

MEDIA RELEASE

22 April 2020

COTA NT launches 'Stay Connected' support for Senior Territorians

COTA NT has launched 'Stay Connected' to help senior Territorians during the coronavirus pandemic. COTA NT recognises it's not 'business as usual' in the Territory and its new campaign highlights how the organisation is working differently to deliver its advocacy, support, programs and services for seniors.

'Stay Connected' highlights the importance of connections, conversations, community and care. People are reminded they can still visit COTA NT's head office at Spillett House in Darwin (with entry restrictions in place) and phone COTA staff on 8941 1004. But they can now also 'chat' via the COTA NT website, join its social community online, take part in a COVID-19 survey to have their say, and even enjoy online exercise classes (seated aerobics and Pilates).



Nick Danks, Telstra Country Wide NT Area General Manager, dropped off ten loan tablets to Sue Shearer, CEO of COTA NT, for use by Territory seniors

"For many seniors, the digital and virtual worlds are alien environments and for them – as well as for others - it's not just a simple matter of downloading an app and having an online chat with friends to make up for a lack of human contact and socialisation. Many people cannot use smartphones, laptops, tablets either because of their remote location, lack of access, experience or confidence in using them," said COTA NT CEO, Sue Shearer.

"So, we are very grateful to Telstra (North Australia) who has helped us provide access to online communication for seniors during the COVID-10 pandemic with a very welcome loan of ten tablets. Following social distancing, isolation and lock down measures, especially in aged care facilities, we had several calls from distressed families as they haven't been able to see their loved ones. Hopefully these seniors will be able to use these Telstra tablets to Facetime or video call their loved ones. We are thrilled that Telstra have been so generous with their support. For seniors feeling the mental and emotional effects of social isolation, being able to see a friendly face, have a conversation with loved ones and knowing they are still close makes a world of difference."

"At COTA NT," continued Ms Shearer, "We are also doing things the more traditional way. With the help of volunteers, we are phoning members of COTA NT and the NT Seniors Card program to ask, "Are you okay?" We are arranging help for them where needed – with shopping, access to aged care services, information about how to stay safe and more. Everyone contacted to date has been very appreciative of a friendly voice and someone checking in with them."

COTA Northern Territory is the peak advocacy and representation organisation for senior Territorians advocating for and working towards an age-friendly, just, inclusive and equitable society since 1969

“We are also urging other Territorians to help seniors living locally by dropping a note into their letterbox which asks, “Are you okay?”. Community ‘kindness notes’ are available on our website for everyone to use which include useful phone numbers and a link to the Northern Territory Government’s advice on coronavirus. We also published idea sheets for people on how to stay connected, busy and active whilst at home.”

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Media contacts:

For more about COTA NT’s work and Stay Connected

- Sue Shearer, CEO, COTA NT – **0408 987 751**

For more about Online Exercise Classes

- Sharon Kelly, Results Personal Health & Fitness Coaching **0438 890 089**

More information

- **Stay Connected Overview**
<https://www.cotant.org.au/stay-connected/>
- **Kindness Notes**
<https://www.cotant.org.au/kindness-notes/>
- **COTA NT Have Your Say – COVID-19 – Survey 2020**
<https://www.cotant.org.au/cota-nt-have-your-say-covid-19-survey-2020/>
- **Online Exercises Classes**
<https://www.cotant.org.au/online-exercise-classes-for-seniors/>
- **Register to Volunteer -**
<https://www.cotant.org.au/register-to-volunteer/>



COTA NT's CEO Sue Shearer delivered supplies of groceries, games and DVDs to seniors in Adelaide River with the help of local police officers