

MEDIA RELEASE
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OLDER SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUPLES CONNECT THROUGH EXERCISE CLASSES

Strength for Life, a program developed by not-for-profit organisation, COTA [Council on the Ageing] SA, offers older South Australians the opportunity to gain strength, stay fit and increase their overall health and well-being.

The classes are a popular way for older South Australians to keep active, and they also provide the opportunity for people to connect and spend quality time being active together.

As many try to find new ways to reconnect with their partners this Valentine's Day, local couple Kevin Fitzpatrick and Anthony McTaggart, who have attended sessions at the Adelaide Aquatic Centre in North Adelaide, twice a week for two years say it's a great way to spend time together.

The same-sex couple of 25 years has found the sessions to be in an inclusive environment with other ages, ethnic groups and sexualities.

"We motivate each other to get up and go and give each other a lot of encouragement. I need a lot of encouragement sometimes, so Kevin's a real boost," Anthony said.

"We've also made really good connections with the people there and expanded our friendships," Kevin added.

Conveniently located at more than 100 locations across South Australia, Strength for Life promotes health and well-being for people aged 50+ years, and 40+ for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and people from refugee backgrounds.

Offered through COTA SA, the affordable sessions are run by accredited fitness providers in a group setting, where individuals work to a personalised program specifically designed for them which considers their fitness level, goals, and any health considerations.

Anthony was diagnosed with Parkinson's and vertigo, resulting in damage to the hearing in his right ear, and after finishing rehabilitation, medicos encouraged him to keep attending Strength for Life.

"It improves balance, and those things that decline when you get older but you don't realise have declined," he said.

Meanwhile, Kapunda couple Janet and Norbert Will, who have been married for almost 53 years, also love spending time together at the classes, attending Kapunda Senior Citizen's Centre and motivating each other during the week.

“If I didn’t go with my husband, he wouldn’t go on his own, and vice versa. I can see what he’s capable of, he can see what I’m capable of. It’s important that I can encourage him when we come home to do various things. There’s also other people and couples there who we interact with,” Janet Will said.

Janet has been attending sessions for just over a year and has seen improvement in her balance and shoulder movement after an operation that she had 18 months ago.

“I think Strength for Life is absolutely a fantastic thing. To keep fit, you need to exercise as often as you can. Because we live in a town that doesn’t have public transport, it’s very, very convenient for people to be able to access it. Sometimes older people don’t have their license anymore, so it’s very important to have some form of activity in our township.”

Sessions offer a range of benefits, including the opportunity to socialise with others before and after sessions, staying active and maintaining an independent lifestyle for longer and improving health and well-being.

Some of the exercises offered include strength training which improves balance and reduces risk of falling, as well as aqua training, which is only offered at a handful of locations and is a low-impact, therapeutic activity that improves cardio, strength and resistance while being easy on joints.

For further information about Strength for Life and improving your well-being, contact:

Strength for Life Program Team, COTA SA
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<https://cotasa.org.au/programs-and-services/strength-for-life>

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ABOUT COTA SA

COTA (Council on the Ageing) SA is an older people’s movement and the peak body that represents the rights, interests and futures of the more than 698,000 South Australians aged 50+. COTA SA stands with older South Australians to create new images and new expectations for the older years. Understanding the diverse views and experiences of older South Australians is core to achieving COTA SA's purpose to advance the rights, interests and futures of South Australians as we age. The organisation helps to reframe the way we age and values ageing as a time of possibility, opportunity and influence.

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