



**COTA**   
NORTHERN TERRITORY  
*for senior Territorians*

**Volunteering**  
**2022**



# About COTA NT

**COTA NT is the peak body representing the interests and rights of people aged 50+ in the Northern Territory. For over 50 years, we have led government, corporate and community thinking about aspects of ageing.**

COTA NT is a not-for-profit community organisation. We fund our activities with the support of government, members and stakeholders.

## Our vision

A just, equitable, age-friendly and humane community in which people are enabled to contribute and grow to their fullest capacity, and have access, with dignity, to appropriate care and support.

## Our purpose

To empower older people, those who work with them, government and the community into achieving well-being and social justice for older people.

## Our values

Respect, inclusivity, integrity, professionalism.

**This handbook is designed to assist new Volunteers during their placement with COTA NT.**

*Our cover: Alice Springs Seniors Expo 2021*

*Photograph: Kate Pepper*



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# Welcome

**It is a pleasure to welcome you to COTA NT, the peak advocacy organisation for seniors in the Northern Territory.**

A volunteer hour is valued at \$45.10 per hour. (This calculation is taken from the biannual Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) average weekly earnings figures for Australia).

Despite the obvious financial value, we know that Volunteers give our organisation *tremendous* support far beyond the bottom line.

## Governance

Our Board Members are in unpaid, voluntary positions and help steer the organisation. Their experience and skills enable us to stay afloat, advocate strongly for seniors and keep seniors in NT regions connected with us.

## Program support

Volunteers are the life-blood of programs such as our Activities and Events and Multicultural Support Program.

Event and activity Volunteers across the NT ensure that seniors stay engaged, connected, informed and entertained - that's no mean feat for stakeholders of all ages, all backgrounds, all with differing interests, needs and opinions.

## Peer educators

As Peer Educators, Volunteers lead musical and photography workshops and health and wellness classes for the community, our Members and our staff.

## Home maintenance service

Volunteers deliver a Home Maintenance Service for our older Members, in particular, making a huge difference to the quality of their every day lives.

## Administration

Volunteers support our communications and *all* our programs through data entry and administrative tasks. Essential to everything.

*"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.*

*You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in".*

Thank you for casting your vote with us.



*Sue Shearer*

Sue Shearer  
Chief Executive Officer, COTA NT



# Code of Practice

**COTA NT is an organisation that involves Volunteers in many aspects of its work.**

It agrees to:

- Interview and engage Volunteers in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunities legislation.
- Provide Volunteers with orientation and training.
- Provide Volunteers with a healthy and safe workplace.
- Not place Volunteers in roles that have been identified as paid jobs.
- Differentiate between paid and unpaid roles.
- Define Volunteers' roles and develop clear role descriptions.
- Provide appropriate levels of support and management for Volunteers.
- Provide Volunteers with a copy of policies pertaining to Volunteers.
- Ensure Volunteers are not required to take up additional work during industrial dispute or paid staff shortages.
- Provide all Volunteers with information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures.
- Acknowledge the rights of Volunteers.
- Not ask a Volunteer to work as a Volunteer for more than 16 hours per week.

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- Ensure that the work of Volunteers complements but does not undermine the work of paid staff.
- Offer Volunteers the opportunity for professional development.
- Hold Accident Insurance and Public Liability Insurance which includes Volunteers.
- Reimburse Volunteers for approved out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.
- Treat Volunteers as valuable team members and advise them of opportunities to participate in decisions.
- Acknowledge the contribution of Volunteers.
- Ensure that all volunteer work is undertaken on a voluntary basis and without coercion.
- Offer Volunteers work opportunities appropriate to their skills, experience and aspirations.
- Maintain written policies and implement procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of Volunteers including maintaining appropriate current volunteer policies and implementing procedures in compliance with all legislation pertaining to Volunteers. In particular, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 and any

other legislation that is relevant to Volunteers.

- Ensure the tasks and activities undertaken by Volunteers benefit the community and that Volunteers do not derive financial gain for themselves.

## **Role definitions**

### **Volunteer**

One who gives their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

### **Program Manager**

The term Program Manager refers to those individuals, working across COTA NT who utilise Volunteers as part of their services/programs and for whom they are specifically responsible.

### **Supervising Staff**

The term Supervising Staff refers to paid COTA employees who may assist Volunteers carry out their duties.

### **Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for providing policy guidance in regard to people in the workplace including Volunteers.

