

2018 STATE ELECTION PLATFORM

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	01
A SNAPSHOT OF AGEING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA	02
BACKGROUND	04
PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM	06
HEALTH	08
HOUSING	10
TRANSPORT	12
DIGITAL INCLUSION	14
EMPLOYMENT	16
DIVERSITY	17
COST OF LIVING	20
ELDER PROTECTION	22
AGEISM AND ATTITUDES TO AGEING	23

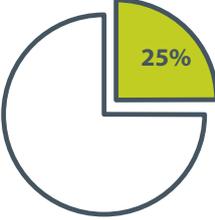
INTRODUCTION

South Australia has begun to embrace the possibilities of our ageing, understanding that the way we age brings with it opportunities that outweigh the challenges that are also part of longer lives.

There is much still to do to transform our attitudes and capabilities to support our modern ageing.

A SNAPSHOT OF AGEING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

There are distinct differences between modern ageing and ageing that was experienced a generation ago: there are lots more of us both in numbers and as a proportion of the SA population, and there is enormous diversity among us – diversity of culture, health, income, location, gender, circumstances, sexual orientation, attitudes and priorities.

 <p>633,784 South Australians are now aged over 50⁺¹</p>	 <p>More people than ever live in single person households</p>	<p>Older age is the time when a lifetime of inequality, compounded and multiplied from life event to life event, is in its starkest relief</p>	 <p>Aboriginal people die more than 10 years earlier than non-Aboriginal Australians</p>
 <p>About 10% of older South Australians identify as LGBTIQ</p>	 <p>25%</p>	 <p>30%</p>	
<p>There is particular disadvantage for older women because of low levels of superannuation, under employment and not owning a home</p>		<p>By 2050 people aged over 60 will represent 25% of the SA population</p>	<p>30% of older South Australians are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds</p>
 <p>Around one third live in rural areas</p>	 <p>People aged over 50 comprise more than 50% of the eligible voting population</p>	<p>VOTE</p>	

A SNAPSHOT OF AGEING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Contemporary older people are increasingly expecting customised approaches - highlighting the need for a shift in service design and delivery



Fewer older people own their own home



Australia has one of the highest life expectancies in the world²



Life expectancy has increased by about 14 years over the last 60 years



Our older age in Australia is healthier than ever before

The “typical” life course of our parents’ generations no longer applies for many people

“

Life is becoming more like a marathon than a sprint... but current policies and practices are based upon a traditional and increasingly outmoded view of the ‘typical’ life-course.³

Former Adelaide Thinker in Residence, Alexandre Kalache

”

2. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/ageing/about/>

3. Kalache (2013) The Longevity Revolution

BACKGROUND

COTA SA spent the second half of 2017 talking to hundreds of older people across SA about what matters most to them in the forthcoming State Government Election.

Almost 30 group conversations later, supplemented by hundreds of surveys, phone calls, emails and letters, we have a clear picture of the positive things that older South Australians value – and of the things they say are getting in the way of their independence and well-being.

BACKGROUND



Our conversations asked older people all over SA to reflect on what they loved as they grew older, what didn't work for them and what mattered most. It should not be any surprise that many of the things that matter are nothing to do with age and that there is an enormous commitment to SA and to its future. While many people are not now in paid work and do not expect to be so again, jobs and employment in their local communities are very important for all.

Equally older people give priority to local neighbourhoods, to local amenity and services, to access to green space and to the pleasure of quietness, the preciousness of neighbourliness, the importance of physical accessibility and the enjoyment of a sense of community.

Another overarching theme is a high level of anxiety about the rising cost of living, about the emergence of co-payments, an increasing tendency to charge for things that previously were free and about a raft of sometimes individually small but collectively significant increased costs in all areas of life. These are on top of some of the well-publicised cost of living increases – particularly power, but also council rates and other essential services.

A final theme is continuing disappointment about the prevailing ageism that many people experience and the consequences of it – age discrimination, isolation, fewer opportunities to join in and take part, an increasing sense of being left out of decision-making, of being invisible, of barriers to participation and of an unabating barrage of lazy, ignorant and damaging stereotypes about being older.

