

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Money saving tips for older Australians

Older Australians are feeling the pinch as household budgets tighten.

Jane Mussared, Chief Executive of COTA SA (Council on the Ageing SA), said continual increases in cost of living was putting the older population under significant financial pressure.

“Older people have to be savvy with their money and we often hear examples of great creativity and thriftiness in making ends meet,” she said.

“The age pension is the main source of income for about 70 percent of people aged over 70-years-old.

“Discounted or free products and services are a valuable way of making their money go further beyond better-known government discounts on utilities for example.”

Below is a list of some of the discounted and/or free products and services which are available to older people in states and territories across Australia:

- **No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)**

This scheme provides no interest loans for people on low incomes. The loans are available for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines, vehicle repairs and medical procedures. The repayments are affordable and can be paid back over 12 to 18 months. The scheme is available through nearly 200 organisations across the country. Terms and eligibility apply.

- **Free and discounted legal advice**

Most COTA organisations in the states and territories have solicitors available for brief initial advice on a range of topics including wills, power of attorney and other general legal matters. Contact your local COTA for more information.

- **Public transport**

Discounted and/or free public transport is available to all older Australians with a Seniors Card. For example, public transport is free from midnight to 7am, 9am to 3pm, and 7pm to midnight and free on weekends and public holidays for Seniors Card holders in South Australia. Check the variations and requirements of each state and territory in advance of travel, but Seniors Card holders can get access to concessional public transport fares in both their home state and in any state or territory they are visiting, as well as in New Zealand.

- **Libraries and community centres**

Many libraries and community centres offer free or low-cost workshops and training programs for retirees to introduce them to or upskill them with computers, tablets, email and other technologies.

Local community or neighbourhood centres also offer a wide range of low-cost activities, interest groups and learning opportunities. There are more than 100 across South Australia alone.

- **Fitness programs**

The Strength for Life program is an affordable fitness program tailor-made for older people and is expanding to become available in most states and territories. Other fitness opportunities such as mall walking, the park run, and Heart Foundation Walking Groups are available in many locations either for free or at low cost.

- **Local Councils**

Services vary but some Councils provide free shuttle buses or transport to key landmarks within the district, such as shopping centres, libraries and medical centres. Local councils are also a good source of information about courses, programs and events in your local area.

- **Funeral assistance**

Most state governments in Australia offer schemes to help families who are unable to pay for funeral costs. Strict income and assets tests will apply.

- **Motor registration discounts**

Some states and territories offer discounted vehicle registration and licencing costs for pension card holders. In South Australia, seniors with a pensioner concession can receive a 50% reduction on the registration fee of one motor vehicle and one trailer or caravan, and a 50% reduction in the driver's licence fee.

This discount is not automatically applied, you must complete an application form at a service centre.

- **Seniors Card**

Seniors Card has just released their 2020 discount directory which includes hundreds of discounted or free products and services and special offers, exclusively available to older Australians with interstate businesses generally recognising Seniors Card holders wherever in Australia they are. The directory differs state-to-state, however in South Australia it can be found online (<http://seniorcard.sa.gov.au/>) and in hard copy.

- **Op Shops**

We are increasingly hearing from older people that they are joining younger generations in making the most of local Op Shops and thrift stores and have been able to source high quality but relatively inexpensive clothing and household goods.

Jeannette Hunt, 71-year-old retiree from Salisbury, South Australia:

**Are you confident that you are aware of all the savings/discounts/rebates available to you as a senior? How have you found out about the savings that are available to you?**

I've left no stone unturned trying to find as many savings, discounts and rebates as possible to help save money.

My local Council and its community centre have been good resources of information, as well as the COTA Conversations events and my own friendship groups.

I always ask for a senior's discount when shopping, the worst they can say is no. Often the shop will give 5 or 10 percent off just for asking.

**What sort of seniors-related savings/discounts/rebates do you currently claim?**

I get a discount on my electricity, gas, water, telephone and internet bills, and Council rates by having a Seniors Card.

Many older people drive but don't know they can get their registration discounted because it's not applied automatically. One of the lesser known seniors' discounts is cheap postage stamps.

I also take meditation classes that my local Council runs for free.

**How much difference do these make to your budget?**

Being frugal has made a significant difference to our household budget. We save hundreds of dollars every year by taking advantage of discounted or free products and services. Every dollar counts and it makes living on a pension much easier.

**COTA SA is an older people's movement run by, for and with older people and represents the aspirations, interests and rights of 633,000 older South Australians.**

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