## Volunteers / Staff relationship

Volunteers are not required or expected to undertake tasks that are the normal responsibility of paid staff. Paid staff are remunerated for the duties they undertake and the responsibilities they have to the organisation. These responsibilities have a legal basis through Awards and Contracts of Employment. Dispute in any of these arenas are solved through recourse to applicable legislation.

Volunteers operate under a moral responsibility to undertake the activities that they commit to but are under no legal obligation to attend or carry them out.

There are no punitive steps that COTA NT can take other than to discontinue a relationship should a Volunteer not adhere to their commitment.

When COTA NT determines to provide a particular service or program to the community it does so on the basis of funding that program and providing it through the agencies of paid staff.

While a strategy to implement and conduct a particular service or program might include the use of Volunteers, it cannot be purely dependent upon Volunteers for it to succeed.

Some activities that Volunteers should not undertake and paid staff should undertake include:

- Participation in a program or service without the presence of, or access to the designated Program Manager
- Reconciliation and banking of monies received
- Provision of non-approved advice/information upon which a member of the public could reasonably be expected to act
- The act of, or commitment to, spending COTA NT funds
- Signing document on behalf of COTA NT
- Commitment to the provision of a service to a member of the public
- Determine whether or not a member of the public will be provided with service or access to a program
- Resolving complaints about a service or program
- Cover the absence of paid staff
- Having access to personal information about staff
- Training of volunteers (unless assessed and determined as competent to do so)
- Supervise or oversee the activities of other Volunteers or work experience placements
- Determine the safe method of work where a standard operating procedure does not exist.



# Volunteers Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers have a range of rights and responsibilities as part of the volunteer program at COTA NT. These are in line with the National Standards for Volunteers adopted by Volunteering SA/NT and in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Antidiscrimination Act and the Privacy Act 2009.

## Rights

Volunteers have the Right to:

- Obtain information about the organisation
- Obtain a clearly written duty

statement and volunteer agreement

- Be recognised as a valued team member
- Be supported and supervised
- Be made aware of the complaint procedure within the organisation
- Orientation into the workplace
- Withdraw as a Volunteer
- Be treated with respect, politeness and honesty in a non-discriminatory work environment
- Claim reimbursement for approved out of pocket expenses incurred e.g. public transport fare, telephone.

## Responsibilities

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Be committed to volunteering at COTA NT
- Be punctual and reliable
- Notify the relevant Program Manager of any changes to their availability
- Accept responsibility for their own action and behaviour
- Abide by COTA NT's policies and procedures on volunteering
- Carry COTA NT ID cards outside of the office whilst volunteering for COTA NT
- Deal with complaints in the correct manner
- Respect the rights of others
- Carry out the duties as instructed
- Ask for support when needed
- Comply with work health and safety procedures including carrying an Emergency Medical Information Booklet, not being adversely affected by drugs or alcohol whilst volunteering, abiding by current public health directives, having medical clearance to resume volunteering after sickness or surgery
- To take all possible care for the safety of themselves and others especially during extreme weather events or whilst moving equipment
- Use the correct safety items, equipment or facilities
- Report potential and actual hazards to the Program Manager
- Inform COTA NT management of incidents and accidents, involving employees, Volunteers or members of the public which occur on its premises
- Discuss issues or enquiries about work health and safety with the Chief Executive Officer.
- Give notice when leaving.



# General Information

## COTA NT Offices

### Darwin / Head Office

Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin NT 0800

**Opening hours:** Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 3pm except public holidays

**Postal:** GPO Box 852, Darwin NT 0801

**Phone:** 08 8941 1004

**Email:** [admin@cotant.org.au](mailto:admin@cotant.org.au)

**Website:** [cotant.org.au](http://cotant.org.au)

**Facebook** (social media)

[www.facebook.com/COTANorthernTerritory](https://www.facebook.com/COTANorthernTerritory)

**Username:** @COTANorthernTerritory

### Alice Springs

50+ Community Centre, 11 Wills Terrace, Alice Springs NT 0870

**Opening hours:** Mondays to Fridays, 8.30am to 1pm except public holidays

Berry Springs Representation and Coomalie Branch are staffed by Board Volunteers and do not have set opening hours.

### Membership Services

COTA NT membership services are located at Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin.

## Access to Premises

- A minimum of two people should be in the office at any time during opening hours.
- Volunteers should not be in the building out of office hours (8.30 am - 4.30 pm), unless accompanied by a staff member.