“

People like to think they can contribute in some way. They don't want to have everything done FOR them, they want help so they can keep LIVING and PARTICIPATING not just staying alive.

Millswood resident, age 68

”

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



HEALTH

Improve access to hospital avoidance, specialist health services, fitness programs and health intervention programs, including through co-design.

Increase understanding of Advance Care Directives (ACDs) and encourage participation.



HOUSING

Develop a comprehensive housing strategy for disadvantaged older South Australians.

Include age as a priority factor for access to public housing.

Fund a one-stop housing support service for older people.



TRANSPORT

Fund the extension of free public transport beyond off-peak times.

Support the development of transport options for people without access to private transport to travel within and between local communities and suburbs.



DIGITAL INCLUSION

Provide free Wi-Fi to support digital access for all.

Invest in comprehensive digital literacy training, particularly for older people and in rural areas.

Create expectations that businesses will support users to access digital information and not charge for hard copy bills or other essential information.



EMPLOYMENT

Support initiatives with employers and recruiters to tackle employment-based age discrimination.

Trial a mid-career check and planning service for people aged 50 and over, focused on planning ahead, upskilling and retraining and understanding future housing and financial goals.

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



DIVERSITY

Build advocacy with older people living in rural and regional SA, particularly in areas experiencing financial downturn.

Adopt the recommendations of the CALD Age Friendly SA report, including improvements to the age-friendliness of outdoor spaces, public buildings and public transport, as well as projects connecting older people of CALD backgrounds with their communities, and facilitating access to information and services.

Establish a community hub for older LGBTIQ⁴ South Australians.



COST OF LIVING

Install solar panels and batteries in all public and social housing, including those intended for older people.

Provide incentives for private sector landlords to offer energy-efficient private rental for people on low incomes.

Offer the electricity concession as a percentage of the electricity cost of the household rather than a flat rate.

Require all government services – including health – to have strategies in place to protect people on low incomes from being exposed to fees and co-payments.



ELDER PROTECTION

Undertake legislative reform that enables a coordinated response to the abuse of adults in vulnerable situations.

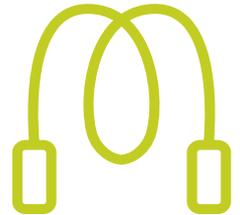
Work with other states and territories to establish a national framework on elder abuse.



AGEISM & ATTITUDES TO AGEING

Commit increased resources to campaigns and activities that counter ageism and create new opportunities for older people throughout SA.

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



HEALTH

THE PROBLEM

Loss of access to local specialist services was a constant theme during our conversations, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. Acute and specialist care is to a large extent a system for older people⁵ and yet we often heard that the need to travel long distances and receive care in alien environments is stressful, disjointed and expensive. Recent data suggests South Australians stay in hospital longer than elsewhere once the need for acute care has been met⁶.

People tell us that they have struggled to have their voices heard in the redesign of health services in SA. They point to an increased expectation for co-payment (eg \$13 per day co-payment for free to air TV in hospitals), the high cost of car parking, limited advice and support if travelling to the city and poor navigability within and between hospitals as examples of services that are hard to use, confusing, expensive and difficult.

Older people, including through The Plug-in⁷, are ready to be part of building improved patient experiences, in determining what works well and what doesn't and whether there may be better alternatives for the provision of some services in places other than hospital. In their conversations with COTA SA, older people have expressed a strong desire to be partners in the redesign of the hospitals and other health service experiences as a high priority.



What happens when one of an older couple from the west is hospitalised at Lyell McEwin Hospital and the other does not drive?

Kidman Park resident, Age 80+



The COTA SA community urges a commitment to support good health in SA with more emphasis on health promotion, health literacy, self-management and peer information. A reduction in hospital admissions requires improved investment in primary-acute-aged care pathways and alternatives to hospital care where hospital care is not preferred or does not add value.

UK based innovation think-tank, Nesta, estimates that co-design approaches such as self-management and peer processes can reduce the cost of managing patients with long term health conditions substantially.⁸ We need to mobilise the community as an underused asset in good health.

