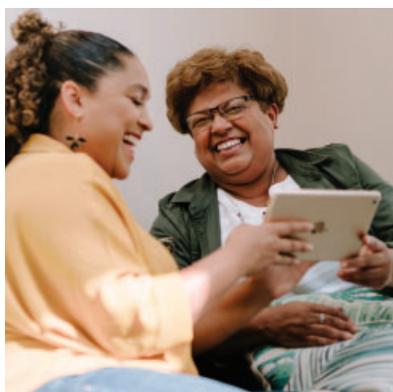


COTA Victoria Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025



Ageing in Australia is a time of possibility,
opportunity and influence.

About COTA Victoria & Seniors Rights Victoria

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria is the leading not-for-profit organisation representing the interests and rights of people aged over 50 in Victoria. For over 70 years, we have led government, corporate and community thinking about the positive aspects of ageing in the state.

Today, our focus is on promoting opportunities for and protecting the legal rights of people 50+. We value ageing and embrace its opportunities for personal growth, contribution, and self-expression. This belief drives benefits to the nation and its states alongside communities, families, and individuals.

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a program of COTA Victoria and the key state-wide service dedicated to advancing the rights of older people and the early intervention into, or prevention of, elder abuse in our community.

SRV has a team of experienced advocates, lawyers, and social workers who provide free information, advice, referral, legal advice, legal casework, and support to older people who are either at risk of or are experiencing elder abuse. SRV supports and empowers older people through the provision of legal advice directly to the older person.

Our vision

Ageing in Australia is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence.

Our purpose

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

Our values

In implementing our strategy — and every other aspect of our operations — we are guided by these values:

- **Respect** - We respect and acknowledge the contribution and lived experience of Victorians as they age, and support each person's right to make choices and participate in their community.
- **Diversity** - We recognise the merit of the great diversity that characterises communities of Victorians of all ages and are committed to genuine exchange, inclusion and engagement with all older people in Victoria.
- **Collaboration** - We unite and engage with older people, with each other, with our partners, with national and state-wide COTA bodies, and with the Victorian community to achieve our Vision and Purpose.
- **Integrity** - We operate ethically, openly, honestly and with accountability.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay respect to elders past and present and those who continue the journey. We recognise the rich Indigenous heritage and culture of this country.

Our strategic focus for the years ahead

The COTA Victoria 2023-2025 Strategic Plan clearly defines our pathway for the future. Our three-year plan will build on our organisation's unique history, national and state memberships, and volunteer and service sector network. While the focus of our strategy is on older people in Victoria, we believe the contribution of our organisation extends beyond our state.

Our strategy is based on our positive and pragmatic perspective of ageing in Victoria. Together, our strategy and plan chart the direction COTA Victoria is heading. We strive to provide a framework using our vision, purpose, and strategic objectives – all underpinned by our values – that ensures our stakeholders are clear about our goals, priorities, and actions.

This is a key part of the transformation of COTA Victoria into a focussed and resilient organisation that exudes demonstrable value for those we represent.

Standing alongside older Victorians

COTA Victoria stands alongside older Victorians to embrace our worth, to promote ageing well, to protect legal rights, and to address ageism. We are also fierce advocates for policy change, and for providing thought leadership-based programs and services across the state.

Victoria is currently facing a range of economic pressures, which is leading to increased costs of living. The state also continues to face the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the pandemic response. These are very real threats to the wellbeing of older Victorians.

At the same time, Victoria is getting older.

Older people currently make up more than a third of Victorians, and this number is growing. The number of Victorians aged over 65 is expected to triple by 2058. Victoria's ageing population has major long-term social and economic implications, but it also has an immediate impact, leaving more people more vulnerable to the current pressures on the state.

These factors are deeply affecting what it means to age in Victoria.

This is why COTA Victoria needs to continue to stand with older Victorians. We believe the steps outlined in this Strategic Plan will enable us to do so.

We need a positive ageing agenda that will support older Victorians to live the lives they want, which will deliver benefits for them and a community dividend for Victoria. Victoria needs to empower and enable its older residents if it is to prosper in current global conditions. COTA Victoria needs to drive this.

COTA Victoria is building on four key pillars to ensure this Strategic Plan means we can best support older Victorians. These pillars – **Influence, Partnership, Empowerment, and Sustainability** – are detailed in the remaining pages of this document.