## Volunteer Hours

- You must record all hours of service each day on the iPad provided by the Program Manager or on written record.
- The Program Manager will allot you with a work station (note this may change subject to desk availability).

## Information and Notices

- The Program manager will let you know by email about upcoming meetings, training opportunities and rosters. You can also check the noticeboard at Spillett House. (You must check with the Program Manager before putting any information on the community notice boards).

## Dress Code

- An appropriate standard of dress must be maintained at all times. Clean and tidy clothing is to be worn.
- At all times, footwear which is appropriate for the task that you are undertaking must be worn.

- Thongs or clothing with 'messages' displayed on them are not appropriate.
- Volunteers are expected to wear a name badge whenever they are representing COTA NT. Lanyards are available for use.

## Breaks

- Volunteers are responsible for taking their own comfort breaks. To work safely with screen equipment, it is advisable to take 5 to 10 minute breaks every hour.
- Volunteers are invited to use the kitchen adjacent to the large function room and help themselves to communal tea, coffee and milk supplies.
- Each person is responsible for washing and putting away their own utensils and leaving the area tidy. Please use hot soapy water to clean utensils and crockery.

## Private Phone Calls

When necessary, it is allowed to use telephones to make personal local calls. This should be done during breaks wherever possible.

## Toilets

The female, male and disability toilets are located on the western side of Spillett House.

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## **Financials/Gifts**

If a small gift is offered, while representing COTA NT, it may be accepted. Small gifts include a bottle of wine, homemade goods, chocolates or a plant.

Volunteers cannot personally accept a cheque or cash. This must be made clear to the person offering the cash or cheque. COTA NT can accept financial gifts as a donation. The donation will be receipted at or on return to the office by the supervising staff member.

## **Public Contact**

### **Customer Complaints**

If Volunteers receive a verbal complaint, a Customer Complaint Form is to be completed and provided to the Program Manager as quickly as possible.

### **Positive Ageing Images**

When dealing with the public, Volunteers should avoid stereotypes. The following are some suggestions:

| <b>USE</b>             | <b>AVOID</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Older people           | Old          |
| Seniors                | Dears        |
| People who are over 50 | Granny/Pops  |

Appearance and manner should

always promote good public relations for COTA NT.

## **Provision of Information**

COTA NT can be held legally responsible for information staff and volunteers provide to the public. If unsure about providing any information, please consult your staff supervisor or the Chief Executive Officer.

Do not provide information outside your given role or direct knowledge.

## **Service Standards**

Staff and Volunteers are required to always monitor, and seek to improve, the quality of the service they provide on behalf of COTA NT.

## **Abusive Callers**

Volunteers who receive an abusive phone call should say that they are going to hang up, and the caller is welcome to phone back when they have calmed down.

## **Staff and Volunteer Mobile Telephone Numbers**

The personal mobile phone numbers of staff and volunteers should not be given out to anyone.

## **Speaking to the Media**

Volunteers are not permitted to make public statements regarding COTA NT, its personnel, policies or services.



*COTA Board Members October 2021 - 2023. From left to right: Michael Walker (Treasurer), John Whyte (Public Officer), Steve Thomas, Susan Kirkman, Dr Sadhana Mahajani and Jan Jewell (Chair and Chair of COTA Coomalie Branch). Inset is Berry Springs Representative, Kerry Steward.*

## COTA Board

**Patron:** Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AM, Administrator of the Northern Territory

**Board** COTA Board Members have responsibility for the organisation's governance, drive its strategy and sets operating limits for management. Members are elected for a two-year term. They meet up to six times a year. The Chief Executive Officer is the conduit for communications between Board and staff.

- Jan Jewell (Chair and Chair of COTA Coomalie Branch)
- Michael Walker (Treasurer)
- John Whyte (Public Officer)
- Dr Sadhana Mahajani
- Steve Thomas (Home Maintenance Service Volunteer)
- Susan Kirkman
- Kerry Steward (Berry Springs Representative).

COTA holds an Annual General Meeting in October. Annual reports and financial statements are tabled to Members and stakeholders. Details on the COTA website.

# Staff

## **Sue Shearer** *Chief Executive Officer*

Based in Darwin. Usual hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm  
[ceo@cotant.org.au](mailto:ceo@cotant.org.au)



Responsible for the overall management of COTA NT through strategic development, operational and financial management. Advocating and promoting activities consistent with organisation mission, objectives and policy. Engaging with COTA A on policy development and advocacy. Engaging with media. Developing relationships with sponsors and providing leadership for staff and Volunteers.