A proven strategy to support health literacy and self-management is COTA SA's peer information programs. These programs have provided cost effective and widespread access to information and health messaging on topics such as advance care directives, falls prevention, mental health and medication management. Of the more than 19,000 hospital admissions that occur in SA as a result of falls⁹, estimates are that between 20% and 30% (5,700) of all admissions of people aged 65 years and over are medication-related.¹⁰

5. P396 Australia's Health (2014) AIHN

6. Report on Government Service Provision (2018)

7. The Plug-in is a community of older people powered by COTA SA who are willing to be part of co-design, to influence innovation, research, policy and services for modern ageing

8. The Business Case for People Powered Health, Nesta, UK, April 2013

9. <http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public/content/sa+health+internet/clinical+resources/clinical+topics/falls+prevention>

10. <https://safetyandquality.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Literature-Review-Medication-Safety-in-Australia-2013.pdf>

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

Important in falls prevention are initiatives that increase the number of older South Australians who undertake regular exercise. Exercise that focuses on strength and balance is a proven protective factor against falls¹¹. Currently fewer than half of people aged over 50 undertake 150 minutes of exercise a week, and this proportion reduces to a quarter by age 75¹².

People tell us that cost, lack of confidence and not knowing where to start are major blocks to people starting exercise. This lack of access is compounded for low income rural South Australians and people from CALD and ATSI¹³ backgrounds.

While Advance Care Directives have considerable potential to enable people to control and choose options particularly at end of life, the uptake of, and respect for, Advance Care Directives is very low.

COTA SA urges a review of the barriers to the completion and use of ACDs. Strategies are required to increase the awareness and take up of ACDs by older people and to raise awareness among health professionals and the broader community. Supporting peer information for older people about Advance Care Directives is a low cost and effective way to increase the number of ACDs being completed.

HOW TO FIX IT

01

Develop options for avoiding or limiting long hospital stays, including through co-design with older people.

02

Develop an approach through co-design that supports older people needing to travel to specialist health services either across the city or from country areas, including access to transport, visitors' benefits, information, planning, advice and support.

03

Support peer programs in SA to build awareness of vital health interventions for older people, including falls prevention, planning ahead and medication management.

04

Extend access to appropriate physical fitness programs for older people with an emphasis on access in rural and regional SA and for older, low income CALD¹⁴ and Aboriginal people.

05

Recognise the low participation rate in Advance Care Directives (ACDs) and increase the understanding, active completion and use of ACDs by -

- Improving community and practitioner understanding of the barriers for the completion and subsequent use of ACDs
- Measuring the effectiveness of ACDs
- Funding programs to raise community awareness among older people and their families/supporters about the value of ACDs
- Encouraging health professionals to understand, respect and make active use of ACDs.

11. COTA SA licences more than 90 gyms and community centres throughout SA to offer Strength for Life, a tailor-made, low price fitness program focusing on strength and balance training for older people

12. 3-5 Physical Activity, State of Our Health, SA Health Performance Council 2016

13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)

14. Culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD)

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

HOUSING



THE PROBLEM

Access to affordable, safe and appropriate housing is perhaps the most urgent issue for an emerging group of older South Australians. We are seeing growing numbers of older people who don't own their own homes and have no financial resources which will cause a group of older people to be at risk of homelessness.

The reasons for this, particularly for women, include lack of access to superannuation, later life separation and divorce, employment breaks because of caring responsibilities, lack of access to public housing and loss of employment later in careers.

More older South Australians are being forced to turn to private rental to meet their housing needs. Private rental housing is typically not designed to meet the needs of people as they age in terms of physical design, secure tenure and affordability. Short leases, insecure tenancies and frequent moves required by some people in private rental compound isolation. Inappropriate design increases falls risk and the financial burden of rents being largely unaffordable for people on an age pension exacerbates mental and physical health problems.

Following the release of A Place to Call Home¹⁵ in 2017 which outlines the urgency of tackling housing stress and homelessness for older South Australians, COTA SA urges the development of a comprehensive housing strategy. In addition, and in the interim, we would also urge that public housing again gives priority to people whose housing options are limited by their age, financial circumstances and support.

