

# seniorsvoice

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

### KEEPING NT SENIORS INFORMED

Published by



The peak body  
for NT Seniors  
since 1969



## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

*Many voices make for change. Find out how to support VAD choice in the NT*

INSIDE: VAD NEWS & CAMPAIGN KIT, RURAL EXPO, EVENTS, HEALTH, LETTERS & MORE

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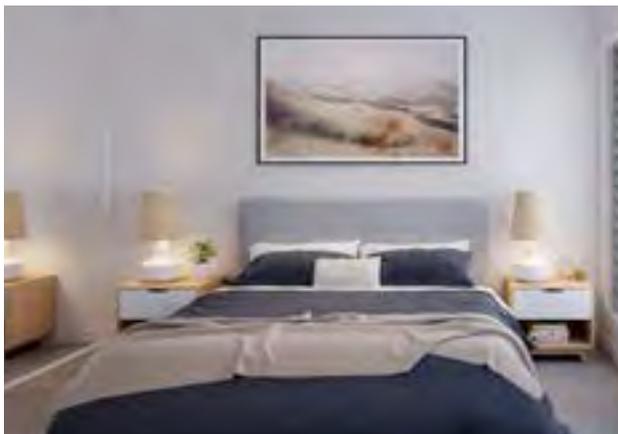
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# Many voices make for change

**Change is most definitely afoot. The new federal Aged Care Act comes into effect on 1 November and with it some of the biggest changes to government-funded aged care delivery.**

In an effort to explain what to many feels like gobbledygook policy, COTA NT alongside Darwin Community Legal Service, (who represents the Older Persons Advocacy Network in the NT) hosted an Aged Care Act Reforms Explained forum. This forum and others held around the country (and online) explained the new home care packages, what consumers can expect and what they will be paying for. There still appears to be confusion about the payment structure – with clinical care especially.

COTA NT is lobbying hard for showering to be included in clinical care for those people who need assistance with showering. In a climate like

ours showering safely and regularly is imperative for good health. So why should we have to pay for showering when it is an essential health requirement?

COTA NT received a call from a consumer who receives home support and who saw a substantial increase in his costs with the suggestion that his number of services be reduced. The **Quality and Safety Commission** now can be contact regarding pricing, so if you are also being subjected to large price increases, please contact them (Complaints & concerns 1800 951 822, [www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)).

We have also been advised that the Federal government will be reviewing the daily rate that providers receive for residential care. At present it is just not enough to provide the quality care that every person is entitled to. This pricing review will take place in early 2026. Let's hope there will be



*Aged Care Reform Explained, from left, Avid Wright-Howie and Sophia Petrov, COTA Australia and Sue Shearer, CEO COTA NT.*

interest in the new 120-bed aged care facility proposed for the Palmerston site from providers. The main stumbling block previously having been the cost of providing daily care.

COTA NT, alongside our counterparts in other states will continue to lobby on your behalf in relation to the inequities in the new aged care reform.

The Federal government is releasing 20,000 home care packages, with 20,000 more later in the year and another 20,000 set for release in early 2026. This is good news, but we would ask again, who is

going to deliver these packages with our ongoing shortage of aged care workers?

If you like to know more about COTA NT's work, our AGM is on Friday 24th October at 10am in Spillett House, 65 Smith Street. You can come as an observer (only our Members can vote) and pick up an Annual Report.



We would be delighted if you feel like attending. RSVP [here](#).

*Sue Shearer, CEO, COTA NT*

## Territory Seniors | Info

Northern Territory Government  
Switchboard 08 8999 5511

NT Concession & Recognition Unit  
1800 777 704 (free call)

Seniors Card 1800 441 489

Help Accessing Aged Care 08 8941 1004

Multicultural Support 08 8941 1004

Services Australia: Centrelink, Age Pension, Health Cards, Financial Information, Concessions, Loans, Retirement 132 300

Medicare 132 011

Disability, Sickness, Carers 132 717

Elder Abuse Helpline 1800 353 374

My Aged Care 1800 200 422

Aged Care Complaints Commissioner  
1800 951 822

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NORTHERN TERRITORY

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Main cover photo: Darwin Voluntary Assisted Dying Community Information Session, 30 September 2025

Seniors Voice acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

# [TOP SHOT]

**SENIORS VOICE SUPPORTS THE PHOTOGRAPHIC TALENTS OF NORTHERN TERRITORY SENIORS AND ENCOURAGES POSITIVE DEPICTIONS OF AGEING.**



**This issue's Top Shot was taken by Lisa Hatz Photography at COTA NT's Alice Springs Expo on 12 August.**

Not only do we love this picture, but we know that everyone attending thoroughly enjoyed listening to the *USA's Beaut Ukes* group. A big thank you from us to the Beaut Ukes who have supported Expo since 2021.

If you want your photo to be considered for this spot, [contact us](#).

Sign up to COTA NT's free e-News [here](#)

*Your details will not be shared with any 3rd party*

## Residential aged care facilities keeping stum on VAD

**Go Gentle Australia released a new report, [Voluntary Assisted Dying in Residential Aged Care Home](#), which revealed that where voluntary assisted dying is legal, only 5% of residential aged care facilities provided full access to VAD and publicly available VAD information.**

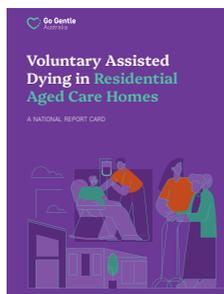
The report looked at 72 providers and found some of the largest providers of faith-based services (around 10,000 beds) reinforced harmful stigma around VAD.

The new Aged Care Act 2024, stipulates that older people have a right to exercise choice and make decisions that

affect the individual's life; be supported (if necessary) to make those decisions and have those decisions respected; palliative care and end-of-life care when required; be treated with dignity and respect; and safe, fair, equitable and non-discriminatory treatment.

The report recommended: service providers published publicly accessible VAD information plus the level of VAD access they supported on premises; and implementation of appropriate VAD policies and training for all staff.

Read the full report [here](#).



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### *Caring for you and your family in your time of need*

Our services are personalised and tailored for families to celebrate the life of their loved ones. We listen to what each family needs and wants are and ensure we carry out their wishes. We help guide families throughout each stage of the funeral process. We help take the stress away at this difficult time.

