

SCOA –ACT

Who should join SCOA?

- Commonwealth superannuants
- Comecare clients

Why should I join SCOA?

SCOA is the only organisation which specifically represents the retirement interests of existing and future Commonwealth superannuants and their families.

The concerns of Commonwealth superannuants are, in many instances, different especially in relation to retirement incomes.

SCOA has a good track record in regard to helping its membership.

It understands the Comcare system and has assisted a large number of Comcare clients.

Join SCOA today – single member \$21, joint members \$27 and widow/er member \$13.

SCOA (ACT),
PO Box 3989 Weston Creek ACT 2611
Phone 6287 3024 or Fax 6287 3023
Email scoa.act@scoa.asn.au

Increased Co-operation between SOCA (ACT) and Council on the Ageing COTA (ACT)

Although SCOA and COTA pursue a number of common issues, both pursue additional issues and provide a number of different services. Because of this SCOA and COTA feel some members would benefit through being a member of both organisations.

Do You Know Of U3A?

U3A ('University of the Third Age') provides inexpensive adult education for retired people, where course presenters give their time free and there are no exams. COTA (ACT) was one of the original sponsors of U3A in the ACT, 20 years ago; U3A ACT now has over 3300 members and runs some 200 courses each year. The U3A office is in the same building as COTA at Hughes (phone 6281 6998). Cost is \$25 per year for a single membership or \$40 per year for a joint membership. Why not join up and try a course or two?

Contact Details

COTA(ACT) Council on the Ageing

Address PO Box 5566
Hughes ACT 2605
Phone 02 6282 3777
Fax 02 6285 3422
Web www.cota-act.org.au
Email contact@cota-act.org.au

Policy Input For COTA

2007 – 2008 Budget Submission to ACT Government

In November 2006 COTA (ACT) presented the 2007 – 08 Budget submission to the ACT Government. The submission was titled 'Sustaining Community Services' and included the priority areas of improving dental health care for older people in residential aged care settings and within the community; allied health care services to residential aged care settings; establishment of a dedicated ward for people awaiting nursing home placement; affordable rental property and affordable housing solutions; applying the medium demand model of independent living units and residential aged care facilities; road safety and transport needs of older people; funding of healthy and meaningful ageing program; employment of older people over 55 years; and appropriate funding for non-government organisations.

Submission to the Australian Government – Citizenship taskforce

The Australian Government Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs distributed a discussion paper and called for submissions relating to Australian Citizenship and consideration of the merits of introducing a formal citizenship test. In November 2006 COTA (ACT) recommended in its submission that if a formal citizenship test were to be introduced then people over the age of 50 should be exempt from the test. COTA (ACT) gave the following reasons for the exemption:

- People applying for citizenship, who are over the age of 50 years, may still participate in the Australian workforce. However, their tenure in the workforce will be time limited.
- Most people over the age of 50 who are likely to reside or continue to reside in Australia are often in Australia for reasons other than work. For some people they come because of family or community reasons, not for the financial gain of working in Australia.
- Long-term residency should also be a consideration for exemption. Many older people, have lived in Australia legally for well over 20 years, and these people already have sufficient ties to the Australian community and for many have direct family members who are next generation Australians.
- Canada, United Kingdom and the United States all have exemptions for older people.

Submission regarding proposed increase in Canberra After Hours Medical Locum Service (CALMS) fees

COTA (ACT) was given the opportunity by Australian Competition and Consumer Commissions (ACCC) to comment on the draft determination lodged by Canberra After Hours Medical Locum Service (CALMS) regarding a proposed increase to their fees. COTA (ACT) in the submission to ACCC expressed deep concern over the substantial increase in the proposed fees. The proposed changes included the gap for standard home visits (including nursing homes and institutions) between 8 pm and 11 pm increasing from \$31.95 to \$76.35 for regular patients and from \$21.95 to \$53.35 for concession cardholders. COTA (ACT) requested that the ACCC rejects the application and asks CALMS to review their fee structure to promote a fair and accessible system to all ACT residents.

Chiefs Minister's Concerts

Wednesday 14th March
11:00am and 1:30pm at The Auditorium,
Vikings Rugby Union Club, Erindale.

"A mini expo for Seniors"



COTA(ACT)

Connecting Over 50s Throughout Australia

AUTUMN
07
NEWSLETTER

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Seniors Day



Thursday 15th March
9:30am – 2:30pm
Contact COTA
Phone 6282 3777
for venue information

"A mini expo for Seniors"

COTA General Meeting

Sub and Non Acute care facilities have now opened at Calvary Hospital.