There is a pressing need to offer a specialist housing service that helps older people to navigate, pay for, adapt and use housing options, preventing older people from becoming homeless. The Victorian government-funded service, Home at Last¹⁶ provides a proven model of one-stop support for older people. It is already evident that "utilising existing resources within the system to address needs by supporting clients to better navigate the system" will save significant public money¹⁷ and will prevent homelessness.



**I am home in Port Pirie with my friends and relatives.
The Housing Trust made that possible by giving
me this nice flat to live in. They do a good job.**

Port Pirie resident, age 62



15. Fiedler and Faulkner, A Place to Call Home (2017)

16. <http://www.older-ants.org.au/>

17. Home at Last

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

HOW TO FIX IT

01

Prioritise the development of a comprehensive housing strategy for older South Australians.

02

Include age as a priority factor for access to public housing.

03

Fund a one-stop housing support service for older people.



PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

TRANSPORT



THE PROBLEM

People tell us that affordable, accessible and timely community and public transport makes a huge impact on their lives – when it operates well it helps them get to and from their medical appointments, it enables them to shop and use other services and it supports their continuing in volunteering and keeping up with friends and family.

Initiatives to increase public transport options in metropolitan Adelaide have generally been welcomed and the Seniors Card is a very significant support for people using public transport in the metropolitan area.

Sadly, however, people tell us that alternatives to driving themselves are often inadequate, inappropriate and expensive, especially for people who live in regional and rural areas. People in regional areas already travel much further to obtain the specialist medical help and other services not available in their local area; the infrequency and expense of transport outside metropolitan areas is a huge barrier to being able to access these services. And that is aside from the isolation of having severe constraints around being able to visit friends, relatives or take part in social activities. We often heard the comment “no car = no life” and reports of people fearing the impact on their lives without their car.



To go from Berri to Murray Bridge I have to take a bus to Adelaide then wait two hours for a bus to Murray Bridge. It's the same story to get to Port Pirie or Port Augusta.

Berri resident, Age 80+



Older people tell us they want to stay in their own homes and within their own communities. An accessible, affordable and appropriate public transport service is a vital component of enabling that to happen. The cost and availability of transport from outside Adelaide and between regional centres is a source of concern and impacts a broad spectrum of older lives.

People in the metropolitan area are frustrated at the lack of transport at night and weekends as well as the time restrictions on weekdays of free travel before 9am and after 3pm. Seniors Card holders use public transport to be active citizens – volunteers, shoppers, service users, club members and festival goers.¹⁸ There is great potential to extend the contribution and involvement of older people by listening to the very real issues they raise about cost of living pressures and expanding the availability of free transport and increasing services.

18. More than A to B: The role of free public transport in enabling community connectedness, Helen Feist, Australian Population and Migration Research Centre, University of Adelaide, 2016

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

HOW TO FIX IT

01

Fund the extension of free public transport beyond off-peak times.

02

Support the development of transport options for people without access to private transport to travel within and between local communities and suburbs.



PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

DIGITAL INCLUSION



THE PROBLEM

The Digital Inclusion Index in 2017 continues to show that South Australia is the second least digitally included state (only Tasmania has a lower score). Older South Australians are making substantial improvements on the digital access and ability indices but these gains are offset by the decline in the affordability index. Even with the access improvements, older South Australians continue to be among those most likely to be less included in the digital world. When more people in the community are online, the disadvantage of not having access to the internet is compounded with 'the digital divide becoming narrower but deeper'.²⁵

The trend is for governments, businesses and services to deliver information largely online while decreasing other forms of interaction. Charges levied by some services for the supply of hard copy information – for example utilities bills – means that digital exclusion has a cost premium for groups least able to afford it.

Older people and others who are disadvantaged in their digital access need an opportunity to take their place in an inevitably digitised world. They will need help to do that by reducing access costs through the provision of free Wi-Fi and by programs to assist with literacy training.



There is an assumption that everyone has and can use a computer - no thought about how older people will cope.

