

# seniorsvoice

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

### KEEPING NT SENIORS INFORMED

Published by



The peak body for NT Seniors since 1969



# HAVE YOUR SAY!

*Fighting survey fatigue pays off Find out more PAGES 6, 8, 12-13*

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**GREENFIELDS**  
LIVING

# A flying start to 2024

**After a busy end of year celebrating with COTA Members and playing Santa (see page 4), the organisation already has events such as the Katherine Seniors Expo 2024 (registrations are open [here](#)) and regular activities resuming.**

**Election platform** We are in the throes of finalising our election platform for the upcoming 2024 NT Election. Sadly, some things haven't progressed from our 2020 recommendations regarding seniors housing, health, the digital divide, crime and the cost of living. We will again lobby for the *NT Seniors Recognition Scheme* to be increased (it has remained the same since its inception in 2018) and also request the *NT Concession Scheme* see some changes. This includes an increase in the

MVR rebate – with petrol and other costs dramatically rising – an increase in this rebate is long overdue.

**Housing** The Federal Housing Minister, Julie Collins announced the \$10 billion *Housing Australia Future Fund* (HAFF) open. COTA NT, after applying for a development permit and other red tape, will be applying for this. We hope to construct rental units specifically for seniors on a low income or a pension, as the critical shortage of affordable housing continues to distress senior Territorians with limited means. We have heard that the NT has a shortfall of 7,000 dwellings, so it's no wonder Territorians are struggling to find affordable rental accommodation.

COTA NT gave a detailed description of our proposed development to the City of Darwin council and received

advice that they support this development – wonderful news.

## Voluntary assisted dying (VAD) consultations

The VAD consultations are still underway. If you need information, would like the VAD Expert Panel to visit your organisation or you would like to put a submission in, there is still time to do this. Visit the [website page](#) for more information or call the VAD Project hotline on **1800 973 393** from 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

From COTA NT's point of view, we hope the winning party in August's NT election will not delay this vital and important piece of legislation.

**Safety and security** COTA NT has some window and/or door security products free of charge for seniors. COTA NT Members will receive first priority, but seniors who live alone and aged over 80 can



Sue Shearer, CEO, COTA NT

also enquire about these products (call Head Office on 08 8941 1004). Thanks to Power and Water who enabled us to purchase these products.

## Grandparents survey

Finally, in our centrefold, you will find our first survey of NT grandparents (it's online [here](#)). You can help us create an evidence-led picture of the contribution grandparents are making in the NT.

So whilst we celebrate Grandparents with our winning Grandies stories, we also invite you to tell us more about the grandparenting experience you are having. Is it a joy, is it a mixed blessing, is it a struggle? Please tell us, so we can understand how best to help and support you.

### 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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## seniorsvoice

NORTHERN TERRITORY

### Contact us

Seniors Voice Publisher COTA NT  
(Council on the Ageing Northern Territory)  
Phone 08 8941 1004

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

Subscriptions, editorial, advertising enquiries  
[ntseniorsvoice@cotant.org.au](mailto:ntseniorsvoice@cotant.org.au)

Post PO Box 852, Darwin NT 0800

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

COTA NT Website [www.cotant.org.au](http://www.cotant.org.au)

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## INSIDE

	<b>NEWS</b>	<b>3-8</b>
	<b>HEALTH</b>	<b>9 &amp; 15</b>
	<b>GRANDPARENTS DAY STORIES &amp; SURVEY</b>	<b>10-14</b>
	<b>CENTRAL</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>LETTERS</b>	<b>17-19</b>
	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>LIFESTYLE</b>	<b>21-22</b>

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.

# Warm hearts, knees and toes



Sue Shearer helped to deliver COTA NT's dotty, non-slip socks and is pictured here with recipient, Maddy McIntosh at Terrace Gardens.

**COTA NT and its sponsored sewing group, Our Common Threads presented beautiful and practical gifts to residents in local residential age care facilities in support of Operation Secret Santa – Aged Care.**

This project created by Territorian, Victoria Starr meant that hundreds of gifts were delivered across the Territory to aged care residents who may not have been able to spend time with family or loved ones over Christmas, and who may have had few if any gifts to unwrap otherwise.

COTA chose to gift non-slip socks (the dots on the sole of

the foot help to prevent slips), which help to keep toes warm under the air-conditioners.

Creators of the knee rugs, *Our Common Threads* is a free creative sewing group for women of all backgrounds, who meet weekly at COTA's head office every Wednesday.