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- ☞ Memorial Urns & Jewellery
- ☞ Interstate & Overseas Repatriations



# Now it's your turn. It's your turn to say this is what we want



Andrew Denton speaking at a community forum on VAD in Darwin

**On 30 September and 1 October, the founder of Go Gentle Australia, Andrew Denton led two community information sessions co-hosted by COTA NT. Nearly three hundred people attended.**

Attendees had the opportunity to learn more about voluntary assisted dying (VAD), listen to local Territorians' lived experience, find out how VAD laws are working across Australia and what actions they can take to show their support of the NT having VAD choice.

An information brochure and materials to show support (pledge cards and petitions) presented at the community information sessions are free to download and share on the [COTA NT website](#).

We're going to watch with bated breath mate, okay...you better get that legislation going..."

Sue Shearer speaking to Dr Tanzil Rahman at the Darwin community information session

If you were unable to attend the Darwin Community Information Sessions, you can find the recording and transcript online [here](#).

## Final report & the draft bill

**The NT Government's Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee (LCAC) released its final report on 30 September which included drafting instructions.**

On 2nd October, the NT Government confirmed that Attorney General Marie-Claire Boothby would progress drafting of VAD laws with the draft bill to be introduced in early 2026.

On 13th October, Leader of the Opposition, Selena Uibo MLA released a draft of [Voluntary Assisted Dying \(Rights of the Terminally Ill\) Bill 2025](#), the day prior to the final report being tabled at Parliament.

In Parliament on the 14th October during Question Time, the Chief Minister advised that the draft Bill would not be based on the draft provided by Leader of the Opposition but on the [86 recommendations in the LCAC's Final Report](#).

Key differences between this report and the *Voluntary Assisted Dying in the Northern Territory – Final Report 2024* include:

- not requiring a prognosis timeframe for a person to be eligible for VAD;
- the need for the NT Government to develop a

palliative care strategy;

- supporting a decentralised rather than centralised VAD model, noting that the service will evolve and mature over time;
- expanding the parameters of institutional conscientious objection to promote cultural safety; and
- expanding immunity from liability to a wider range of workers in the healthcare sector involved in VAD.

There were also issues where the Committee's view diverged from the Australian model of VAD, including:

- embedding cultural safety as a guiding principle in the VAD legislation;
- respecting a person's choice to voluntarily include other people in decision-making
- about end-of-life choices;
- allowing for alternative modes, including videos, to make formal requests for VAD more accessible;
- embedding greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on a VAD Review Board; and
- expanding protections to other workers in the healthcare sector who conscientiously object to VAD.

**No date was provided for the draft Bill to be introduced.**

**Members of the NT parliament will be allowed a conscience vote on the draft bill.**

At the beginning of October, it was reported that of the

**VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING**

**TIME TO WRITE THIS LAW**



[www.cofant.org.au/voluntary-assisted-dying-for-the-northern-territory](http://www.cofant.org.au/voluntary-assisted-dying-for-the-northern-territory)

Visit this [page](#) for free information and materials you can use to share our petition and pledges.

25 Members of the Legislative Assembly, 13 had stated they personally believed the NT should allow voluntary assisted dying, 10 had declined to comment or were recorded as undecided. At the time, these were Members for:

- [Marie-Claire Boothby, Brennan](#)
- [Robyn Cahill, Port Darwin](#)
- [Oly Carlson, Wanguri](#)
- [Jinson Charls, Sanderson](#)
- [Steve Edgington, Barkly](#)
- [Hon Lia Finocchiaro, Spillett](#)
- [Matthew Kerle, Blain](#)
- [Brian O'Gallagher, Karama](#)
- [Khoda Patel, Casuarina](#)
- [Tanzil Rahman, Fong Lim.](#)

# Now it's your turn. It's your turn

continued from previous page

Many of these Members were also reported as seeking the views of their communities and said that they would be voting in accordance with the wishes of their electorate.

"While COTA NT and Go Gentle are pleased that the NT Government is now drafting VAD legislation, the next step will be for all parliamentarians to vote on the draft bill," said Sue Shearer, CEO of COTA NT. "We will be waiting and watching with bated breath for this draft legislation.

"As Andrew told attendees in the information session, **'There are many ways in which a government can make legislation slow down, disappear, get lost in the wheels of parliamentary process. What will change that, is if they start to think that there's going to be cost...'**

## What politicians think is what they think everyone else thinks. Neil Lawrence

"So while it is a conscience vote," continued Shearer, "We would urge all Members to remember who they represent – their electorate and Territorians. Over 85% of Territorians would like the choice. While the Australian Christian Lobby does not agree with VAD – that is their choice. We want to give Territorians *their* choice.

"This legislation is not, and should not be a political or religious issue, it is a human rights issue that goes to the heart of democracy.

"We can all vote for who we choose, we can live where we choose, we can love and marry who we choose, we can live how we choose. VAD is an end-of-life choice that we should also be able to choose, as is

palliative care.

"We ask all parliamentary members if they cannot support this legislation to abstain from the vote.

"We are the last frontier, let's make sure Territorians are not second-class citizens – lobby those local members who want to hear from their constituents **relentlessly**, make sure they know you support VAD.

"Tell them that they cannot deny you your choice. Get heard."

You need to do your research. You need to be respectful and you need to be relentless if you want this law to happen.



Andrew Denton at the Darwin community information session Tuesday 30 September

WATCH THE SESSION [HERE](#)  
READ THE TRANSCRIPT [HERE](#)

## Supporters toolkit for making change

Free from the [COTA NT website](#).

- VAD information brochure
- Email form direct to MLA
- Campaign [pledge cards](#)
- Social media tile to share
- Petition and petition flyer to share.



# Celebrate Grandparents Day in the NT



The Northern Territory's Grandparents Day is celebrated on Sunday 26th October. It is the 5th year of the observance first initiated by COTA NT with the support of the Northern Territory Government.

Grandparents Day recognises and celebrates the role of grandparents and older carers. It is a day for the generations to hang out with each other, to chat, to laugh and to learn from each other. The website, [ntgrandparentsday.org.au](http://ntgrandparentsday.org.au) hosts free resources including links to government and service provider supports for grandparents and carers, a Grandparents Day Event Kit (including I Love Grandie frame template and bunting), plus an event calendar (handy for sending invitations). Grandparents Day event organisers can submit their event to the site for free [here](#).