COTA Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



We are thought leaders and first-of-mind with government, business and community.

Goals

- Increase our advocacy initiatives focussing on the issues affecting older people, on behalf of older Victorians.
- Entrench ourselves as the leading not-for-profit, statewide voice on policy that impacts older people.
- Foster a broad-based policy environment that supports ageing well in Victoria.

Priorities

- To focus on policy areas vital in supporting positive ageing in Victoria, and where COTA Victoria can support better outcomes and demonstrable community dividend.
- To focus on areas including – but are not limited to – healthcare, aged care, financial stability, social isolation, and housing.

Actions

- We will proactively develop and publish a policy paper on older Victorians and the health system, highlighting the experience of older people receiving care during the current healthcare pressures.
- We will expand our engagement with key government stakeholders, informed by an overarching plan that is focused on delivering real change.
- We will continue and grow our partnerships and agreements with Victorian Government departments that have the most impact on ageing well in Victoria.
- We will continue to develop submissions for state-level consultations that affect older people and their lives in Victoria.



We seek opportunities to be a trusted ethical partner to deliver inclusive and positive outcomes for older people.

Goals

- Continually improve the mental, physical, economic and social wellbeing of older Victorians.
- Continually improve our engagement with older Victorians to deliver the most impact.
- Continue to be a trusted partner in delivering reform, innovation, and thought leadership-based programs and services.
- Expand Care Finder services beyond South East Melbourne.

Priorities

- To leverage the lived experience of our existing volunteer base to create COTA Victoria champions.
- To increase the education and engagement of older Victorians to deliver services and change.
- To elevate our position to the leading Care Finder provider within Australia.

Actions

- We will maintain and enhance opportunities to increase mental health, access to physical activities, social connection and participation for older people.
- We will enable older people to access and participate in innovative employment and training programs.
- We will continually improve upon COTA Victoria's volunteer management and engagement framework.
- We will continue to deliver assertive outreach and information-based activities and monitor how to best improve internal and external engagement.
- We will build upon the capacity of the COTA Victoria Helpline to reach a broader and more diverse cohort of older Victorians.
- We will continue to provide leading care and support in the provision of Care Finder services.



We enable older people to be their own advocates and build capacity in their communities.

Goals

- Significantly expand the resources of Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV).
- Through SRV, continue to provide an integrated legal-socio legal service where casework teams of lawyers and advocates work collaboratively to address the legal and non-legal issues clients have across the state.
- Through SRV, build upon the provision of general advice, support, resources and referral information for family and friends of older people via the SRV Helpline.

Priorities

- To continually improve our response to elder abuse and the preservation of the rights of the older person.
- To continue to lead efforts to empower older people through the prevention of, and response to, elder abuse.
- To remain the key state-wide service that recommends, influences and reforms policy and research on elder abuse.

Actions

- We will build upon measurement and evaluation of our work and services to showcase our high-volume output.
- We will continue to improve our Helpline call response to deliver timely advice and referrals to our clients.
- We will continue to design and deliver industry-leading community and professional education programs and events.



We are a dynamic and viable organisation.

Goals

- Continue to be financially viable and able to deliver the support and reform that older Victorians need for another 70 years.
- Remain an effective and trusted partner, with key stakeholders and networks across the state.
- Innovate with new programs and services to deliver real change for older Victorians.

Priorities

- To grow our organisational brand and build long-term relationships with external stakeholders.
- To secure three-, five-, and seven-year funding streams for new and existing programs, services, and supports.

Actions

- We will develop business cases for proposed new areas of COTA Victoria to create and build long-term relationships with organisations that want to enhance positive ageing in Victoria.
- We will actively seek out gaps in the care of older Victorians and develop solutions to be the go-to agency for the holistic provision of care.
- We will proactively engage with the media and external organisations to increase our representation in stories that impact older people.
- We will refine our COTA Victoria membership services framework with the focus of adding value to our members.



cotavic.org.au

Phone: 03 9655 2100

Email: cotavic@cotavic.org.au



seniorsrights.org.au

Helpline: 1300 368 821

Email: info@seniorsrights.org.au

Level 2, Suite 2.5, 424 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004