



18 June 2007

As Addressed

Dear ASN Members, Supporters and Friends

Re: Aged Services Network (ASN) Western Region -Network Closure

I am writing to advise of the significant decision about the future of the Aged Services Network (ASN) taken by the March meeting of the ASN Committee, which will result in the closure of the ASN at the end of the 2006 -2007 financial cycle. A copy of the decision is attached (*Attachment 1*).

For fifteen years, the ASN has been the key Regional service provider forum for facilitating aged services planning, service coordination and advocacy on behalf of services, supported by the Department of Human Services (DHS). COTA Victoria has been the auspice agency for the Aged Services Network (ASN) Western Region for around a decade.

In recent years, some of the important roles of the ASN have passed to new loci of activity, such as the Primary Care Partnerships, and the great work implemented by Local Government, such as the 'Positive Ageing' strategies. A discussion about the future viability of the Network was initiated by the ASN Committee in 2006 as a result of these changing planning forums.

There has been a process of consideration and consultation within the network that has resulted in the decision to dismantle the current Aged Services Network, and replace it with a new consumer focussed forum to enhance consumer consultation and participation in aged services planning in the North and West Metropolitan Region (NWMR). Consequently, the service system resource funded by DHS will be redeveloped, utilising the currently funded position to work with a consumer focussed reference group that will operate across the North and West Metropolitan Region, and be managed by COTA Victoria.

The ASN Committee, DHS and COTA Victoria see the ending of the ASN as a positive decision that paves the way for a new Regional HACC Planning Platform to be established, as well as creating an opportunity for the consumer perspective to be more effectively harnessed in the regional development of the aged services system. However, the closing of the ASN is a milestone with many positive achievements to be celebrated.

Therefore a final ASN Member Forum and celebration is being held on **Tuesday 17 July 2007** at the Clock Tower Centre in Moonee Ponds. An invitation is enclosed.

We would like to thank you for your support for the ASN over the years and hope you will join us at the celebration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sue Hendy".

Sue Hendy
Chairperson
Executive Director
COTA Victoria

Decision on the Future of the Aged Services Network (ASN) Western Region:

The proposed model involves the dismantling of the current Aged Services Network, and replacing it with a new consumer focussed forum that would operate across the region. Details of the model and the implementation of this consumer focussed consultation forum and processes are still to be determined, in consultation with consumers and service providers and DHS. However broadly speaking the new model would incorporate:

- ?? Redevelopment of the currently funded position to work with a consumer focussed reference group, and managed by COTA Victoria;
- ?? Closer collaboration with COTA Victoria to represent the voice of consumers in the aged service system;
- ?? Service provider consultation and feedback for input into issues, priorities and recommendations;
- ?? Identification and coordination with existing consumer consultation mechanisms to support and input into the new consumer consultation forum;
- ?? Consumer representation at the Regional HACC Planning Platform.

The ASN Executive believes that this model is more likely to effectively utilise the funding allocation and achieve the intended outcomes and benefits to the regional HACC planning and consultation platform, service providers and clients.

Advantages of the proposed model:

- ?? Increases consumer participation and input into Regional HACC Service planning and delivery;
- ?? Provides an interface for Service providers and consumers;
- ?? Provides a mechanism for HACC and other aged care service providers to access consumers for consultation;
- ?? Could increase capacity to promote, *facilitate and undertake research and data analysis to inform* planning and service delivery;
- ?? Builds on experience and reach of COTA Vic to underpin good consumer participation practice;
- ?? Better alignment with the expressed needs of the DHS NWMR in terms of consumer input and engagement;

The ASN Committee adopted the above proposal:

Moved Carolyn Stapleton; Seconded Hazel Ingram; All agreed.

ASN Committee Meeting 6 March 2007