COTA NT has organised four movie screenings of KANGAROO in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Katherine on the day from 10.30am. Specially-priced tickets cost \$6.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children aged 16 and under. The ticket price includes refreshment. Tickets can **only** be purchased through the [COTA NT website](#) and a limited number is available. *More details on back cover.*



Photo by COTA NT: Grandparents Day 2024 at BCC Casuarina Cinema

# What aged care changes mean for you

Janet Brown  
COTA NT Aged Care Navigator

**The new Australian Aged Care Act starts on 1 November 2025 and will most affect people who entered the system after September 2024.**

If a person was already in the system, prior to September 2024 and receiving a Home Care Package; or on the waitlist for a Home Care Package; or had registered for an assessment, they will be 'grandfathered' into the new Support at Home program under a **'No Worse off'** principle, even if they are re-assessed to a higher support classification at a later date. Their services will remain the same, their financial contribution will be the same or slightly lower. If the person had unspent funds they will keep these funds which can be used to fund assistive technology or home modifications (as approved).

**One of the biggest changes with the Support at Home Packages is how it is funded.**

From 1 November 2025 your contribution rate will be based on your income and assets as assessed by Services Australia (Centrelink) in a similar way to the Age Pension means test. It will also vary by the amount and type of services you receive.

Those on the Aged Pension and the Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card will pay lower contributions



than self-funded retirees. The amount you pay will be set as a percentage of the price of each service you have received.

The aged care system is complicated to navigate. There is plenty of information online, but it is important to know that you can get help.

Much-trusted (and utilised) in-person resources for Territorians are COTA NT Aged Care Navigators in Darwin and Alice Springs, including rural and regional areas. Since 2019, they have helped steer Territorians towards making the best informed decisions about their government-funded aged care.

The Aged Care Navigators service is free for all seniors and their families in the NT. Information and resource brochures are also available.

**Call COTA NT on 08 8941 1004 (Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 3pm) to make an appointment with an Aged Care Navigator (help is available in-person, via phone and through video calls) or to request an information brochure.**

# Tools to estimate aged care fees

The way people's aged care fees are determined is changing under the new Aged Care Act on 1 November this year. There are tools to help you estimate how much you will need to pay for aged care services. The fee estimators on My Aged Care can help you understand potential costs:

- Visit the My Aged Care website to [learn about upcoming changes to aged care funding](#).
- [Support at Home fee estimator](#) – see how much you may pay towards services in your own home
- [Aged care home fee estimator](#) – see how much you may pay for care in an aged care home.

These tools help you make more informed decisions about your aged care.

**Different languages, same aged care** If you, or someone you care for, has difficulty speaking or understanding English, you can use an interpreting service to communicate in your preferred language.



Click [here](#) to view *Support at Home contributions for older people* video

**Translating and interpreting services** If you are receiving care, you can get interpreting through [TIS National](#). Call 131 450 and tell the operator the language you speak. TIS National is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can also ask your aged care provider to contact TIS National for you using their client code.

**Help from your aged care provider** Aged care providers can translate key information into languages other than English to help them communicate with you in your preferred language.

You can ask your aged care provider to use the [Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's free translation service](#) to produce translated versions of print and digital materials in different languages, as well as 'Easy Read' or 'plain English'.

**Sign language interpreting and captioning services** The National Sign Language Program (NSLP) provides free sign language interpreting and captioning services or eligible older people. The NSLP can help you with using aged care services and taking part in professional and social activities, and health and medical appointments that are covered by Medicare.

To book, call 1300 773 803, email [interpreting@deafconnect.org.au](mailto:interpreting@deafconnect.org.au) or go to the [Deaf Connect website](http://deafconnect.org.au) (deafconnect.org.au).



# Navigating life's chapters



Some chapters of life unfold just as we expect, while others bring surprises, challenges, or new directions. Hearing real stories from those who've been there can help you find your way forward when life shifts.

**Funded by the Australian Government, LiveUp is your free guide to staying well, active, and connected as you age.** It's packed with trusted resources, inspiring stories, and tips to help you stay independent for longer.

#### Activities directory

Find local activities and filter results to match your needs and goals.



#### Personalised healthy ageing quiz

Get tailored product and activity suggestions based on your answers.



#### Printable exercise sheets

Step into health and enjoy the benefits of movement for your mind and body.



#### A library of articles

Explore evidence-based articles that align with your healthy ageing goals.



**Visit [liveup.org.au](https://liveup.org.au) or speak to a Navigator  
for free on 1800 951 971**

# Free advice on nbn

Book your free one-on-one advice sessions by calling COTA NT Head Office on 8941 1004 during office hours.

**CHAT WITH NBN**

Halley from nbn will be at the COTA Darwin offices to chat with you about your current nbn connection, share tips on optimising your home setup, and explain the latest speed upgrades.

**Free 1-on-1 chat with Halley from nbn at COTA NT, Spillett House 65 Smith Street, Darwin**

**Book your free 45-minute one-on-one appointment today!**

Between 9am and 3pm  
Thursday 23 October  
Tuesday 18 November

**Bookings**  
Spots are limited and it's first in, first served—so get in quick!  
Ring COTA NT on 8941 1004.

COTA NT logo

**Self-management information sessions** | **Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT**

**Taking the first step**  
Help to get you moving, an essential part of chronic condition self-management  
• Friday 17 October, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

**What a pain!**  
Self-management strategies for chronic pain, whatever the cause  
• Friday 21 November, 9:30 am to 1:00 pm

**Understanding and managing arthritis and osteoporosis**  
Update your knowledge  
• Friday 19 December, 10:00 am to 11:30 am

All welcome - bookings are essential.  
Call 8948 5232, Monday to Thursday 9:30 am to 2:00 pm

Follow us on Facebook | [aont.org.au](http://aont.org.au)

# Rural seniors receive in-person info at Expo

Seniors living in the rural area outside Darwin enjoyed the first Darwin Rural Seniors Expo held over 10-11 October at the Litchfield Community Library in Coolalinga.

30 exhibitors provided information and answered questions on topics such as aged care, concessions and savings, health issues

(asthma, dementia, hearing, nutrition), safety online, in the community and from fire, pensions and retirement, government supports, library services, volunteering, consumer rights, end of life care, making wills and advance personal plans and leisure pursuits).

Patrons enjoyed presentations in the new library's conference room which focussed on aged care services, nbn and digital learning, banking and money-saving schemes and programs, health management for asthma, arthritis, hearing and dementia.

The Expo was organised by COTA NT, nbn and the Litchfield Community Library.

