

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

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# THE AGE OF CHANGE

### **GIVING BACK TO SENIORS**

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria Chief Executive Officer, Ms Sue Hendy, welcomed yesterday's announcement of the Victorian Labor party's *Supporting Seniors* election policy.

"This is a welcome recognition by the Government of the needs and issues impacting on Victorian Seniors," Ms Hendy said. "We are very pleased that a Brumby Government will act on its commitment to an Age-Friendly Victoria, supporting older people to remain active, independent and connected to their communities."

"The introduction of a Summer Electricity Concession will be particularly welcome. The Winter Energy Concession is a great help, but older people aren't just vulnerable or struggling to meet energy costs during cold weather. Extreme heat takes a severe toll as well."

"Too many older people are struggling under rising costs of energy. Utility bills of pensioners and low income seniors make up a higher proportion of their spending because they can't afford energy efficient appliances, or access government schemes to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. "

"We are also pleased that the Victorian Labor party recognises the importance of older people maintaining an active lifestyle. Funding announced today for an Active Seniors Grants program and to expand strength training programs - such as the very successful *Living Longer Living Stronger*<sup>TM</sup> programs in gyms - are important initiatives to enable older people to enjoy healthy, independent lives."

"The opportunity to establish and promote new activity groups for seniors under this program will be very welcome. Not everyone wants to go to gyms or participate in organised sport, so having the chance to be with other older people in activities that are accessible and that they enjoy will help older people get out in their communities," said Ms Hendy.

"The funding for upgrading of senior's community centres, and for Men's Sheds will also help in creating communities that are age-friendly. Men's Sheds are a great community resource for all members of the community, but we would like to see funding to assist with the coordination of activities and to reach those men who are not already involved in groups."

"Of course not everyone can enjoy the fully active life they might like, and older people tell us that physical incapacity and illness are big challenges to maintaining independence through life. The additional funding announced for Home and Community Care Services will mean that more people can get the support they need to stay in their homes and close to family and friends."

"Victorian Seniors have worked hard all their lives to build and contribute to this state. It's about time our politicians and political parties recognised this and acted to give back," said Ms Hendy. "With around a quarter of Victoria's population aged over 60, seniors are not a minority group."

"If the Brumby Government is re-elected we look forward to working with them to build on these initiatives to make an Age-Friendly Victoria a reality."

Other announcements welcomed by COTA include:

- extension of the Pensioner Stamp Duty Concession, for seniors downsizing their homes;
- Additional 3000 Personal Alert alarms;
- High-care residential care facility in Mornington.

*For more information on age-friendly policy initiatives, or to join the campaign, Victorians can go to [www.cotavic.org.au](http://www.cotavic.org.au) or call 9655 2127. Since 1951, COTA has been the voice of Australian seniors and the peak representative body of older individuals and organisations representing seniors. COTA is a non-profit organisation committed to human rights, social justice and the eradication of ageism – our mission is to mobilise older people and those who work with them, to age well in a just society.*

– ENDS –

**For all media enquiries, please contact Sanna Nyblad 03 9416 0010 or 0430 561 600**

*Please see **Media Backgrounder** for information on the issues seniors face.*