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## **Stephanie Kendall** *Communications & Marketing*

Based in Cairns. Usual hours: Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm  
[communications@cotant.org.au](mailto:communications@cotant.org.au)



Manages development and delivery of communication and engagement tools including: websites, social media pages, email marketing, newsletters, surveys, reports and publications. Plus marketing campaigns for major events, projects and observances.

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## **Lorna McLaughlin** *Membership*

Based in Darwin. Usual hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm  
[picacnt@cotant.org.au](mailto:picacnt@cotant.org.au) / [officemanager@cotant.org.au](mailto:officemanager@cotant.org.au)



Delivers and develops membership services for COTA NT and Seniors Card programs including with all queries regarding eligibility, applications, renewals and replacements and payments.

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## **Cecilia Chiolero** *PICAC NT & Office Management*

Based in Darwin. Usual hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm  
[picacnt@cotant.org.au](mailto:picacnt@cotant.org.au) / [officemanager@cotant.org.au](mailto:officemanager@cotant.org.au)



Provides of advocacy for seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse communities across the NT; plus and cultural awareness sessions and training specifically to the aged care sector. Office management for COTA in Darwin and Alice Springs including IT support and accounts liaison.

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## **Janis Adair** *Administration & Reception*

Based in Darwin. Usual hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm  
[admin@cotant.org.au](mailto:admin@cotant.org.au)



Provides front of house services and administrative support across all programs, in particular Seniors Card.

**Suzanne Kendrick** *Activities and Events*

Based in Darwin. Hours: Monday to Thursday, 9.00am to 1.00pm  
[activities@cotant.org.au](mailto:activities@cotant.org.au)



Responsible for activities and event delivery including: Seniors Expos in Darwin and Katherine, Seniors Month, Grandparents Day, Fit for Life and Knowledge for Life programs.

**VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER**

**Kim Farrar** *Seniors Card Program Manager*

Based in Darwin. Hours: Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm  
[seniorscard@cotant.org.au](mailto:seniorscard@cotant.org.au)



Responsible for the development and delivery of the NT Seniors Card program including membership, communications, business and commercial growth.

**Fran Kilgariff** *Alice Springs Coordinator / Seniors Card Program*

Based in Alice Springs. Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 8.30am to 1pm  
[centralaustralia@cotant.org.au](mailto:centralaustralia@cotant.org.au)



Seniors' services representative and advocacy, including Seniors Card program, co-ordination of workshops, Alice Springs Seniors Expo and observances.

**Janet Brown** *Aged Care Navigator (Darwin)*

Based in Darwin. Hours: Part-time (Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm)  
[agedcare\\_darwin@cotant.org.au](mailto:agedcare_darwin@cotant.org.au)



Manages and delivers the Aged Care Navigator service, which helps to inform people about their choices of aged care. The service also helps seniors, their friends, families and carers to find out about and to access government-funded age care support including home care support packages and residential aged care.

NT stakeholders can book appointments with an Aged Care Navigator for face-to-face meetings, phone or video calls. Group information sessions are also available and Aged Care Navigators promote the service via community outreach.

**Debbie Pepper** *Aged Care Navigator (Alice Springs)*

Based in Alice Springs. Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 8.30am to 1pm  
[agedcare\\_alicesprings@cotant.org.au](mailto:agedcare_alicesprings@cotant.org.au)



Delivers the Aged Care navigator service including leading workshops and community outreach events such as Alice Springs Seniors Expo.

# Work Health and Safety

## **The responsibility of working safely is a dual responsibility between COTA NT and those who act on its behalf.**

COTA NT has a responsibility under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to provide a safe work environment for Volunteers. This encompasses the physical and mental environment, and also a responsibility to provide safe systems of work.

The primary duty of an organisation is qualified by “so far as is reasonably practicable.” This means the organisation does not have to guarantee that no harm will occur, but must do what is necessary to ensure health and safety, i.e.

- The provision and maintenance of a work environment without risks to health and safety.
- The provision and maintenance of safe plant, structures and safe systems of work.
- The safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances.
- The provision of adequate facilities for workers at work, (e.g. toilets, and first aid facilities).
- The provision of information, training, instruction or supervision necessary to protect all personnel from risks to their health and safety

arising from their work.