Dr Deborah Cole, Chief Executive Officer, Calvary Health Care ACT, will outline where these services fit within the broader health sector and the future provision of health services. This is a strategic long term health issue.

The General Meeting is at 2.00pm on Tuesday 27th March at the Hughes Community Centre.

President's Welcome



2006 was an interesting year for COTA (ACT) and 2007 is looking as challenging.

Local and Federal elections will be held this year. This will ensure a high level of interest in policies. We will be attempting to ensure that due attention is given to community needs relating to older people.

This imperative was one consideration when the President's of all the State and Territory COTAs, along with ARPA Over 50s, met early last month. I am delighted to say that there was an enthusiastic approach to cooperate and work together. The initial emphasis will be on policy development and advocacy effort.

In addition to this, the plan is to undertake considerable work in other areas and this will pave the way for broader activities in which the nine organisations work together. This work is to be undertaken during the next twelve months.

As a consequence of the meeting, COTA Over 50 Limited invited the ACT, South Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory COTAs to become members. All members are to have the same rights and obligations.

The COTA (ACT) Board resolved to accept the invitation to join COTA Over 50's. It also agreed with the approach and to participate in initiatives decided at the President's meeting. I believe that this should effectively implement the resolution of last years general meeting that empowered the ACT Board to pursue a common effort with other COTAs at the Federal level. It in no way lessens or compromises our efforts in the ACT.

Last September, the National Policy Office was established within the Hughes Community Centre. While they are in a separate office, we are actively working together. We have also been pursuing collaborative approaches that will assist the effectiveness of all the State, as well as, the Federal policy development and advocacy thrust.

I believe that this collaboration means that we are now better placed to meet the challenges of 2007. This applies at both the ACT and Federal levels.

Elizabeth Grant AM
President

2007 Federal Budget

The COTA Over 50s submission included:

Provide funding to eliminate waiting lists for public dental health services.

Develop and fund a National Mental Health Strategy for Older People.

Increase initiatives to educate consumers, pharmacists and doctors in the quality use of medicines.

Increase efforts to ensure the affordability and availability of medicines and to protect the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Fund the National Aged Care Workforce Strategy to ensure that older people receive high quality and culturally appropriate services.

ACT Senior Snapshot



Launch of the Seniors Week Program. Seniors enjoying the Canberra Show.

Great Debate



Friday 16th March
1:30pm
Old Parliament House
Bookings 6270 8282

Chief Minister's Breakfast



Monday 12th March
7:00am – 9:00am
Ainslie Football Club
Speaker: Dr Kaye Price
ACT Senior Australian of the Year
Bookings 6282 3777

Executive Notes

Paul Flint | Executive Officer



The Prime Minister recently announced the package entitled 'Securing the Future of aged care for Australia'. The package estimated to cost a staggering \$1500 million over four years. The initiative will increase the number of residential places and aged care services in the community, as well as, improve the quality of services and provide greater consistency across the sector. Improvements of this nature are both needed and worthy.

It can be argued that the nature and extent of the Federal Government initiative simply reflects the needs of the sector.

In the ACT, the Sub and Non Acute Services area was opened at Calvary Hospital just a week or so ago. This facility will be used to delivery psycho geriatric and a range of 'post' hospital type care. Some services previously delivered at Burrangiri will now be located at Calvary. These changes have been a long time coming.

The above recent events indicate that the nature and volume of services are changing. This does not mean that appropriate services will be available when required. This is partly because of the mechanistic methods for determining supply of services and also because of the extended period before facilities are brought on line. The gap between a 'promise' or program and an outcome can be significant in regard to both time and the extent to which it is implemented.

Dr Deborah Cole, the Chief Executive of Calvary Hospital will address the next COTA (ACT) General Meeting. We will hear from a person that is involved with 'on the ground' delivery of health services. This is someone who is implementing changes to improve the nature, quality and effectiveness of services for older. It should be particularly interesting to get Dr Cole's view of progress and where we, as a community, are going.

Did you know?

The odds of hearing loss doubles with each increasing decade of age. If there is some concern about hearing, the first step is to discuss the problem with a doctor. There may be a medical problem that can be rectified.

Pensioner concession cardholders and most veterans are eligible for assistance from Australian Hearing. Ring Australian Hearing on 131 797 or visit www.hearing.com.au.