Photos supplied.



Carer Gateway & Ageing With Grace



Bendigo Bank (Coolalinga)



Dementia Australia (NT)



COTA NT



**COTA NT's  
SENIORS  
EXPOS  
2026**



**Katherine**  
Thursday 26th March  
**Darwin**  
Saturday 27th June  
**Alice Springs**  
Tuesday 11th August

Exhibitor registrations  
open early 2026  
[www.cotant.org.au/  
seniors-expos/](http://www.cotant.org.au/seniors-expos/)

# Seniors have a powerful role in saying NO MORE

*Dr Charlie King AM, Founder – NO MORE Campaign*

**As we head toward the end of the STAND campaign on 4 November, I want to thank everyone who's already taken part – and remind you there's still time to get involved.**

The STAND is about community-led action to end domestic and family violence across the Northern Territory. This year, we set ourselves a powerful goal: to create 90 Domestic Violence Action Plans (DVAPs) to honour the lives of more than 90 women who have died in the NT due to domestic and family violence. Every plan represents

a commitment to change – a promise that we will not stand by while violence continues.

Seniors have a particularly important role in this work. You've lived through change, raised families and helped shape the communities we live in today. You know what it means to look out for one another. Your words carry weight – with your families, your friends and the community around you. When you talk about respect, people listen.

Creating a DVAP is easier than it sounds. It's about simple, practical things that everyday people can do to promote safety and respect. Things like having

conversations about healthy relationships, setting clear expectations in your workplace or community group, and supporting someone who might be struggling. You can nominate an organisation or create your own DVAP. Creating a DVAP is easy, and we can help you get started.

By standing together, we can build a Territory where everyone feels safe, valued and free from fear. Let's make sure we reach our goal of 90 DVAPs – and honour the women whose lives have been lost by taking action for change.

To learn more or start a DVAP visit [thestand.org.au](http://thestand.org.au), call 08 8944 2000 or email [nomore@catholicarent.org.au](mailto:nomore@catholicarent.org.au).



## TAKE THE STAND

**90 DAYS. 90 LIVES. 90 PLANS.**

**THE GOAL:** 90 Domestic Violence Action Plans created in 90 Days

**For businesses, sporting clubs, workplaces, community groups and anyone ready to take a stand against domestic and family violence**

Create your own Domestic Violence Action Plan  
or nominate an organisation to create one.

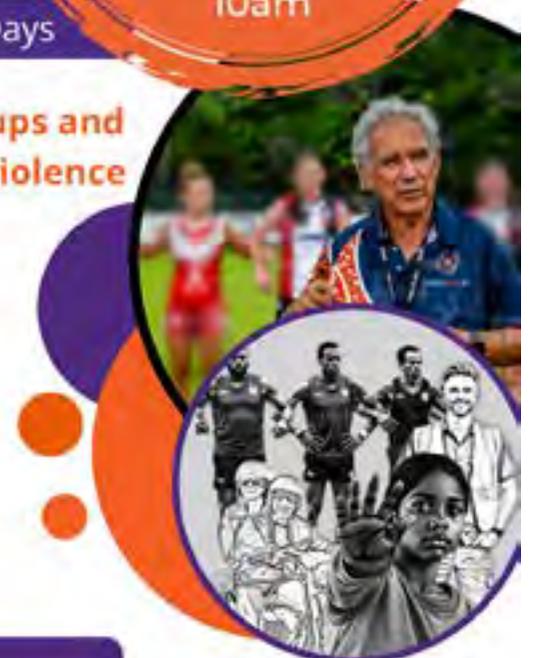
**7 August - 4 November 2025**

[www.thestand.org.au](http://www.thestand.org.au)

An initiative of the NO MORE Campaign

**SAVE  
THE DATE**

March with us to say  
**NO MORE** at Casuarina  
Shopping Centre  
Friday 5 Dec  
10am



# COTA NT recognised for service to seniors



Left to right, Cecilia Chiolero, Kim Farrar & Sue Shearer accept awards, September

**COTA NT's work serving Territory seniors has been recognised in the prestigious 2025 Northern Territory Export and Business Awards. These awards are supported by the NT government and the NT Chamber of Commerce.**

COTA NT won three awards: for Outstanding Customer Service in Not for Profit and Excellence in Business and Best Community Event or Business Collaboration: Darwin Seniors Expo by COTA NT (Greater Darwin) and Outstanding Customer Service in Not for Profit and Excellence in Business (Northern Territory).

"I am so proud of the COTA team," said Sue Shearer CEO. "These awards recognise the hard work and dedication of all our paid staff and volunteers. This award recognises that there is no 'I' in team.

"We have for years punched above our weight with many people not realising that only one of our paid staff is full-time, with the rest of us working on a part-time basis.



Left to right, Laura McLaughlin, Cecilia Chiolero and Janet Brown accept the award, October

(although It doesn't always feel like it).

"Our volunteers do a terrific job in governance, event support, activity facilitation, administration and program delivery. Last year, they contributed nearly 1,000 recorded hours to the organisation, valued nominally at nearly \$40K. We hope we say it enough, but we thank our volunteers, appreciate the hugely, and of course share these awards with them."

Nominations are currently open for our Volunteer Board for 2025-2026. EOI accepted by email. Opportunities outside of governance are available all year round. Information is available [here](#).

## Renew your NT Seniors Recognition Scheme membership

The NT Seniors Recognition Scheme provides a **\$550 prepaid card** each financial year to eligible Northern Territory seniors.

To continue receiving a prepaid card, you must remain eligible and renew between 1 January and 30 June to ensure your card is ready to use from the start of the new financial year. If your details aren't updated during this time, or you no longer meet eligibility criteria, your membership may be placed on hold or cancelled.

### Apply, renew or get assistance

- [ntconcessions.nt.gov.au](http://ntconcessions.nt.gov.au)
- 1800 777 704
- in person at one of our service centres.

### Using your card

Your card can be used at participating businesses to help with everyday expenses such as groceries, fuel, travel, and more.

Groceries	Travel	Clothing	Fuel
White goods	Power and water	Bills	Veterinary services
Driver licence	Postage	Car registration	Coffee

Use the card by 30 June each year, any remaining funds on the card will be cleared at the end of the financial year. Funds do not accrue.