Founding member, Kerry Thomas said, "It was a pleasure for us to create these gifts and we welcome anyone interested in starting or continuing sewing craft projects to join us at COTA NT."

*Our Common Threads* meets on Wednesdays from 11am at COTA NT, Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin.

**For information, phone Kerry on 0438 936 862.**

## WATER CYCLING CLASSES

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## Watch season

**We've reached the middle of the Top End's cyclone season, which officially commenced on 1 November and which will finish on 30 April.**

Whether you live in the city or the rural area, learning to protect yourself, your family and your property from cyclones can assist in minimising the potential losses and trauma that you might suffer. Public safety advice is available online [here](http://www.pfes.nt.gov.au/emergency-service/public-safety-advice/natural-disaster-advice/cyclones).

The Northern Territory Emergency Service (NTES) is implementing the Australian Warning System (AWS) for cyclone, flood and storm emergencies. A summary of the AWS is on page 21.

### Where to get info

- Emergency Alert (national telephone warning system) – **DO NOT BLOCK +61 444 444 444** (learn more [here](#))
- ABC Radio and local media (find your frequency [here](#)). Also on social media.
- Weather warnings [www.bom.gov.au/nt/warnings](http://www.bom.gov.au/nt/warnings)
- [securent.nt.gov.au/alerts-warnings](http://securent.nt.gov.au/alerts-warnings)

# Expos in 2024

COTA NT created its Seniors Expo event format back in 2015. The formula of information stalls plus workshops and presentations plus performances and morning tea has proven successful over 16 times.

This year, COTA NT is planning another 3 Expos. Dates for 2024 are:

- **Katherine Seniors Expo**  
Thursday 7 March, 10am to 1pm
  - **Darwin Seniors Expo**  
Saturday 29 June, 10 to 2pm
  - **Alice Springs Seniors Expo**  
Tuesday 13 August, 10am to 2pm
- Registrations are now open for Exhibitors for the Katherine Expo. This is the 4th year of

Expo in Katherine and will once again be held at the Henry Scott Recreation Centre (YMCA). Registrations cost from \$25 and the form is online [here](http://www.cotant.org.au/katherine-seniors-expo-2024).

[www.cotant.org.au/katherine-seniors-expo-2024](http://www.cotant.org.au/katherine-seniors-expo-2024)

Expos are supported by the Northern Territory Government, sponsors YMCA, Netball NT and the Alice Springs Convention Centre, COTA Club & Associate Members and Supporters, businesses, service providers, not-for-profit organisations and seniors' groups.

**For more information about our Expos, contact COTA NT Head Office on 08 8941 1004.**



From left: Keep Moving exhibitor at Katherine Expo 2023, NuLine Dance at the Darwin Expo 2023 and (below) arrival at Alice Springs Expo 2023.





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DEC welcomes Seniors with quality entertainment in ease & comfort. Call 8980 3333 to discuss your accessibility needs.

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





# Taking surveys pays off in many ways

Survey fatigue is real. And we should know as we often ask seniors to have their say, let us hear their voice and so on (and some may say, and so on).

But bear with us. Whilst customer reviews and survey requests overload our inboxes, almost landing the very minute after a purchase is made....sometimes taking 5 minutes to complete a survey can leave you with a very satisfied feeling!

Sheryl was the winner of the recent NT Seniors Card Members Survey and she chose to spend her winning gift voucher with the team at [Palmerston Quality Meats](#).

Two wins. One for Sheryl and one for a local business that supports the NT Seniors Card by offering Seniors Card holders a 10% discount every day of the year (not just at Christmas).

**p.s. Take the Grandparents Day Survey 2024 on page 12-13 or online [here](#) for warm fuzzies and a chance to win \$150!**



Survey winner, Sheryl chose to spend her gift voucher with NT Seniors Card Business Partner, Palmerston Quality Meats.

# Opp for artists opens

**The Darwin Street Art Festival will run from 18 May – 8 June in 2024, allowing artists to paint murals in cooler weather.**

The Festival saw 23 murals painted in 2023, and overall, there has been 108 painted in the past eight years.

Artist expressions of interest open on Monday 15 January, and will close Friday 2 February.

The Darwin Street Art Festival is funded by the Northern Territory Government through Activate Darwin.

