

Making the ageing experience better, together

Strategic Plan 2026–2031





COTA SA (Council on the Ageing South Australia) is the not for profit, peak body representing the rights, interests and futures of more than 700,000 South Australians aged 50+, who make up more than a third of our population.

COTA SA is independent and non-partisan and we have our sights firmly set on:

Challenging ageism

Overcoming disadvantage and inequality

Fostering respect for the diversity of ageing across our state

Offering unique programs that create new possibilities for and with older South Australians.

COTA SA is a proud partner in the COTA National Alliance, made up of COTAs in each state and territory and COTA Australia. Together, our COTA reach and influence is felt both locally and nationally.

We were established in 1957 and continue to evolve and develop to ensure that we reflect modern South Australia.

About our Strategic Plan

We asked our community what they wanted from our next strategic plan and they told us:

Be our voice: "Representing us to government when they are proposing changes that will affect how we live."

Challenge ageism: "Focus on debunking ageism within the general population, the media and older people themselves."

Make us visible and heard: "Erase the invisibility."

Support ageing well: "Continue on path of advocacy and information for those ageing and looking to age well."

Our Strategic Plan 2026-2031 sets out how we will make the ageing experience better for South Australians, guided by our community, and our vision, purpose and values.

We've called our plan *Making the ageing experience better, together* because every South Australian deserves to be seen, heard and supported as they age.

Thank you to the older South Australians whose photographs appear in this plan, Gayle, Max, Ravi and Rajam - who have been part of COTA SA's work by participating in the development of our policy and advocacy work, and our research and engagement activities. We're grateful to have you as part of our community.



Making the ageing experience better, together

South Australia has one of the highest populations of older people in Australia. We have an opportunity to lead the nation in building age-inclusive communities and better ageing experiences.

This strategic plan focuses on activities that provide meaningful impact for older people and the wider community, while strengthening COTA SA's independence, financial sustainability and long term influence.

COTA SA is committed to ensuring older South Australians are visible, heard, and able to shape the decisions that affect everyday life.

We will continue to help influence a South Australia where older people are respected and supported to live well as they age – and where ageing is understood and embraced.

We will push for change to make systems and services easier to navigate, advocate for fairer decisions for older South Australians and work to strengthen systems that are failing to deliver equitable outcomes – especially for people who are vulnerable and most at risk of exclusion.

Recognising that ageism is one of the greatest barriers to ageing well, we will actively challenge it, and work to shift attitudes, behaviours and narratives so older people are valued and included.

Grounded in lived experience, research and evidence, our advocacy, policy and communications will reflect what we hear from older people and demonstrate what has changed as a result. Alongside this, we will deliver practical programs that support connection, health and wellbeing and confidence through life transitions ensuring more older South Australians can access and benefit from them.

Making the ageing experience better, together

COTA SA Strategic Plan 2026–2031

Our vision

Ageing is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence.

Our purpose

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

Our values

Respect, Diversity, Equity, Collaboration, Integrity, Independence.

Our 5-year direction

A strong and independent COTA SA makes the ageing experience better in SA.

Our strategic direction

Trusted authority on ageing

We will be South Australia's trusted authority on ageing, translating older people's lived experience to create real change through our policy, advocacy, programs and services.

Understand the lived experience of the diversity of older South Australians

Strengthen our influence with decision-makers to effect change

Deliver programs to improve the ageing experience

Communicate clearly about what we stand for and why it matters

Age-inclusive South Australia

We will campaign against ageism and promote age-inclusion, drawing on research and evidence to build awareness and shift attitudes.

Call out ageism and promote age-inclusion in all we do

Gather research and evidence to shift ageist attitudes and behaviours

Build awareness and education to reduce and prevent ageism

Strong and Independent COTA SA

We will invest in the enablers that make us a strong, capable and financially sustainable organisation with a positive culture, so we can keep making an impact well into the future.

Foster positive people and culture, with professionalism, excellence and impact

Strengthen our self-funding programs and social enterprises

Manage finance and risk to remain sustainable and independent for the long-term



Measuring our success

COTA SA will develop and maintain a set of measures and milestones for each focus area through our annual business planning.

We will report on our progress and impact, through regular updates and an annual impact report, so our Board, members, partners and the broader community can see how we are creating change and making the ageing experience better for older South Australians.

How we will know we're successful?

By 2031:

Older South Australians' lived experience is routinely reflected in decisions, policy and services with COTA SA widely sought out and recognised as a trusted authority on ageing.

Ageism in South Australia is more widely acknowledged and challenged, with measurable shifts in attitudes, behaviours and public narratives towards respect and inclusion – and fewer older South Australians report experiencing ageism.

COTA SA has delivered on this plan and has grown its impact, remaining trusted, independent and effective, with organisational strength and viability at its core.

Our community

This plan will be delivered with and alongside older people and the many individuals, members and organisations that share our commitment to delivering a better ageing experience for South Australians.

We thank our community – COTA SA supporters, members, volunteers, partners, Board, Policy Council and staff – your contribution is essential to achieving the change outlined in this plan.



COTA SA
Kurna Country,
Level 1, 85 Hutt Street,
Adelaide, SA 5000

P: 08 8232 0422
Free Call: 1800 182 324
E: cotasa@cotasa.org.au
www.cotasa.org.au

PO BOX 7042,
Hutt Street SA 5000