Salisbury resident, age 86



Most companies, especially power companies, discriminate against the elderly. A huge number of our generation do not own computers or are computer illiterate. So being charged for paper bills and paying at the Post Office is not on. We end up paying more than the average person.

Glenside resident, age 79



PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

HOW TO FIX IT

01

Provide free Wi-Fi to support digital access for all.

02

Invest in best practice and comprehensive digital literacy training with an emphasis on older people including in rural areas.

03

Create expectations that businesses will support users to learn to access digital information and not charge for hard copy bills or other essential information.



PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



EMPLOYMENT

THE PROBLEM

More and more South Australians want and need to work into their 60s and beyond. However, the prevalence of age discrimination in employment¹⁹ means that many mature workers are unable to find and keep jobs. As a result, only one third of people aged over 55 participate in the workforce and unemployed older job seekers take on average 68 weeks to find work²⁰. Many older workers abandon their search for work or put up with significant underemployment. Increasing the workforce participation of older workers by just 3 percentage points adds \$3 billion to GDP or nearly 2% of national income.²¹

There is a particular issue in SA for workers transitioning from a diminishing manufacturing workforce, and for blue-collar workers needing new careers that better suit their physical attributes. Investment in mid-career planning²² will yield considerable benefits in terms of engagement and performance²³. It is also an opportunity for workers to make a plan for their future (such as health, housing and financial), and for the upskilling or reskilling that may be required. This concept is based on an assumption that people are more likely to get new jobs while still employed and to stay employed as they age if they keep the job they have, making the adjustments, changes and upskilling that are required along the way.

The Mature Women’s Ambassador Project heard the stories of older unemployed women and proposes that raising awareness among employers is a key strategy in tackling age discrimination in employment.²⁴

HOW TO FIX IT

01 Support initiatives with employers and recruiters to tackle employment-based age discrimination

02 Trial a mid-career check and planning service for people aged 50 and over, focused on planning ahead, upskilling and retraining needs and understanding future housing and financial goals.

19. p17, Work Well; Retire Well, findings of the Work, Care, Health and Retirement Ageing Agenders Project, 2017

20. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-19/age-discrimination-over-50s-worst-bracket-to-be-unemployed/8540548>

21. Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability (2016)

22. Work and retirement intentions among SA “Baby Boomers” A Mixed Method Approach (2016), David Waterford, Jo Battersby and Jane Mussared unpublished

23. Mid-Career Checks were first proposed by former Age Discrimination Commissioner, Susan Ryan, as part of the Willing to Work Inquiry.

24. <https://www.unisa.edu.au/Media-Centre/Releases/2017-Media-Releases/UniSA-study-shows-organisational-policies-and-practices-are-failing-to-support-and-engage-older-workers-/#.WHay-FN96UII>

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



DIVERSITY

THE PROBLEM

Our Rural Community

The COTA SA statewide consultations in October and November 2017 included travel to eight regional and rural centres to find out what was most important to older rural people's lives – what was working for them in their communities and what wasn't.

26% of older South Australians live outside the metropolitan area, with many of our rural communities having significantly higher age profiles than metropolitan Adelaide.²⁶ The concerns they highlighted are no surprise – jobs for their families, transport and access to services.

A common theme for rural, regional and metropolitan communities was the value that everyone put on the support and social connection they receive from interaction with their friends, neighbours and family. Good social connection through regular personal contact feeds a sense of security and counters isolation. In a practical sense, it means that for many older people there is support and help available locally when needed without relying on government to provide those services and support. But the system fails when people can't get local jobs.

The loss of local services combined with the limited ability to get to services or connect to family by using public transport compounds disadvantage for people living outside of Adelaide or away from regional centres. Having limited or no access to public transport exacerbates isolation when connections to family and friends are lost. Transport issues have been addressed under that section of this submission.

Country people pointed out to us that their cost of living is often higher than for their metropolitan counterparts – for example in food, transport and fuel. They feel that this is not recognised by government.

In other words, the risks of disengagement and isolation for older people in country SA are much higher than for their metropolitan peers arising from reduced access to services, being geographically isolated and losing connections with family.²⁷

Older people living in regional areas affected by substantial job losses tell us that they feel powerless and marginalised from decision-making about the options to rebuild their communities.