Businesses and landlords who are interested in having their wall painted are encouraged to express their interest all year round through the DSAF website [www.darwinstreetartfestival.com.au](http://www.darwinstreetartfestival.com.au)



# NT ministerial shuffle ahead of election

**Member for Drysdale, the Hon Eva Lawler was announced as the new Chief Minister for the Northern Territory on 20 December 2023.**

Lawler is also Treasurer and holds the portfolios of Territory Development, Defence Industries, Industry and Trade and Major Projects. She succeeds Natasha Fyles in the Chief Minister role.

The Hon Ngaree Ah Kit is the Minister for Territory Families and Youth, Seniors and Equality. (The Minister for Seniors was previously the Hon Lauren Moss MLA.)

COTA NT is currently preparing its election platform, which will be submitted to the Northern Territory Government. It will also be published to the COTA NT

website. As per the [Election Submission of 2020](#), it will call for the government to take action in key areas relevant to NT seniors' well-being.

The recommendations will be based on the national policy of the organisation's federal body, COTA Australia, contributions from State and Territory COTAs, the COTA NT board, Members and Territory stakeholders.

Crime prevention, safety at home and in the community, seniors' housing, support for mature aged workers, accessible information, health (specifically aged care and dementia care), retirement infrastructure, elder abuse and everyday living costs will be on the agenda once again, with an emphasis on acute and immediate needs.

# New term for Aged Care Council of Elders

## The Australian Government recently announced a new term for the Aged Care Council of Elders.

The Council of Elders provides a direct voice to the government about aged care reform and ageing well on behalf of older people.

Following the Council's productive initial term, applications were sought from older people with strong connections in their local communities and lived experience of aged care.

A rigorous selection process resulted in the appointment of 13 members, commencing in January 2024. Six members return to Council, with 7 new members appointed.

- Anne Burgess AM remains as Council chair and is joined by new members:
- Ms Lynda Whiteway, who receives a home care package and is a carer for a family member with dementia.
- Ms Anna Harrison AM, who has strong connections with local culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Auntie Lynette Cullinane, a Mununjali woman with strong connections with First Nations peoples, particularly women and people in rural and remote areas.
- Ms Juliet Rankin, who has a background in palliative care and working in rural and

remote communities.

- Major General Vikram Madan OAM, who is connected to local older culturally and linguistically diverse people, particularly those experiencing domestic abuse.
- Mr James Carey, who resides in an aged care home and is an aged care community volunteer.
- Dr John Davis, who is well connected to older people in aged care in his local community, particularly those from LGBTQI+ communities.

Returning members are:

- Mrs Gillian Groom AO
- Dr Tom Calma AO
- Professor John McCallum
- Ms Margaret Walsh
- Ms Val Fell OAM
- Ms Gwenda Darling.

Appointed members are geographically and demographically diverse, ensuring the voices of a wide range of older people can be heard through the Council.

More information is available at [www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/aged-care-council-of-elders](http://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/aged-care-council-of-elders).

Opportunities to engage with the Council will be published on the [Aged Care Engagement Hub](#). Opportunities may include surveys, webinars, online workshops and consultation papers.

**Open until the 16 February is consultation on the draft new [Aged Care Act](#).**

# Time to renew

**Memberships of the NT Concessions Scheme and Seniors Recognition Schemes must be renewed between 1 January and 30 June each year.**

If you do not confirm your details by 30 June each year, your membership will be suspended and you will stop receiving your benefits.

## How to Renew

Visit a Territory Families, Housing and Communities service centre to use a self-service kiosk or talk to a team member in person.

**Call  
1800 777 704**



## Your rights

You have the right to:

- access payments, when eligible
- receive quality customer service
- be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect
- be informed about the schemes
- keep your privacy and personal information confidential
- provide feedback and make a complaint.

## Your responsibilities

You must tell Territory Families, Housing and Communities if:

- your circumstances change and you are no longer eligible for the scheme
- you have been overpaid or underpaid

- treat staff, member assist agents and other members with courtesy, dignity and respect
- provide us with all the information needed to assist you
- stay informed about changes to the scheme
- be fair and honest when making complaints and help us resolve the issue.

## Consumer guarantees

When you buy products or services, they come with automatic consumer guarantees set out under the law. For more information **go to the NT Consumer Affairs website or call 1800 019 319**.

