

## MEDIA RELEASE

26 November (for immediate release)

# Over 900 voices – what NT seniors had to say

COTA NT conducted a Territory-wide survey recently which closed at the end of October. We received over 900 responses from seniors located throughout the Northern Territory. They were asked to share their thoughts around issues such as housing and accommodation, employment and volunteering, health and well-being, transport, crime and security and activities.

COTA NT has now released a snapshot of the major findings of those surveyed, which presents a uniquely Territorian picture. The snapshot reveals specific wishes including a lower cost of living, more housing for seniors close to where they have lived their lives in the NT, more affordable housing for independent living and adequate and reasonably priced services “to allow me to stay in my home as I age.”

“We received a lot of comments regarding the cost of living,” said COTA NT’s CEO Sue Shearer, “And almost half of those surveyed were concerned about this more than any other issue. Nearly 60% felt that the cost of living is increasing at a rate that is leaving them behind. Many voices told us that the NT Concession Scheme and the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme should be fair and equally available to all, and not related to economic circumstances. What a lovely Christmas present it would be indeed, if the NT Government ended this inequality and helped seniors ‘keep up’ with the cost of living. The consideration of a ‘debit card’ would enable more consumer choice for seniors too, enabling them to choose from a greater variety of selected vendors for the Seniors Recognition Scheme payment of \$500.”

The snapshot from the COTA NT survey also reveals that 82% of seniors feel very safe or relatively safe in their communities, and that nearly 70% of them expect to be living in the Territory in the next five years. “To ensure seniors stay in the Territory, we need adequate accommodation choice,” said Ms Shearer, “We know it’s beneficial to the Territory’s economy and community to retain our seniors, but one of the biggest problems we already have – and will continue to face – is the lack of appropriate and affordable housing, whether it is retirement villages or nursing homes. As figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show, 34% of the Territory’s population is aged over 65, proportionately the largest in Australia. We need to start seriously planning now.”

The survey also suggested that many people welcome a return to the issue of legalised assisted dying. Nearly 80% of survey respondents were in support of this; with 10% not in support. Meanwhile, it’s good news across the board, the average age felt by those who were surveyed was 56 (only just senior in fact).

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**Attached: COTA NT Survey 2018 Snapshot of Results**

Also located at, [www.cotant.org.au](http://www.cotant.org.au)

<https://www.cotant.org.au/about-us/who-is-cota/cota-advocacy/council-on-the-ageing-nt-2018-survey/>

**COTA NT is the peak policy development, advocacy and lobby organisation for older Territorians**