

Beverley Morris
Greens SA, Candidate for Schubert
PO Box 48
Eden Valley SA 5235
Phone 0427524298

Jane Mussared
CE COTA
Level 1/85 Hutt Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your letter dated the 16 November 2021. My sincere apologies for my delayed response. Along with my own comments below, I have attached the formal response from Robert Sims, MLC. I believe that State and Local governments can work collaboratively to guide the Federal government to allocate funding where it is best placed in South Australia and in collaboration with organisations, such as COTA, consider data-based research, as your document suggests, for future policy development in the aged care sector.

Response 1: Greens SA agree¹ with your recommendation that the incoming state government commission an Aging in Country South Australia Strategy. I currently sit on several committees in the Barossa Area, along with various stakeholders, the Barossa Council and local MP's. It has been noted at these meetings that services providing services to older people are often understaffed and can find themselves unable to provide assistance to residents as required. However, I note that there are several organisations in our region, providing exemplary services regardless of these difficulties.

I also had firsthand experience with navigating the aged care sector and the SA Health system. In my experience, older people presenting at hospitals are often dismissed and are encouraged to go into residential aged care, there are also often long waits for appropriate funding packages. In addition, to these complexities, a number of health services in the region have been pared back or simply are not available.

I agree that working and volunteering into older age, helps people to remain active and vital within their community. Older people provide many services to our community through volunteering. I am part of Friends of Parks and the Lillefield Gallery and know from experience, that the demographic working in these volunteer organisations are, in the main, over 50. Isolation can be overcome by attitudinal change toward older people, by changing the narrative that they are a burden on the systems and recognise that they are a resourceful and valuable part of the community.

Ageism within the employment sector is a barrier that needs to be overcome, age brings wisdom and experience which is a valuable commodity. Housing availability is also an issue mentioned in your report. In the electorate of Schubert, in the Barossa region, there are no transitional housing options available, that is short term housing to help people get back on their feet. In general there is lack of housing options and housing affordability, many homes are now being used as business premises and competition is high for housing that does come onto the market.

At a recent meeting it was reported that a senior gentleman was discharged from hospital into homelessness and with no connection to service providers or assistance. This concerned me very much, I believe changes in the health system into community services can be improved. Older

people experiencing difficult times and life changes impacting that can impact on health and their ability to find and pay for stable accommodation.

Response 2. Greens SA agree¹ that the incoming government should fund a \$160,000 Country Engagement Program to be undertaken by COTA, to engage with older people and stakeholders to improve, aging and living well, build local capacity and support options. A collaborative, community orientated approach to reducing isolation, greater options and affordability of aged care services, lifestyle options, transport, work, socialisation and volunteering are of utmost importance. Mental health services are also thin on the ground in regional areas such as Schubert, dementia and suicide prevention being top concerns.

Response 3. Greens SA agree¹ that the incoming government should map, plan and set targets for aged care service provision and regularly report on targets and achievements in these areas. I will endeavour if elected to continue to take part in conversations and meaningful planning for better working conditions for staff and for improved living conditions and lifestyle options for older regional South Australians.

I have responded mainly to your recommendations for country or regional South Australia. All other recommendations in your report are of importance to me, the digital world has made life difficult for many vulnerable people, as online communication has eclipsed face-to-face and paper-based communication. Access and affordability of internet connectivity compounds the difficulties being experienced by people attempting to engage with crucial government services, such as, My Aged Care, My Gov and the ATO for example. Lack of computer skills can also be a barrier for all vulnerable people.

Greens SA and I as a candidate, agree with your recommendations on Aging in Country, housing, including availability and affordability, health and well-being, digital and social inclusion, employment, and ageism.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to COTA's 2022 State Election Platform. My interests are in human services, sociology, and psychological science. I will be registering for the State Election Leaders Forum on Ageing.

Yours faithfully,



Beverley Morris
Greens SA, Candidate for Schubert.

References: 1. The Honourable Rob Sims, MLC, COTA response (see attached to email).