**Elder abuse** If you feel someone is taking advantage of you, call **ELDERHelp on 1800 353 374** for help.

*Authorised by nt.gov.au*

# Help take draft aged care legislation forward

Public consultation is now open on the final draft of the new Act and the Department of Health and Aged Care want to hear from:

- older people, their families and carers
- aged care providers and workers
- advocates and representatives
- others who are interested in aged care.

To get involved in the consultation, read the:

- [draft law](#)
- [full consultation paper](#)
- [plain English consultation paper summary](#).

You can then give us your feedback by:

- attending a workshop ([details here](#))
- completing the [online survey](#)
- sending the Department of Health and Aged Care an [email](#)

Read more about the new [Aged Care Act consultation](#). You can also [watch a webinar](#) that covers the new Act and Support at Home program.

**Public consultation closes on 16 February 2024.**



COTA NT's Aged Care Forum in August 2022 helped to inform people as to what the reforms to aged care would mean for home care, residential aged care services, residential aged care quality safety, workforce and governance. Now is the time to have your say on the draft legislation.



## AIR NT

**AIR NT promotes the independent lifestyle of Territorians aged 50+**

**We aim to assist fully or part self-funded retirees (and those planning their retirement) to enjoy the benefits of living in the Territory while ensuring our unique needs are met**

**Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month 5.30pm  
Tracy Village Social and Sports Club  
28 Tambling Terrace, Lyons or via Zoom**

**Presentations on topics of interest for people approaching or in retirement**

[www.airnt.org](http://www.airnt.org)

[info@airnt.org](mailto:info@airnt.org)

**Contact Jill: 0422 002 408**

# Share belonging

**Relationships Australia announced their 2024 theme as 'share belonging.'**

This is a call to action to individuals, community groups, business and government to take every day actions that create social connection and foster respectful relationships.

Belonging is the sense of safety and comfort you feel when you are accepted for who you are. It's more than inclusion, it's an authentic acceptance and a state of feeling both connected and supported.

They have two free information sheets on how to achieve and how to share belonging.

**10 Ways to achieve belonging** (learn [more](#))

1. Listen
2. Give
3. Be yourself
4. Make an effort
5. Be patient
6. Reach out
7. Practice acceptance.
8. Be empathetic
9. Call in rather than call out
10. Learn about First Nations

**5 Tips to share belonging** (learn [more](#))

1. Recognise
2. Take accountability
3. Focus on strengths
4. Celebrate diversity
5. Be kind to yourself & others.

# Changing care needs require assessment

Janet Brown, Aged Care Navigator

**“I don’t need help to live at home...”**

“Really? If I had a dollar for every person who told me that I could retire!”

Most of us have an unrealistic sense of self. I remember finding myself straddling across my 6ft fence, when I had locked myself out, thinking “I’m 65... was this really a sensible thing to do?” as I looked at the concrete driveway below.

Now, aged care supports may not stop you from making poor decisions like this one, but **an assessment might provide support to minimise your risks** such as someone to clean the ceiling fans or change that light globe.

As we age small changes to our sense of balance or our ability to stand for long periods

of time increase the risk of a fall, the bathroom being the riskiest place in your home.

My Age Care may provide support for the installation of handrails, a shower chair or a walking frame. Falling has a high risk of hospitalisation and permanent injury necessitating entry into a nursing home.

My Aged Care provides supports to help you maintain your independence, safely, in your own home.



*Pictured here at Seniors Expo 2023, Janet offers free, professional and friendly advice about aged care needs.*

## Making time for aged care needs

**COTA NT Aged Care Navigators offer a free advisory and support service to help people fully understand their options for aged care.**

You can choose to phone, video call, email or meet Aged Care Navigators in person (depending on your location). They will be able to:

- **patiently** explain options (with the help of an interpreter as necessary)
- repeat information as often as necessary
- ensure you are aware of your rights and choices
- assist with changing providers and making complaints.



For assistance, contact your local Aged Care Navigator in Darwin (available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9am – 2.30pm) and in Alice Springs.

**Janet Brown 08 8941 1004 (Darwin)**  
**Debbie Pepper 0423 828 558 (Alice Springs)**

# Seeing life through a new lens

**Margaret’s vision deteriorated to the point where she was no longer able to read efficiently with her traditional glass magnifier. She struggled reading price tags. When Margaret was out at a café with friends, she relied on others to tell her what was on the menu, which she found frustrating.**

Jacqueline from TEVM met Margaret at her home and looked at a range of magnification options to

assist with her reading needs. It was identified that the versatility of the pocket sized electronic magnifier suited her vision and lifestyle the most. The Clover 6 HD pocket sized electronic magnifier fits into Margaret’s handbag, so she can easily take it with her when she is out and about.