To determine what the organisation is required to do to protect its paid and volunteer workers, the following factors are considered:

- The type of work the organisation carries out.
- The nature of the risks associated with that work and the likelihood of injury or illness occurring.
- Steps to eliminate or reduce those risks, including the location or where the work is carried out.

COTA aims to fulfil its responsibilities under the applicable Acts and regulations by:

- Ensuring that all employees and volunteers of COTA NT are safe from injuries and risks to health while they are at work, and there are adequate facilities to protect them.
- Providing information, training and supervision for all employees, and volunteers, to ensure their health and safety.
- Ensuring that all effective health and safety programs are in place and maintained.

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- Consulting with health and safety representative(s) on any proposed changes in the workplace affecting health, safety or welfare.
- Ensuring that agreed procedures for resolving health and safety issues are followed.
- Ensuring machinery, equipment and substances are provided and maintained in a safe condition.
- Regular review of health and safety performance and resources resulting in modifications being made where necessary.

COTA NT is committed to encouraging consultation and cooperation concerning work health and safety

through:

- Work Health and Safety meetings to address any issues.
- Formulating, reviewing and distributing Work Health and Safety policies, practices and procedures to all paid staff and Volunteers.
- Providing information, training and supervision for all employees and Volunteers in the correct use of plant, equipment and substances.
- Under the Work Health & Safety Act, 2012 (as amended), the appointed, Responsible Officer is the Chief Executive Officer.



# Equal Opportunity

**The management of COTA NT is firmly committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity. It aims to ensure that no present/future Volunteer is subjected to discriminatory policies or practices in any aspect of service. In addition, harassment (that is, annoying or pestering) of any type will not be tolerated.**

Equal opportunity is concerned with fair treatment, which means:

- Treating people as individuals, recognising different skills and abilities.
- Making no judgements, irrelevant to a person's capability to do the job e.g. stereotypes and characteristics.
- Ensuring a work environment that allows all employees and volunteers to work to their full potential, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment.
- Implementing the merit principle, i.e. an applicant who best meets the needs of the job is the one selected and then retained.
- Practising management "best practice".

## Rights and Responsibilities

The Equal Employment Opportunity

(Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987 gives rights and responsibilities to Volunteers:

- Volunteers have the right to work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.
- Volunteers have the responsibility to not discriminate against or harass other employees/volunteers.
- Employers have the responsibility to ensure that the workplace is free of discrimination and harassment. Employers, managers and supervisors have a legal responsibility to take all reasonable steps to make sure this happens.

## Procedure

Any complaints about breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and quickly.

Complaints should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer.

In addition, any person has the right to contact the Anti-Discrimination Commission for information or advice.



## We pledge

‘We stand for a world without ageism where all people of all ages are valued and respected and their contributions are acknowledged. We commit to speak out and take action to ensure older people can participate on equal terms with others in all aspects of life.’

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Share a photo of you and your signed pledge:  @EveryAGECounts  @EveryAGECounts  @everyagecounts

Make your voice count by signing the pledge online too: [www.everyagecounts.org.au](http://www.everyagecounts.org.au)

Proudly supported and funded by 

# Disability and Access

**The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) aims to ensure that as far as possible people with a disability are not discriminated against by either individuals or organisations and are treated the same as those people who do not have a disability.**

COTA NT is committed to the following principles in respect of DDA:

- Advocacy and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities to participate equitably in the life of the community.
- Freedom from discrimination for all, including people with disabilities.
- Promotion of positive attitudes and behaviours amongst staff and Volunteers which respect the right to equal access and dignity for people with disabilities.
- Equal opportunity for people with disabilities through fair recruitment and selection and the provision of reasonable changes to work practices and environments.

**COTA NT affirms respect for the rights of people with disabilities in the following ways:**

COTA NT aims to make its service environment safe, welcoming and inclusive for staff, Volunteers and members of the public.

Consistent with legislative requirements, COTA NT premises have been made accessible to the disabled by:

- The provision of disability access including fully accessible disability toilets on ground floor.
- Floor surfaces that are safe and traversable by all users.
- Signage is well located and welcoming.
- Reception staff, understanding the importance of their role as first contact, create a welcoming atmosphere and are sensitive each individual's needs.
- The waiting area has reading materials and comfortable chairs.
- Assessment and service provision are conducted in comfortable and safe places that are non-threatening to clients.