The May 2006 results for the Australian Wellbeing Index were only recently released. They indicated that the four year rise in population wellbeing is now over.

Income security is one of the most powerful determinants of wellbeing.

When the resources are adequate, dependents have little influence on parental wellbeing. When resources are inadequate children place the wellbeing of co-habiting adults at risk.

Marriage and high income are stronger influences on personal wellbeing than body weight.

COTA Insurance

The purpose of insurance is to provide some benefit in the face of an undesirable event.

It is good to get some positive feedback from two members that had to call on their COTA insurance.

Brian Rope, a previous COTA (ACT) President said 'In September I had the misfortune to find myself in a Hong Kong hospital for thirteen days. Mondail, which provides the COTA (travel) insurance cover, was extremely helpful and supportive to Robyn (Brian's wife) at all times. Whenever she spoke to them they always asked after me, they made all necessary arrangements efficiently, and provided prompt and clear answers to all her questions. They fought hard and long to persuade the hospital to accept their guarantee that they would pay the bill for my hospitalization. They were successful in doing so.'

In conclusion, Brian said 'On the basis of our experience we would commend COTA travel insurance to anyone.'

The New Year's Eve hailstorm on the south side of Canberra resulted in John and Margaret O'Beirne calling on COTA Insurance. They said:

'We would like to record bouquets to COTA/(Allianz Insurance) for their efforts after we suffered extensive house damage as a result of heavy hail and rain.

Allianz's local representative loss adjusters responded promptly and organised inspections and quotes by Morgans Services, A&A Contractors and their sub-contractor JHB Carpentry and Painting and, subsequently, Hood's Carpet Court. All the tradesmen involved observed high standards of professionalism and were considerate of our circumstances, bearing in mind the general mess and upheaval. In particular, we were most impressed with the workmanship and "old fashioned" values of Richard, Hood's carpet layer. Special thanks also to the busy SES team who "tarped" our house on New Year's Day to ward off further damage. Despite the fact that hundreds of houses were damaged, our property was completely restored in a matter of weeks.

We compared notes with the experiences of our neighbours and friends in this particular unwelcome example of nature's power, and COTA/Allianz and the tradesmen who picked up the pieces were clearly up there with the best'

Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards

The 'Lock Out' program, or more specifically what you may know as the immobilizer program, received a Crime and Violence Prevention Award for our effort during 2006.

This program has been effective due, in large part, to the coordinated and cooperative effort of all the parties. Canberra Connect (phone 13 22 81) receives the initial requests and is able to check registration and pension details to ensure eligibility before issuing the immobilizer voucher. The vouchers are taken to Braddon Car Stereo, Lee and Thomas at Phillip or Tuggeranong Auto Electrics for the immobilizer fitting. COTA arranges payment and administers the scheme.

This scheme helps people who are generally highly dependent on their car and are least able to replace it if the vehicle is stolen. It has worked very well and it is gratifying for it to be recognized. The irony is that this award was received just after CLASP ceased.



IN THE FRAME Catherine Versegi COTA Peer Education Manager

Catherine is the second longest serving employee of COTA (ACT). While currently working as the Peer Education Manager, Catherine has a varied background both within COTA and in previous aspects of her life. Catherine was born at the Bethesda Hospital in Marrickville, Sydney. This, like one of our local hospitals, no longer exists. Catherine enjoyed her childhood and particularly remembers holidays spent in the Pilot cottages up and down the NSW coast.

Working life for Catherine started in the hospitality industry. This included the Australian Jockey Club and, after moving to Canberra, the Canberra International Hotel. The opening of the National Convention Centre provided the opportunity for Catherine to be an event coordinator.

Three lovely daughters, as well as, overseas postings with her husband, Peter, filled in a considerable period.

Catherine came to us to ensure the 2001 COTA National Congress was effectively managed. 'A most enjoyable experience' was how Catherine summarised this period. COTA appreciated her effort and asked Catherine to manage Seniors Card.

Over the last eighteen months Catherine has developed the peer education effort for COTA. It started with Quality Use of Medicines and subsequently covered falls prevention, insomnia management, generic medicines and will, in the near future, include work with Beyond Blue.

'The training and interaction with people mean the peer education projects are particularly exciting. In addition, the programs provide important information for Canberrans. This makes it so worthwhile.' Catherine commented. That probably summarises why Catherine has chosen to specialize in peer education.

Contact Catherine if you would like someone to talk to your group in any of the above peer education areas.