Margaret found the inbuilt reading line particularly helpful for maintaining her reading position. As glare is a big issue for her, she was able to dim the brightness of the screen and set the reading display to be yellow

text on a black background. Margaret’s confidence has returned and she has no problem now with reading recipes, shopping and menus.

She was able to purchase her pocket sized electronic magnifier through My Aged Care as she has provision for assistive technology in her package.

**Top End Vision and Mobility (TEVM)** specialises in providing support for older Territorians, who have a vision impairment, to achieve their individual goals and live more independently.



SENIORS CARD

NT Seniors Card holders can get a 5% discount on **TEVM** services and products, first consultation free.

**Call Jacqueline on 0457 288 396, TEVM**  
[www.tevm.com.au](http://www.tevm.com.au)

# Meet our winning Storytellers

Stephanie Kendall, COTA NT

**Regular readers will know that to celebrate and recognise the special relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren, COTA NT ran a Story Telling competition for NT Grandparents Day 2023 (Sunday 29 October).**

This competition was open to all age groups across the Territory and invited people to share memories, stories, poems, words of advice, funny moments and more with us.

We had some wonderful entries, but finally the staff of COTA who read and judged the entries (without knowing who the authors were) agreed on the following winners:

- Primary School Age Category – Maurice Petterson for his story, My Nanny
- Middle / High School Category – Kaleb Collins for his story, My Nana
- Open Age Category – Jody Kopp for her story, Nana Fred and Pop Kev's Farm.

All 3 winners received a \$100 gift voucher and are now published authors, as their stories are published in this edition of Seniors Voice and on the [Grandparents Day website](#).

## Nana Fred and Pop Kev's Farm

Jody Kopp

**I walk around the farm, remembering days of old, the fun we had the laughter shared, the pigs the chickens and the dogs!**

The mango orchard, trees perfectly in rows, the pineapple patch the paw paw trees the passionfruit vine, custard apples and the gunja plot.

The honey we made, being stung a million times, the welts and the itch I am surprised we didn't die! It hurt so bad each time you were stung, but we all wanted to be the one who walked into the house proudly, with the golden magic liquid and placed it on the kitchen bench!

Each morning was egg collection in the chook house to the side, I hated getting the eggs in the morning, too many snakes in the summertime.

We would muck out the chicken house and lay fresh hay, the poo the chicken lay, smelt awful and it was everywhere.

Trying not to vomit and looking out for snakes, you couldn't help but be weerie when the mice jumped and scurried as snakes weren't far behind.

I've killed so many with one foul strike, not giving it a chance, either with the shovel or the rake! We all cheered the victories of killing snakes.

Being from the desert you see the green ants, mozzies and midgies drove me crazy! And anti hestimes saved me time and time again from passing out and convaulting!

Allergic to most things, smothered with rid omgosh that shit drove me up the wall and made me sweat like a pig! Nanna's



Jody Kopp, Open Age Category Winner

precautions all with good intent, as if we got sick we weren't allowed to come back for holidays again!

June, July and Christmas were the holidays we spent on the farm with our cousins, nan and pop and the neighbours Sally, Dick and Zac!

All chores needed to be done before we could explore as there was always something new and exciting to do on the farm.

Walk the greyhounds, collect the eggs, check the bees, cut sunflowers for the chooks, feed them!

Mow the grass on the ride on slasher, the fun we had on that orange beast, our farm was big so we each got a turn, cutting the grass was my favourite chores!

And then there was the tractor that we'd plow the new plots

planting the sunflowers that we fed to the chooks. We drove all over the farm until we conked out and I had to ask pop to fuel us up! he would rave on, swearing and carrying on but would do it all the same! Anytime the tractor moved all 5 of us jumped on, 2 in the front and 3 at the back, the younger ones in the front so as not to fall off.

The adventures we had and the fun times we shared and the trouble we got into, we were usually spared by nana screaming dinner time, set the table and let's eat!

My Nan was the best cook and prepared our food with love and care, and the smells that came out of her kitchen made your tummy rumble wanting more, we always had sweeties after dinner, normally custard and cake, frozen mango and ice cream or even plain old honey on fresh bread, whatever you wanted dinner time was fair game as each night the table was set like a banquet for each of us to eat to our hearts content! Chutney and chillies, bulchung and bread, savoury biscuits and all the sauces and condements, pickled vegetable from the garden, honey and cheese, butter and fresh herbs!

