

19 October 2018 – Sue Shearer, CEO COTA NT interviewed by Rachael Chisholm, Aboriginal Broadcasting Australia

Interview Transcript

With thanks to Scott, COTA NT for transcribing work. (Please note that the text that follows is an abridged version of the recording.)

Rachael: My name is Rachael Chisholm and with me in the studio with me is Sue Shearer the CEO of the Council on the Ageing in the NT also known COTA NT. Thank you Sue for coming into the studio.

Sue: *Oh, thank you Rachael. It is terrific for you to invite us in, because we want to really want to get more indigenous people on this particular scheme and to know about COTA and how we can help them.*

Rachael: Yes, well we have a lot to talk about in the interview today. **For those of us who don't know, what is COTA?**

Sue: *COTA is as we said is Council on the Ageing, and we advocate and lobby for people over 50 throughout the NT.*

We want an inclusive community for all our aged people, especially for people in remote and very remote communities. One of the things obviously that we are currently involved in, which is very important, is the Royal Commission into Aged Care.

[My Aged Care]

*And I don't think a lot of indigenous people on communities know a lot about the **My Aged Care** programs and how they don't have to leave country; how they actually can be looked after in their home or community by the **My Aged Care** system. That's another one that we are trying to get the information out there about as well. We've put in for a tender, and if we are successful, we will have a staff member who can go out and show people how they can access the system.*

We believe that no matter where you are, what you are, who you are, that you should have access to everything that people have access to in the urban area.

Rachael: Now Sue I see that **COTA NT are conducting a survey at the moment, what is this survey about?**

Sue: *It's about for seniors in the NT, again that's 50 and over which includes all Territorians.*

COTA NT Inc
GPO Box 852
Darwin NT 0801

65 Smith Street
Darwin NT 0800
ABN 86 316 991 800

P: (08) 8941 1004
E: admin@cotant.org.au
www.cotant.org.au



Seniors Card
Freecall: 1800 441 489
E: seniorscard@cotant.org.au
www.ntseniorscard.org.au

[COTA NT 2018 Seniors Survey]

They can fill in the survey and say, you know, what do we want, when do we want it, we want it now. We want you to have your say so we can lobby local government, state government and federal government about your concerns again; especially in the remote areas in the NT where we feel voices aren't being heard. Hopefully we can deliver a better service, we can advocate for them to have a better service out there - whatever that may be health, transport, social inclusion - who knows. We do a lot of activities with fitness. We might be able to deliver some of those out there as well which will increase people's mobility...

Rachael: So how long does this survey take, about 15 minutes?

Sue: It does take about 15 minutes...

[NT Concession Scheme and Seniors Recognition Scheme]

*...The other thing we want people to be aware of is, and I don't know whether they are, is the new scheme **NT Concession Scheme** and **NT Seniors' Recognition Scheme**.*

There are two schemes whereas before there was the old NT concession carers scheme. It's been changed now, but for people who were already on it there is no need to worry. They've been transitioned over to the new scheme. Their electricity, their motor vehicle, all that.

*The main change has been with the **NT Seniors' Recognition Scheme**. Anybody over 65 who is a permanent resident of the NT - no matter what your economic circumstances - will be entitled to 500 dollars. Now the 500 dollars that used to be in the concession scheme for travel has been taken out now and has its own little NT Seniors Recognition Scheme. The beauty of it is, you can actually use that 500 dollars for travel within NT - so you can use it for fuel, or you can catch bus to visit relatives.*

Or if you want, you can nominate that 500 towards your electricity bill for the year which could save people a lot of money.

So it's good. You've got a lot more choices... but people really do have to register.

[Help with Registration for Schemes]

*You have got until end of December to register with Territory Families. But if you have any queries, please call us on **8941 1004** and we'll help you out. We've had a quite a few calls from Nhulunbuy and the Tiwi Islands, but I don't think it's been very well broadcast further out into the remote communities. We really don't want people to miss out especially for fuel and travel because we know that people love*

COTA NT Inc
GPO Box 852
Darwin NT 0801

65 Smith Street
Darwin NT 0800
ABN 86 316 991 800

P: (08) 8941 1004
E: admin@cotant.org.au
www.cotant.org.au



Seniors Card
Freecall: 1800 441 489
E: seniorscard@cotant.org.au
www.ntseniorscard.org.au

to visit their relatives and their friends, attend events, come in for football and do all sorts of things. That 500 dollars can go a long way to helping with that.

[NT Seniors Card]

*The other really exciting one is the **NT Seniors Card**. Now that's for anybody over 60. It doesn't matter what your economic circumstances are, you are entitled to the NT Seniors Card. That will give you discounts in businesses throughout the NT and also on your motor vehicle registration as well.*

[Motor Vehicle Registration Saving]

Like the NT Concession if you're a member of that you get quite a bit off, and then again with the NT Seniors Card with the 15% you can get off that as well so there's a lot of money to be saved there which will help a lot of families so please, please, please have a look at what you are entitled to and either contact us or contact Territory Families about the new concession scheme or us to get your card.

Rachael: **Is there anything else that you would like our senior citizens to know about COTA and what it does?**

Sue: *Just that you do not have to be a member of COTA if you want to contact us.*

If you do have an email address we can send you a lot of information, that's relevant to you on health issues especially and how we can help you, how we can lobby for you.

You know we're here for all Territorians, all seniors. You're a bit young, Rachael, but you'll get there one day [laughs]... if we can get help with nutrition, fitness activities, mental well-being – they're all very important as we age. That's what we have activities for and we are also a very big lobby and advocate for seniors.

Rachael: **One question I have for you, do you think that it is important that people my age in my early 30s know, should be involved more with senior citizens?**

Sue: *I do. I think we all have an obligation to look after our older people, and also, Rachael you should look or make sure that your parents, and you, have an Advanced Personal Plan.*

[Advanced Personal Planning]

It's a really important part of ageing. Unfortunately we get quite a few people coming in that their parents have been diagnosed with dementia and that their parents will now have no say how they want to be treated and where they want to go when they're older.... The young ones especially should make sure that their older relatives have an APP to ensure that they are not taken advantage of.

COTA NT Inc
GPO Box 852
Darwin NT 0801

65 Smith Street
Darwin NT 0800
ABN 86 316 991 800

P: (08) 8941 1004
E: admin@cotant.org.au
www.cotant.org.au



Seniors Card
Freecall: 1800 441 489
E: seniorscard@cotant.org.au
www.ntsensorscard.org.au

Rachael: So sorry again, those **contact numbers for those who want to find more information is Territory Families and?**

Sue:

- Territory Families 1800 750 167 (free call)
- COTA NT and Seniors Card 8941 1004 or 1800 441 489 (free call)
- **Seniors Card** - apply online www.seniorscard.cotant.org.au

Rachael: Well thank you again, Sue, for coming in and talking to us about what is on offer for our senior citizens across the NT - so they don't have to feel left out or cut short, that there is help and support there.

Sue: *Pleasure Rachael, anytime.*

Territory Families Contact Numbers

- Alice Springs Phone: (08) 8955 6001
- Arafura Phone: (08) 8922 8474
- Arnhem Phone: (08) 8987 0400
- Barkly Phone: (08) 8962 4334
- Casuarina Phone: (08) 8922 7111
- Darwin City Phone: (08) 8999 2737
- Katherine Phone: (08) 8973 8600
- Palmerston Phone: (08) 8999 4789