We need to find new ways to involve and engage older people in decision-making about their local communities. In many rural communities (on the Yorke Peninsula, Murray Mallee and Fleurieu for example) older people make up between 40% and 60% of the population.²⁸ COTA SA is constantly urged to offer opportunities to support better engagement and influence by older people in both local and statewide issues but has very limited capacity to do so.

26. Dr Helen Barrie, University of Adelaide supplied Jan 2017

27. COTA Victoria Social Isolation Working Paper, 2014

28. Dr Helen Barrie, University of Adelaide supplied Jan 2017

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

“

My family have moved away to get jobs – I can't rely on them for help. We need more support for local small businesses so people stay here. Our economy is fragile – lots of the young ones are on benefits. The government needs to get the economy working again so they can get jobs.

Port Augusta resident, age 76

”

Our Multicultural Community

Older South Australians are increasingly likely to come from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.²⁹ About 16% of older South Australians were born in non-English speaking countries although this proportion is higher among people aged over 70. A wide variety of languages is represented among this group, with households speaking more than 120 different languages at home. The MCCSA³⁰ has just finished a project to explore the Age Friendly Guidelines with more than 200 older people of CALD backgrounds and made a number of recommendations³¹. These recommendations were very much supported in our own consultations.

Our LGBTIQ Community

COTA SA has spent the last year talking with large numbers of older people identifying as LGBTIQ. For many the long Marriage Equality campaign, while achieving a good outcome, has exacerbated feelings of isolation and marginalisation.

The importance of the support and cohesion of the LGBTIQ community has been revisited by many people. Our research suggests that many of the clubs and groups that once were so important to older people identifying as LGBTIQ have collapsed as members have become frail, and that the resulting isolation and loneliness is a significant and pressing issue for the community.

Elsewhere research suggests that older LGBTIQ people are twice as likely to be single and live alone and 3 or 4 times more likely not to have children. Older people identifying as LGBTIQ therefore often nominate the LGBTIQ community as an important part of their support network, guarding against social isolation.

The SA Government currently has no mechanism to connect with this community. COTA SA recommends the creation of a permanent “hub” – in both physical and online formats – to enable LGBTIQ people to support and inform one another.

29. <http://mccsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CALD-Age-Friendly-Report-WEB.pdf>

30. Multicultural Communities Council SA (MCCSA)

31. <http://mccsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CALD-Age-Friendly-Report-WEB.pdf>

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

HOW TO FIX IT

01

Build capacity and advocacy with and by older people living in rural and regional SA, particularly those people living in areas experiencing financial downturn.

02

The recommendations of the CALD Aged Friendly SA be adopted covering –

- improvements to the age-friendliness of outdoor spaces and public buildings
- identifying opportunities to improve the age-friendliness of public transport (taking into account the views of older people from diverse communities)
- projects that connect older people of CALD background who are isolated or vulnerable to their local community
- projects explore ethno-specific communities' access to programs, social activities and groups for seniors to expand opportunities for social, cultural and economic participation
- projects that explore communication strategies to increase awareness of older people from CALD backgrounds to available information, services and programs.

03

Establish a community hub for older LGBTIQ³² South Australians.

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



COST OF LIVING

THE PROBLEM

Older South Australians on low incomes are increasingly experiencing real poverty. One of the areas people identified in our consultations as creating the most financial stress while living on a pension is the rising cost of power. COTA SA has previously referred to a finding by Choice in 2015 that the cost of household electricity is the biggest cost pressure for households.³³

This finding has been reiterated in our survey. The burden and stress caused by the rising cost of electricity and gas was the headline issue from all our research and is causing great anxiety for people on low fixed incomes. Many older people pay their utility bills and rent ahead of any other expenses so the hardship is not necessarily reflected in incidences of access to hardship programs but more that people are doing without other fundamentals – food, social activities, heating and cooling. The message they want passed to the SA Government is that energy costs need to come down.



My apartment does not have gas and I am unable to further cut my electricity bill without endangering my life.