Dinner time was family time, where we all talked over teach other and shared our day, with nana screaming one at a time

After dinner and when everything was clean and put away, Pop would give us a night cap, so slight of thick red port, that was like syrup that gave us a tingle in our bellies that made us sleepy for bed!



Bedtimes were always fun too, where nana would tell us stories of long ago, the adventures she had when she was young or where she was from, or how she met pop, the camping trips the fish she caught, the adventures she had she lived a full happy life!

And just before we all nodded off she would pray a prayer of protection and made sure we all said Amen.

And the day would then start all over again, and the weeks would go quickly before we returned home, the good old days on the farm made us grateful and happy we had each other, fought and laughed, but never forgot the crazy, unique, perfect on Nana Fred and Pop Kev's farm!

With love dedicated to Freda and Kev Manski.

## My Nana

Kaleb Collins

**When Nana was young in the 70s she used to play around with her kids taking them to the playgrounds.**

In 1974 December 25, Cyclone Tracy destroyed Darwin. Darwin was gone. Lucky Nana survived.

I decided to look after Nana, I give her food and drink when she's sick. Me and Nana just laugh and laugh

sometimes about a funny ad on tv where the car crashes and about farts.

Nana and I order breakfast hash browns at Maccas, Nana has a big mac and I like quarter pounders. Nana goes shopping at Casuarina for her grandkids, it makes her happy.

Nana likes me to do scratches on her back. I hope I'm good to my nana, happy grandparents day 73 year old woman.

***Our third winning story is published on page 14 after the Grandparents Survey.***



Kaleb is pictured above with COTA NT CEO, Sue Shearer receiving his gift voucher for his winning entry.

## Meeting up in 2024?

**If you need a space in Darwin's central city, consider using Spillett House, COTA NT's head office located at 65 Smith Street in Darwin.**

Its activity and board rooms have conferencing facilities, kitchen and accessibility bathroom. There is ample parking (ticketed) at the rear of the building. (We prioritise use by seniors,

community groups and not for profits). Information about the rooms including a booking form is available here – [www.cotant.org.au/about-us/meeting-rooms/](http://www.cotant.org.au/about-us/meeting-rooms/)

# Northern Territory Grandparents Survey 2024



## Grandparents, have your say!

Tell us what grandparenting in the NT looks like in 2024, tell us how it impacts you and what advice you'd pass on.

Complete and return the survey to COTA NT, PO Box 852, Darwin NT 0801 or drop it into our offices at 65 Smith Street, Darwin during opening hours (Monday to Friday except public holidays, 9am to 3pm).

You can also take the survey online [here](#) if you prefer.

\* Indicates required question

1. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### About You

#### 2. Which generation are you part of?\*

- Greatest Generation: Born 1901–1924
- Silent Generation: Born 1925–1945
- Baby Boomers: Born 1946–1964
- Generation X: Born 1965–1980
- Millennials: Born 1981–1996
- Generation Z: Born 1997–2012

#### 3. What is your gender?\*

- Female  Male
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Which region of the NT do you live in?\*

- Alice Springs  Barkly
- Belyuen  Central Desert
- Coomalie  Darwin
- East Arnhem  Katherine
- Litchfield  MacDonnell
- Palmerston  Roper Gulf
- Tiwi Islands  Victoria-Daly
- Wagait  West Arnhem

#### 5. What is your marital status?\*

- Married / Living with Partner
- Widowed
- Divorced / Separated
- Never married / Single

#### 6. What is your employment status?\*

- Retired / No longer working
- Retired / Working part-time
- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Homemaker
- Disabled, not able to work
- Not employed, looking for work
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. How many grandchildren do you have?

- 1-2  3-4  5-6
- 7-8  9-10  10+

#### 8. Where do your grandchildren live?

Tick all that apply.

- Close by (within same suburb)
- Locally (within same postcode)
- Northern Territory
- Interstate  Overseas
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 9. Would you consider leaving the NT to live closer to your grandchildren?

- Yes  No  Maybe
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 10. Are you currently the PRIMARY care giver (Grandparent Carer) for any grandchildren?