Volunteers should be aware of the needs of people who are:

- accompanied by an assistant, interpreter or reader, by a trained animal, such as a guide or hearing dog
- or who use equipment or an aid, such as a wheelchair or a hearing aid.

# Sexual Harassment

**Sexual Harassment is unlawful under the Commonwealth Sex Discriminations Act 1984 and the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 1992. COTA NT regards sexual harassment as a serious and an important issue.**

All COTA NT Volunteers have the right to be treated with the same respect and dignity that is rightfully owed to all individuals.

COTA NT is committed to providing an environment which is free from asexual harassment including, among other things:

- Touching, patting or fondling.
- Staring or leering.
- Sexually suggestive comments and jokes, persistent invitations or requests for sex.
- Showing lewd pictures, posters or cartoons (including electronic communication).
- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against someone, perceived as unwelcome behaviour to the person to whom it is directed, making them feel (with reason) humiliated or offended or intimidated.

COTA NT will treat all complaints of sexual harassment seriously and will

deal with them promptly, impartially and confidentially. COTA NT will also take all steps necessary to ensure that sexual harassment does not continue. That complaints and witnesses are not victimised in any way.

Where possible, a fair and appropriate resolution to the problem is reached.

COTA NT will discipline staff found harassing others. COTA NT will support employees and clients wanting to contact the Anti-Discrimination Commission to get advice and/or lodge a complaint.

## Volunteer Responsibility

- Be aware of the definition and laws regarding sexual harassment.
- Follow recommended Grievance Procedure.
- Contact the Anti-Discrimination Commission to get advice if needed.
- Lodge a complaint as soon as possible after the incident.

# Grievances

**Every Volunteer has equal access to the grievance process and COTA NT aims to ensure that it is:**

- It is fair, prompt and responsive to individual needs.
- The grievance is resolved with the minimum of stress to all concerned.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- Emphasis be on problem solving and avoiding blame and judgement.
- Alternative solutions are considered.

## Procedure

### Step 1

- Gathering and writing down all the facts about the issue in an objective way.
- Talk to an impartial colleague outside of the immediate work area; someone who can be trusted to be constructive, supportive, objective, non-judgemental and confidential.
- Use that person as a 'sounding board' to express feelings and talk through the grievance, and at the same time try to be objective and use a problem-solving approach.
- Expressing feelings enables a better understanding of the nature of the grievance and to be calm, proactive,

understanding and committed to solving the problem.

### Step 2

Talk to the other party involved and try to resolve the problem amicably.

### Step 3

Once clear about the exact nature of the grievance and the facts, approach the Program Manager. Preferably both parties will attend together. However, if one party is unwilling to participate, this should not prevent the other from making the initial approach to the Program Manager. The Program Manager will organise a meeting between parties to resolve the issue.

### Step 4

If the two parties are unable to reach agreement about the nature of the grievance and/or an appropriate course of action, both parties will then meet with the Chief Executive Officer.

The process in Step 3 is then repeated. If the issue cannot be resolved, then the Chief Executive Officer may take the matter to the Board for resolution or, if the Chief Executive Officer believes a matter of principle is involved, it may also be referred to the Board.

# OCHRE Card

## **Volunteers require a Working With Children Clearance (OCHRE Card) before they can undertake volunteering with COTA NT.**

COTA NT is committed to best practice in all its activities. While COTA NT does not deliver care services to older and ageing consumers, it is committed, in principle, to the Community Care Common Standards.

These standards, among other things, seek to ensure that those working with ageing Australians do not have criminal records that could endanger clients and will not compromise the sound corporate governance of the organisation serving older Australians.

## **Volunteer obligations**

Volunteers must provide a current and compliant OCHRE Card (or an interim statutory declaration and receipt of application). A current Ochre Card is not more than 6 months old from the date the OCHRE Card was issued. A current OCHRE Card is valid for 2 years until a renewal is required.