Adelaide resident, age 67



It is urgent that provision is increased for energy concessions, especially those for electricity, for older people living in South Australia. The flat rate concession currently provided by the State Government is losing ground against the rising cost of electricity. COTA SA advocates that the SA Government adopt a percentage concession approach and strongly recommends the 17.5% concession currently available in Victoria be adopted here.

Last year COTA SA advocated for the acceleration of the program of installing solar panels in public housing in SA and for new incentives to be available for older people on low incomes to fit solar panels and batteries. The urgency for this is growing all the time, with the cost of power again being nominated by older people as a source of considerable anxiety particularly as they balance health advice to stay cool within their household budgets.

In addition, older people say that co-payments, an increasing tendency to charge for things that were previously free and a collection of increases in many other areas add up to real financial stress. This includes council rates, health care costs and other essentials.

33. <https://www.choice.com.au/~media/ef9cbe-615ba84432982b76715b-f60b80.ashx>

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

HOW TO FIX IT

01 Offer the electricity concession as a percentage of the electricity cost of the household rather than a flat rate.

02 Install solar panels and batteries in all public and social housing, including those intended for older people.

03 Provide incentives (including through taxation) for private sector landlords to offer energy-efficient private rental for people on low incomes.

04 Require all government services – including health – to have strategies in place to protect people on low incomes from being exposed to new co-payments.



PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM



ELDER PROTECTION

THE PROBLEM

The Closing the Gap report³⁴ remains an authoritative and comprehensive blueprint for the reform of the protection of vulnerable older adults in SA. It recommended legislative reform to enable a consistent, coordinated response to prevent and respond to the abuse and harm of vulnerable older people in the community. Since its publication in 2011, several very serious incidents including in accredited aged care facilities, suggest that a review and repair of the holes in the legislative safeguards, redress and services available are required. While COTA SA supports the steps taken so far, we continue to urge a more comprehensive approach.

Given that legislative change is likely to take some time, the State Government must develop and implement a coordinated response framework, informed by a clear human rights perspective.

COTA SA joins our COTA colleagues in other jurisdictions in urging a national framework on elder abuse, including a focus on data collection around prevalence.



We need better monitoring of nursing homes, we're terrified of the thought of going in one because of how you might be treated!

Yankalilla resident, age 83



HOW TO FIX IT

01

Undertake legislative reform that enables a consistent, coordinated response to investigate and respond to the abuse and harm of adults (including older people) in vulnerable situations.

02

Work with other states and territories to establish a national framework on elder abuse including a focus on data collection around prevalence.

34. Closing the Gaps: Enhancing South Australia's Response to the Abuse of Vulnerable Older People, Office of the Public Advocate in collaboration with University of South Australia, 2011

PROBLEM AREAS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

AGEISM AND ATTITUDES TO AGEING



THE PROBLEM

Scholars and practitioners agree that ageism - the structural devaluation of older people within a society (which often intersects with other forms of discrimination) – heightens the risk of abuse for some individuals³⁵. Older people tell us that ageism and age discrimination are alive and well, diminishing opportunities for volunteering, work, being heard and having a say.

The leadership of new attitudes and understanding about what a modern older life is and what the possibilities of our ageing are must come from government and should be integral to the creation of an Ageing Well industry in SA. South Australia should lead the possibilities of ageing . Throughout history cultural organising has been a powerful partner of social movements and new expectations for gender and race. For example, COTA SA is continuing its campaign for an injection of funding to upgrade the ZestFest Festival of Modern Ageing³⁶, a unique partnership model which reaches up to 100,000 older people every year throughout SA.

HOW TO FIX IT

01

Commit increased resources to campaigns and activities that counter ageism and create new opportunities for older people throughout SA, such as ZestFest.

35. ALRC Elder Abuse Discussion paper, Dec 2016

36. ZestFest is an annual October program of events throughout SA staged by COTA SA and partners to celebrate, connect to and challenge modern ageing.

COTA SA

16 Hutt Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Phone

(08) 8232 0422
Country Callers: 1800 182 324

Email

cotasa@cotasa.org.au

Postal Address

GPO Box 1583,
Adelaide SA 5001