- Yes  No

#### 11. Other than grandparenting, do you provide care for any of the following people in your life?

- Partner  Parent/s
- Relative/s  Friend/s
- Son/s or daughter/s
- Others in the community
- No-one else
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### You as a Grandparent Carer

You're a grandparent carer if you provide ongoing care for your grandchildren. If you are not a Grandparent Carer, feel free to skip this section.

#### 12. Have you received advice from a Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Advisers (free call 1800 245 965) about what assistance the government can provide you with?

- Yes  No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 13. How helpful was the advice you received, if any?

- Not helpful Very helpful
- 1  2  3  4  5

#### 14. As a Grandparent carer, which support services, if any, do you access? Tick all that apply.

- Family tax benefit
- Child Care Subsidy
- Double Orphan Pension (to help with the costs of caring for children who are orphans or who can't be cared for by their parents in certain circumstances)
- Health Care Cards (to help with the cost of prescriptions for you and your family)
- Additional Child Care Subsidy Grandparent
- Medicare
- Child support for non-parent carers
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 15. Do you feel that your role as a Grandparent Carer is recognised and supported by your community? (e.g. help with participation in education, social, cultural and sporting opportunities and activities)

- Yes  No  Not sure

#### 16. Do you belong to a Grandparent Carer Support Group?

- Yes  No

#### 17. Would you like to be part of a Grandparent Carer Support Group?

- Yes  No  Maybe

#### 18. What would make your role as a Grandparent Carer easier? (e.g. what would make you feel supported)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 19. What advice would you offer to a new Grandparent Carer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### What Territory Grandparenting Looks Like

#### 20. CARE / CONTACT: What type of care, if any, as part of your grandparenting do you give your grandchildren? Tick all that apply.

- Primary care
- Needs-based (immediate or emergency need)
- Regular care (e.g. helping with transportation and before and after school care)
- School holidays
- No care
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 21. TIME: How much time do you spend grandparenting per week (on average)?

- 0 hours per week
- 1–5 hours per week
- 5–10 hours per week
- 10–15 hours per week
- 15–20 hours per week
- 20–30 hours per week
- 30–40 hours per week
- 50–60 hours per week
- 60–70 hours per week
- 70–80 hours per week
- 80–90 hours per week
- 90–100 hours per week
- 100–110 hours per week
- 110–120 hours per week
- 120–130 hours per week
- 130–140 hours per week
- 140–150 hours per week
- 150–168 hours per week (with 168 being full-time – 24/7)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**22. Do you encounter any barriers in seeing or contacting your grandchildren? Tick all that apply.**

- Living interstate or too far away
- Still working full or part-time
- Busy schedules (for you, parents and children)
- Access not allowed
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**23. FINANCE: How does grandparenting impact your personal financial circumstances if at all?**

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**24. How much do you spend on your grandchildren each year (approximately)?**

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**25. Which of the following, if any, do you spend your money on for your grandchildren? Tick all that apply.**

- Gifts     Holidays
- Tuition     Pocket money
- Day to day expenses (e.g. meals, groceries etc)
- Major expenses (mortgage, rent, medical bills etc)
- Transport (e.g. bus fares, petrol, car maintenance/upgrade)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**26. HEALTH: Does grandparenting impact your own health and wellbeing? If so, how?**

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## Your Grandparenting Role

**27. Broadly speaking, what are your thoughts, feelings and attitudes about the role of grandparents?**

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**28. Overall, how important of a role do you think you play in your grandchild/children's lives?**

*(1 = very important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = a little important, 4 = not very important, 5 = not at all important)*

Very important    Not at all important

- 1     2     3     4     5

**29. Which of the following are you comfortable giving advice or talking to your grandchildren about? Tick all that apply.**

- Morals or values     Movies / TV
- Food / nutrition     Politics
- Household issues     Racism
- Internet safety     Sports
- Career advice     Stress
- Overall health
- Using social media
- Education and career plans
- Social etiquette and behaviour
- Bullying / peer pressure
- News and current events
- Drinking / alcohol use
- Smoking cigarettes
- Religion or spirituality
- Issues with their parents
- Managing finances and savings
- Use of illegal drugs / recreational drugs
- Mental health / wellbeing
- Dating / sex / sexuality
- Gender equality / women's rights
- Media education / literacy
- Associations / organisations / clubs to join
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**30. What's the best piece of advice you have given to your grandchild/children?**

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## Connections & Communication

**31. Indicate on the scale, to what degree you feel isolated from or connected to your grandchildren?**

*(1 = isolated, 2 = somewhat isolated, 3 = neither (neutral), 4 = somewhat connected, 5 = fully connected)*