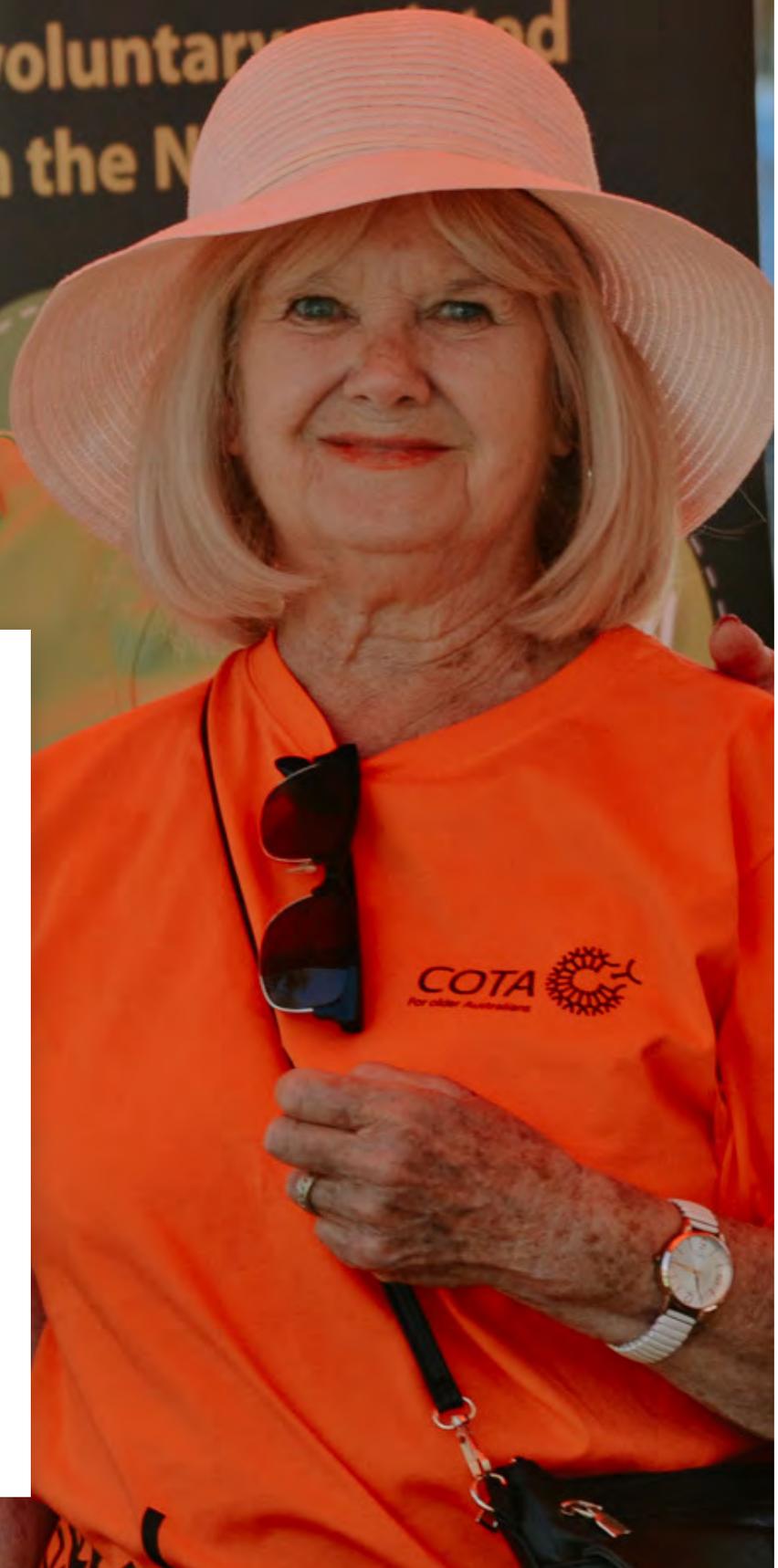
COTA NT keeps and maintains relevant records in relation to OCHRE Card for Volunteers. This includes compliance with the requirements under the Privacy Act in relation to the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information about individuals.

COTA NT is obliged to consider and make a determination on whether an individual's OCHRE Card is compliant. COTA NT applies The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's principles and guidelines in making a determination to ensure individuals are afforded with natural justice and fairness protocols. COTA NT is not obliged to offer a person with a non-compliant OCHRE Card volunteering work.

## **COTA NT obligations**

- COTA NT pays for OCHRE Card for Volunteers including the requirement for a two-yearly renewal OCHRE Card notice.
- COTA NT declares to the Department of Social Services about whether the organisation complies with the requirements of OCHRE Card.
- COTA NT is obliged to ensure Volunteers have a current OCHRE Card at all times.

Together we make  
change happen



NORTHERN TERRITORY  
*for senior Territorians*

**COTA NT – Council on the Ageing  
Northern Territory**

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