlife with Phillip Clarke (ABC Radio) about Grandparent Carers
 - › Drive with Richard Glover (ABC Radio)
 - › Australian Financial Review about older workers and forced retirement clauses
 - › Ross Greenwood (2GB Radio) about *The Twin Currencies 50+* Report
 - › Jane Gilmore (Sydney Morning Herald) about *The Super Bias 50+* Report
 - › Rebecca Huntley (Radio National) about older people and food Rebecca Huntley, Radio National about older people and food



Organisation

BOARD

Name	Position	Number of Meetings
Joan Hughes	President	8/9
Daryl Bates	Vice President	8/9
Nirmal Hansra	Treasurer	7/9
Colleen Cartwright		8/9
Sara Graham		8/9
Stephen Ginsborg		8/9
Laurie Axford		7/9
Janet Beale		9/9
Raymond Lim	Appointed 04.09.18	1/1

STAFF

Current staff

Ruth Anstice	Legal Pathways Officer
Karen Appleby	Senior Policy Officer
Liz Freestone	Office and Information Manager
Meagan Lawson	Chief Executive Officer and Public Officer

Staff who have commenced employment

Judith Brown	04.03.18	Home Options Information Officer
Sarina Foulstone	27.08.18	Advocacy Community Development Officer

Staff who have left COTA NSW

Jason Chanphakeo	Office Manager	08.06.18
Sarah Davidson	Education and Business Development Manager	31.12.18
Lyn Hicks	Research Officer	08.08.17
Aya Horne	Program Support Officer	22.09.17
Joanne Knight	Home Options Information Officer	31.12.18
Lisa Langley	Policy Manager	12.07.18
Katie Moses	Media and Communications Officer	01.06.18

STUDENTS

Feda Kotina	Western Sydney University
Bethany Ananin	Sydney University
Ahmed Shafa Shovon	Western Sydney University
Ilana Liberatore	Western Sydney University
Madeline Klemer	Macquarie University



Acknowledgements

COTA NSW acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

COTA NSW would like to thank all of our members and supporters who have contributed to our work over the year.

COTA NSW acknowledges the efforts of all our volunteers and committee members over the last year, particularly the members of our Policy Advisory Group who provide advice, guidance and feedback on COTA NSW submissions and documents.

COTA NSW acknowledges our life members: Kath Brewster, Patricia Campbell, Frank Gribble, Heather Johnson, Joyce McLean, Dr Roger Morris, Audrey Power, Ross Power and Iris Wallis.

COTA NSW acknowledges our funders and donors over the last year for their support – the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, South East Sydney Local Health District, NSW Legal Aid, the NSW Department of Department of Fair Trading, the AMP Foundation, seek.com and Seniors Card NSW.



Vision

Ageing in Australia is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence.



Mission

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



Values

Respect, Diversity, Collaboration and Integrity

COTA NSW is a member of the COTA Federation that consists of COTA Australia and the state and territory COTAs. The COTA Federation collectively sets the vision, mission and values of the Federation of COTAs.

COTA NSW is the voice of older people in NSW and has the autonomy to set strategic priorities to drive outcomes for older people in NSW, on issues related to NSW Government politics and services.



COTA NSW

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