The NT Seniors Recognition Scheme Prepaid Visa Card ('Card') is issued by Heritage Bank, a trading name of Heritage and People's Choice Ltd ABN 11 087 651 125, AFSL and Australian Credit Licence 244310. Visit [ntconcessions.nt.gov.au/activate](http://ntconcessions.nt.gov.au/activate) to check your card balance.



# ALICE SENIORS EXPO

Photos for COTA NT by Lisa Hatz Photography. More online [here](#).



# Alice's main event

**COTA NT's Seniors Expo held during Seniors Month in Alice Springs attracted the crowds once again.**

This was the organisation's 7th Expo-style event for Alice Springs seniors and was supported by the Northern Territory Government sponsorship, Club and Associates and stakeholders.

It featured 40 exhibitors speaking to a wide array of topics including lifestyle, community, aged care, health, well-being, financial and legal services, consumer rights, safety, palliative care, advance personal plans, concessions, savings on the cost of living, voting and relationships.

The Plaza Wellbeing Centre made a welcome return with head massages on offer and new exhibitors included a sexologist, spinal flow therapist and women on wheels.

The event was designed to be as inclusive as possible with a pre-event walk, entry, morning tea, Rotary barbecue and Qi Gong class all provided at no charge to event attendees.

"We'd like to thank in particular our wonderful event volunteers, who help make it happen," said Sue Shearer, COTA NT's CEO. "For an event that attracted hundreds of seniors, our volunteers provided vital hands on deck."

## Alice Springs Seniors Expo 2026

The date for its 8th year has been set for Tuesday 11th August 2026, again during the NT's Seniors Month celebrations.



# Get free access help for aged care services

Janet is pictured at the recent Alice Springs Expo.



**Help in Alice Springs for people trying to access government-funded aged care services is available through COTA NT's Aged Care Navigator, Janet Bradbury.**

Janet is at the 50+ Community Centre on 11 Wills Terrace on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays

between 8am and 2pm (access through the rear gates).

COTA NT's Aged Care Navigators are there to help ensure the aged care needs of older people from all backgrounds are being met and to ensure they have access to appropriate and relevant information before making decisions about aged care.

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**ALICE SPRINGS**  
Masters Games  
10 - 17 October 2026

[alicespringsmastersgames.com.au](http://alicespringsmastersgames.com.au)



The Alice Springs Masters Games return to the Red Centre in October 2026. With over 25 sports on offer, there's something for everyone.

**Want to participate? Visit the website and register your interest today.**

# Yarralin Seniors Day Brings Community Together

Content and permissions:  
Victoria Daly Regional Council.



**The Yarralin Community Care Centre recently hosted an Open Day to celebrate Seniors Day, with a BBQ lunch as the highlight of the gathering.**

Clients, family members, carers and the wider community came together to share a meal, enjoy activities, and connect with one another.

The event also provided an opportunity for workers

to speak with community members about the supports available through Aged Care Services. Several potential new clients even took their first steps towards registering with My Aged Care, with the hope of soon accessing additional support.

The Open Day showcased the wide range of activities available at the centre, including arts and crafts, puzzles, and board games,

with new cooking and morning tea groups set to start soon. Photos from recent outings were also on display, highlighting fishing trips, picnics, the gathering of traditional medicines and bush foods, and a special visit to a neighbouring station where some clients once lived and worked.

Throughout the day, conversation flowed easily, with stories of station life, local history, and family connections being shared. The event was a true celebration of the contribution of Yarralin's senior community members, strengthening bonds and highlighting the important role of elders in community life.



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grow louder



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Home Maintenance Service fee \$10  
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www.cofant.org.au/  
be-a-member

# Model citizens in Katherine steal the show

Gillian Hagger

*[To whom we wish a very happy 90th birthday and our thanks and appreciation for being our correspondent in Katherine - Ed.]*

**Various activities were enjoyed during Seniors Month in August.**

**Morning tea** hosted by Mayor Elisabeth Clark and councillors in the grounds of the Katherine Town Council. Lis has recently retired as Mayor and we thank her for the support and assistance she gave us during her appointment. We trust she enjoys more time with her family and in her garden.

**Garden morning tea** hosted by local Member, Jo Hersey in the grounds of her home. Jo is a great supporter of our group

and she and her staff are always obliging and assist us in many ways.

**A fashion parade** was held at the local Coffee Club and items from local op shops were displayed. Organised by Gaye Lawrence with morning tea and lunch provided by management and staff at the Coffee Club. We enjoyed all the different outfits presented by our eight (human) mannequins. We welcomed a group from Pine Creek and extend our thanks to Nikki and staff at the Coffee Club, Gaye as convenor and our models.

*[Gillian revealed in conversation that the fashion parade was so well received they've been asked to do it again - Ed.]*

**A Teddy Bears Picnic** was held at the Hot Springs Park by the Katherine Library and

included the local children's group who with Mums and Grandmas meet regularly at the library. Thanks to the staff for stories on teddy bears.

Tracey and Matt who keep bees and provide honey to locals hosted a morning tea for us to **learn about bees**. This was very interesting and enjoyed by all who attended. A luncheon at the Katherine Country Club followed and once again, we welcomed a group from Pine Creek. Thanks to all involved.

**Normal meetings and outings**

We held a Dutch Auction, had a guest speaker and a lunch at the Lazy Lizard in Pine Creek. We enjoyed the company of locals. In September, we had



lunch at Nitmiluk Gorge and the Katherine Club. In October, Tracey our 'bee lady' will be talking about her adventures in South Africa. And in November, we host speakers from Darwin who will be providing advice on the changes to aged care packages and funding. Vital information for those who are ageing and may require assistance to stay at home.

Meeting times: Every Wednesday, 10am, 18 Bernard Street unless otherwise advised.

**Contact: Gillian Hagger  
0488 269 632**

# Territory local

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**NT Seniors Card Business Discount Directory 2025-26**

Information and discounts for Territory seniors

ntsensorscard.org.au

Seniors Cards are free of charge. There is NO payment or membership fee involved.

WALK DARWIN

There are hundreds of discounts offered by Seniors Card Businesses to Seniors Card holders. Check out where you can make savings on everyday expenses, eating out and treats plus more!

Visit the Discount Directory online [here](https://ntsensorscard.org.au/discounts-directory) (ntsensorscard.org.au/discounts-directory) or pick up a printed copy in one of [47 community locations](#) across the Territory.

For more information, freecall 1800 441 489.

You can apply for a FREE Seniors Card if you are aged 60 or older and are a permanent resident of the Northern Territory.

- You can apply online today on the [ntsensorscard website](https://ntsensorscard.org.au).
- There are NEVER any fees associated with applying for a new or replacement Seniors Card.
- With your card, you can travel for free on public buses in Darwin and Alice Springs.
- You can get an annual \$55 discount on private vehicle registration
- You can receive our latest [e-News](#) direct to your inbox.

Follow us on Facebook for news and updates.



# Real life: letters, Qs and conversation

## Centrelink bonus cash is fake

**COTA NT received a call from a senior asking to verify information she had received stating there was a Centrelink bonus of \$3600 for seniors to cover increases in cost of living.**

She reported that she had been on hold on the Centrelink phone lines for two hours trying confirm the payment, before she called COTA.

Our reply: False.

From [Centrelink website](#):

There are unofficial websites and social media accounts online sharing information about Centrelink payments that isn't real.

When talking about one off and bonus payments, they might say they'll help:

- with the cost of living
- people getting Age Pension, Carer Payment or Carer Allowance
- people who have a concession card.

They offer varying amounts of money. These payments don't exist. People are sharing these claims on social media, thinking the information is real. If the website address doesn't end in .gov.au then it

isn't an official government website. It could be a scam. The only genuine Services Australia and myGov websites are servicesaustralia.gov.au and my.gov.au.

If you're not sure if Centrelink information you've seen online is real, search their genuine website. Type servicesaustralia.gov.au in a trusted browser.

## What do I need to do before the new My Aged Care Scheme is in place?

**[Name withheld] is wondering what she needs to do next before the new My Aged Care scheme is implemented.**

Our reply:

Current Home Care package clients (Levels 1 – 4) will transition to the new system with no change to their in-home supports. Their budget will be matched in value within the 8 levels of the new Support at Home program, it is likely they will pay the same or slightly less than they currently pay. The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) will remain until 2027 although there may be a few changes before then.

## Elder abuse suspected – what do I do?

**I suspect my older brother is abusing our elderly mother. She's going through chemotherapy and he does things to her that are borderline illegal.**

**He tried to pressure her into transferring her house made up a backstory I was in a prison in New South Wales even though I've never been there.**

**She had her keys taken by him today and he did something with them and refused to return them, I had to buy her a new lock for her door.**

**Weird shit, there is also only one aircon in the house, she is literally dying of cancer and he has moved into the room with the aircon while she suffers the heat? Surely that's not right?**

I went over yesterday and i fixed an aircon in the house and she was basically doing jumping jacks she could feel comfortable. He is in my mind 100% abusing her and little things go wrong or make life hard without outright pointing to him. Very circumstantial but I'm sure he is abusing her.

Our reply:

**Darwin Community Legal Service** operates the [Older Persons Abuse Information Line](#) to assist elderly people suffering from abuse, making referrals to support organisations and providing legal information to people wanting to make informed choices about their situation.



Vulnerable Person Abuse Questions developed by NT Police

The **Older Persons Abuse Information Line (1800 037 072)** is available from 9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday and is free to call from landlines and public phones. If you are calling from a mobile phone, please them know and they can call you back.

### Older Persons Abuse

Elder abuse is defined as; 'A single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.'

The most reported form of abuse is financial abuse. Other types of abuse include; physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. The mistreatment of older people occurs in all communities and ethnic groups. The abuser is often a family member, carer, neighbour or friend. Victims may be dependent upon the abuser for care or services and may be reluctant to complain due to fear of retribution or loss of services.

# Have your say

Send your letters, questions or comments to the Editor.

By email [communications@cotant.org.au](mailto:communications@cotant.org.au)

By post

COTA NT, Seniors Voice  
GPO Box 852  
Darwin NT 0800

# New drug treatment for Alzheimer's disease

Professor Amy Brodtmann

**Donanemab is the first drug to be approved in Australia that alters the course of Alzheimer's disease. Previous medications have only helped to manage the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.**

Donanemab is given as an intravenous infusion every four weeks for a maximum of 18 months. It targets a protein in the brain called amyloid, which is thought to provide the tinder for degeneration or atrophy of the brain that another tau protein in the brain seems to drive. Donanemab binds to and removes the sticky amyloid plaques, much like an antibody would do.

It is thought that removing the amyloid will stop the tau then driving the neurodegeneration. For some people with low to moderate disease progression, donanemab can remove amyloid to a level that is below the threshold for diagnosis. For those with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease, however, donanemab won't work because the amyloid build-up is too advanced by then.

## How can I access Donanemab for myself, or my loved one?

There is a slowly growing number of sites where you can access donanemab; and there will likely be more to follow. There are groups of clinicians who are working together to provide this therapy in private

settings and potentially via public private partnerships. You will need to speak to your General Practitioner or your specialist about how you can access it in an area close to you.

## Will it cure me or my loved one?

Donanemab is not a cure, and we need to manage expectations. It will not cure you or your loved one. Donanemab is estimated to slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease by around six months. However, the neurodegeneration will continue despite being on the medication and despite having the amyloid removed from your brain.

## How much does Donanemab cost, and why doesn't the government support it on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)?

We're not sure of the exact costs of donanemab currently, but the estimate is around \$80,000 per year. This is because the two major side effects of donanemab are brain swelling and bleeding, due to possible over-activation of the brain's immune mechanisms. The complications often present with no symptoms, so what brings up the cost is regular MRI (and other) scans to ensure a patient is an appropriate fit for the drug, and to support early detection of any side effects. Moreover, anyone who has two copies of an Alzheimer's risk gene called ApoE4 is at a higher risk of brain swelling and bleeding

and cannot take donanemab, thus any patient considering the drug is also required to have genetic testing to check for this. Donanemab was only approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in May this year. The PBS advisory committee are reviewing an application for donanemab to be listed on the scheme, this month. However, a significant cost-effective benefit would need to be shown.

This article was supplied by [StepUpforDementiaResearch](http://StepUpforDementiaResearch). COTA NT is a Champion of *Step Up for Dementia Research* and *Step Up for Ageing Research*.



## No age limits on some travel insurance policies

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**1300 1300 50**

[cota.com.au](http://cota.com.au)

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### DONATE TO COTA NT

Every dollar helps us look out  
for senior Territorians



All donations are spent  
in the Territory on  
programs designed to  
improve seniors' health  
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**together we  
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COTA NT is a ACNC registered charity  
Donations over \$2 are tax deductible

**[www.cofant.org.au/donate](http://www.cofant.org.au/donate)**



**Dementia  
Support  
Australia**

**Learn to live  
at home with  
dementia.**

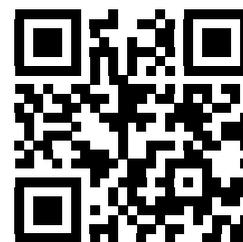
**Staying at Home** is a free program to empower and upskill carers supporting a person living with dementia to remain at home for as long as possible.

Call **1800 699 799** or visit **[dementia.com.au/SaH](https://dementia.com.au/SaH)**

**Staying  
at Home**

A Carer Wellbeing & Respite Program

**Free sessions over 2 days**  
22nd - 23rd July 25, Darwin NT  
16th - 17th Sept 25, Darwin NT  
18th - 19th Nov 25, Darwin NT



# End of life through a culturally and linguistically diverse lens

Cecilia Chiolero, PICAC NT Manager, COTA NT

**I lost my husband recently and that experience made me live and think about end of life practices more deeply.**

Throughout the years we talked about life and about the life that we wanted. We wrote some indications in our [Advance Personal Plans](#) (APP) on what we did not want. This requirement, to provide instructions about choices we would wish if we became unable to express them, was something we were not aware of when we first moved to Australia from Italy. I do not believe many countries have anything similar. Once we realised the importance of having an APP, in particular appointing Alternative Decision Makers, we wrote down some things, especially around health matters.

What we never wrote down was anything about our funeral preferences. We were in agreement on cremation, but what to do with the ashes was never resolved. My husband travelled a lot, exploring and writing mostly about the Indian subcontinent. At some point he imagined friends and family travelling to India together to disperse his ashes in one of the places he loved. Later, as he grew older, he changed his view. I remember the last time we talked about it, not many years ago, when he simply said: 'you and my daughter will do as you please.' That response did not help, or perhaps it did.

Deciding on one's own wake, funeral arrangements and music to be played can bring comfort to both the person and their family. It allows them to have a say and to know that they will be remembered in a certain way. This too was something we never spoke about. Our experiences of funeral arranging had always been similar. One chose a funeral home and talked to the parish priest to book a day and decide on a burial place. There was not much time between the passing and the date of the funeral, sometimes only a couple of days. Everything else followed a well rehearsed routine and the involvement of families could be, and mostly was, minimal.

Here in Darwin, everything was different. The hospice was supportive and accommodating. There was no need for me to leave the room. I could take the time I needed and call family, friends and a minister. In hindsight this was critical, because when I left the room at the hospice after almost five hours, I was ready. I was surrounded by our closest friends and family, and thanks to video calling even those who could not come in person were part of those moments.

The funeral arrangements that followed were partly routine, such as deciding on the date, the location, the coffin or urn and the type of funeral. The date came as a surprise though, as the first available spot was ten days later. What at first seemed a long wait turned into a gift,

because it gave us time to think and to prepare. Other aspects became deeply personal. With guidance I was able to organise the final goodbye in a way that would have made my husband smile, and that allowed everyone else to feel part of it because the choices were meaningful.

Finally there was the eulogy. Since my husband had spent most of his life overseas, it had to be meaningful not only for those attending the funeral in Darwin, but also for friends and family following online.

Organising, choosing, liaising with people, talking to family and friends and celebrants, all contributed to making the farewell less traumatic and helped me take the first steps into the next stage of my life.

For many older people who move into residential care, not necessarily because of dementia, but often to receive more support, the staff and carers who look after them often become the ones they turn to for help in recording their stories and wishes. Even when an Advance Personal Plan is in place, people may change their minds.

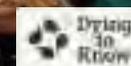
Different cultures have different rites, yet they all share the same role. They offer comfort and solace and they ease the transition to the next phase.

For aged care service providers who need to provide the most appropriate and

**"I'VE MADE A PLAN FOR COCO AFTER I'M GONE."**



The secret I'm glad I shared.



dyingtoknow.au

person-centred care, it is important to be aware of the cultural and spiritual practices of the people they support. Good practice means asking, listening to personal stories, understanding personal preferences and adjusting services so that rites, traditions and personal wishes are acknowledged. In this way, families feel respected and older people are honoured in ways that are meaningful to them.

## Useful resources

- [Dying to Talk - Discussion Starters](#) Palliative Care Aus
- [Proveda.com.au](#)
- [The Awkward Conversation We're All Avoiding \(But Really Shouldn't\)](#)
- [Your Emotional Will](#)

On the COTA NT website,

- [Advance Personal Plans](#)
- [Advance Personal Plans in Languages](#)

**If you need resources translated, please contact me on 8941 1004 or [email](#).**

# NT Grandparents Day

Sunday  
26 October  
2025

*Celebrate a special  
day together!*



Join COTA NT in celebrating Grandparents Day with a special screening of the movie "KANGAROO" - a home-grown Territory film perfect for the whole family.

KANGAROO is a heart-warming family comedy about ex TV personality, Chris Masterman, who becomes stranded in an Outback town outside Alice Springs. There, he teams up with 12-year-old Indigenous girl Charlie. The pair form an unlikely friendship and work together to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned joeys in the remote but stunning Outback community - an endeavour that proves to be life-changing for them both.

**Tickets: Adults \$6.50, Children 16 and under \$3.50**

*Ticket price includes movie and refreshment.*

Tickets are through COTA NT website event listings only and are NOT available at the box office on the day.

All Grandparents/carers must be accompanied by at least one grandchild.

**Get your tickets through [www.cotant.org.au/series/cota-nt-grandparents-day-2025](http://www.cotant.org.au/series/cota-nt-grandparents-day-2025) - limited numbers available!**

Call COTA NT on 08 8941 1004 during normal office hours (Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 3pm) for assistance if required.



**Showing on Sunday 26 October, 10.30am to 12.30pm at:**

**BCC Cinemas Casuarina** • 247 Trower Road Casuarina

**Event Cinemas Palmerston** • 1 Roystonea Ave, Yarrowonga

**Alice Springs Cinema** • Todd Plaza, 11 Todd St, Alice Springs

**Katherine Cinema 3** • 1/20 First St, Katherine



# Aged care innovations that go beyond compliance and co-payments

First published by Hello Care, read full article [here](#) October 2025

**As Australia stands on the cusp of implementing its new Aged Care Act, many in the sector are questioning whether this long-awaited reform truly delivers the innovation older Australians deserve.**

Despite promises of modernisation, accountability and improved quality of care, the Act lacks meaningful strategies to tackle one of the most pressing issues facing our ageing population: **loneliness and social isolation.**

What makes this shortfall especially frustrating is that the solutions already exist. Across the globe, governments are pioneering imaginative approaches that weave social inclusion into the fabric of care.

Loneliness can be addressed through thoughtful design and deliberate policy. Yet Australia's new framework offers little to encourage similar innovation. Instead, the contentious Support at Home program, with its co-payment structure, risks creating additional barriers for those most in need, potentially deepening isolation rather than alleviating it.

The [full article](#) explores examples in Singapore, Japan, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and China.

## Singapore's proximity housing grant

Introduced in 2015 and revised in 2024, the Proximity

Housing Grant (PHG) provides financial subsidies for families and for singles to encourage adult children to purchase resale flats within four kilometres of their parents' or child's home, or even to live together.

*For Australia, where urban sprawl often separates generations, a similar grant could incentivise co-location in regional areas or suburbs. Imagine rebates for granny flats or priority housing access for families living near seniors, ideas that could alleviate the caregiving crunch without overburdening working adults.*

## Japan's community-based integrated care

Japan, facing the world's oldest population, has pioneered a comprehensive system to prevent senior isolation.

Since 2000, its long-term care insurance (LTCI) covers not just medical needs but social participation, funding community centres, volunteer befriending, and preventive programs like exercise classes and hobby groups. The "Community-Based Integrated Care System" emphasises "ageing in place", with local governments coordinating services to keep seniors connected.

*Australia's vast geography could adapt this through expanded community hubs in regional towns, funded via the new Act, to mirror Japan's success in turning ageing into an opportunity for communal vitality.*

## Denmark's senior co-housing

In Denmark, senior co-housing represents a grassroots revolution against isolation. These intentional communities house 20–50 residents in private units clustered around shared spaces like kitchens and gardens, promoting mutual support and socialising.

## Netherlands' dementia villages

The Netherlands' Hogeweyk Dementia Village, opened in 2009, is a radical innovation: a gated community mimicking a normal town, with shops, restaurants, and theatres staffed by caregivers in plain clothes. Housing 152 residents with severe dementia, it prioritises normalcy over institutionalisation, reducing agitation and medication needs by encouraging social roles.

For Australia, where dementia affects over 400,000 seniors, scaled-down villages in regional areas could integrate with the Aged Care Act, blending care with community to humanise support.

## Sweden's tech-driven solutions and China's legal mandates

Sweden leverages technology to bridge gaps, with programs like digital intergenerational matching and AI companions reducing loneliness amid COVID-19. Initiatives such as Memory Lane use voice assistants for reminiscence

therapy, fostering connections remotely.

Similarly, **South Korea's** long-term care insurance provides home visits and meal services, supporting 10 million seniors with community-integrated policies.

In **China**, filial piety laws mandate adult children visit and support parents, enforceable by courts, reinforcing cultural norms.

**Italy's Long Live the Elderly!** program builds networks for at-risk seniors, offering home visits and social events to combat isolation. In the **USA**, DOROT's friendly visiting pairs volunteers with seniors, while engAGED hubs curate innovative interventions.

These varied approaches – tech, legal, and communal – offer Australia a toolkit.

## Charting a connected future for Australian seniors

As the Aged Care Act dawns, Australia has a golden opportunity to innovate beyond co-payments and compliance.

Yet rather than learning from these proven successes, our government has chosen to take the narrowest path forward. By rejecting Royal Commission recommendations for sustainable public funding, and embracing co-payments that shift the burden onto older Australians, we risk creating a system where connection becomes a privilege, not a right.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

COUNCIL ON THE AGEING (NORTHERN TERRITORY) INC

Friday 24 October 2025, 10am

Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin

COTA NT Inc's AGM will commence at 10am and be followed by light refreshments. All members are encouraged to attend. Anyone wishing to become a member is also welcome.

In accordance with Clause 44 of the NT Associations Act a copy of the 2024/2025 audited accounts will be available for inspection by Members upon request. A full copy of the Audited Accounts will also be tabled at the Annual General Meeting.

More information about the AGM including 2025 Nomination Forms for Board positions is available by contacting Sue Shearer, CEO of COTA NT on 08 8941 1004 or email [ceo@cotant.org.au](mailto:ceo@cotant.org.au).

**Bookings are required for catering purposes**  
**Book online [here](#)** or call COTA NT on 08 8941 1004.



## Job opportunity with COTA NT Events & Activities Organiser

**Do you want to be part of a dynamic and inclusive team?**

In early 2026, we will have a vacancy for an **Events & Activities Organiser**. This is a fast-paced, hands-on role that involves organising most of COTA NT's events and activities alongside our dedicated staff team.

We're looking for someone with:

- Proven experience in planning and coordinating events
- Strong time management, organisational, and communication skills (both verbal and written)
- The ability to work in a busy, active environment with plenty of physical involvement
- Confidence using a variety of computer programs
- An understanding of the political and economic landscape of the Northern Territory (an advantage, but not essential)



This is a rewarding opportunity to be at the forefront of planning and delivering activities that make a real difference in the community.

### What do to do if you are interested

To express interest in this role, please contact us in first instance.

- Email Sue Shearer at [ceo@cotant.org.au](mailto:ceo@cotant.org.au)
- Or arrange to speak with her on 08 8941 1004.



### "A lifetime of stories, experiences, and skills is worth sharing"

volunteering is a wonderful way to do just that.

It's a chance to stay active, meet new people, and continue making a difference.

From helping out in the community to simply being there for someone who needs a friend, every moment you give has meaning.

Stay connected, stay inspired, and keep shaping the world around you because your time and experience are more valuable than ever.

### Step into volunteering!

Scan the QR code below or visit:

[freddymatch.org/agencies/AG-ZE04ZNO/volunteering-nt](https://freddymatch.org/agencies/AG-ZE04ZNO/volunteering-nt)



[vnt@vsant.org.au](mailto:vnt@vsant.org.au)

<https://vsant.org.au/join-us-nt/>

<https://www.facebook.com/volunteeringnt>

Chris Ponter

Finalist - 2025, Chief Minister's Volunteer of the Year (Central Australia)  
 Founding member of Women's Cricket in Alice Springs

# VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

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*for senior Territorians*

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