Isolated    Fully connected

- 1     2     3     4     5

**32. How do you connect with your grandchildren? Tick all that apply.**

- In person     Email
- Video calling     Post
- By phone (landline or mobile)
- Through texting
- Social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, SnapChat)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**33. What would help you stay better connected?**

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## NT Grandparents Day

**34. Were you aware of a special Grandparents Day in the Northern Territory? (Held on the last Sunday of October since 2021)**

- Yes     No     Not sure

**35. How important do you think increasing community awareness of grandparent support and care is?**

*(1 = not important, 10 = very important)*

Not important    Very important

- 1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9     10

**36. How would you like to celebrate Grandparents Day?**

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*This survey aims to:*

- find out how many NT Grandparents are raising their grandchildren and how many they have in their care
- what support NT Grandparents have already and what do they need
- what financial and health issues do NT Grandparents face
- explore and understand the role – and evolving role – of Grandparents in the Northern Territory today.

*Participants should be a Grandparent and have at least one grandchild.*

*For the purposes of this survey:*

- **A grandparent** is a biological, adoptive, step grandparent or great grandparent of a child (or their current or former partner).
- **Grandchildren** include step-grandchildren, adopted grandchildren and great grandchildren.
- **Grandparent carers** are those grandparents who provide ongoing care for their grandchildren.

*This survey takes roughly 10 minutes to complete and your answers will help COTA NT better understand the role of grandparents in the NT and how the organisation can lobby government, media and community to better support them.*

**TAKING PART** An email is required to enable you to send us your survey responses online. Note: no personal identifiers will be shared in the survey report. If you prefer to complete the survey completely anonymously, please contact our Head Office on 08 8941 1004.

**\$150 Debit Card for one lucky survey entrant up for grabs!**



# My Nanny

Maurice Petterson

My Nana was so nice. I remember that my Nanny gave us big cuddles. Nana's cuddles made me feel happy and safe.

Ny Nana was really beautiful. We used to go downstairs to see her because she lived with us.

I miss my Nanny so much. My Nanny was funny and happy. My Nanny lived until she was 72 and went to heaven last year and I know Nanny is still with us.

by Maurice Petterson, 8 years old.

COTA NT has been supported by the NT Government to create the NT Grandparents Day observance, and due to its success, the organisation will continue to mark the day. The website [ntgrandparentsday.org.au](http://ntgrandparentsday.org.au) publishes links to help and support to grandparents, grandparent and kinship carers.

**Services Australia (Centrelink) offers a phone support line is available for those offline, or for those who prefer to speak to a Customer Services Officer.**

**Grandparent Advisors on 1800 245 965**

These specialist Grandparents Advisors can help you find the most appropriate options for your own particular circumstances, so you need to talk to them.

# Grandparents Day 2023 Snaps

Over 400 people enjoyed COTA NT's Grandparents Day movie in Casuarina, Palmerston, Alice and Katherine. Many thanks to BCC and Event Cinemas, Katherine Cinema 3 and Alice Springs Cinema for helping to make this fun and (almost) free event happen. Keep following COTA NT's news for what's in store for '24.



# Melioidosis and Ross River alerts

NT Health: <https://health.nt.gov.au/>

**NT Health is urging Territorians to be on high alert for the potentially deadly melioidosis and debilitating Ross River virus during this wet season.**

**Melioidosis** is a disease caused by the bacterium, *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, found in tropical soil and water. While melioidosis bacteria live deep in the soil at the start of the wet season, heavy rain brings the bacteria to the soil and water surface. Wind can allow the bacteria to be blown around in the air, allowing it to be inhaled through dust and droplets.

Melioidosis bacteria in soil and surface water most commonly enter the body through cuts and sores so it is important to protect your skin. Melioidosis most often causes lung infections and can also affect many variable parts of the body causing abscesses. Skin sores that do not heal

can be caused by Melioidosis bacteria.

If left untreated, melioidosis can lead to severe pneumonia and blood poisoning, with around 10 per cent of infections leading to death. To take precautions against melioidosis, Territorians are advised to:

- wear covered waterproof footwear when outdoors
- wear gloves while working in the garden or a soil-based environment
- wash then cover sores and abrasions with waterproof dressings
- wear a face mask while using high pressure hoses around soil and paths
- stay indoors during heavy wind and rain
- seek medical attention early.

### Ross River virus

All Territorians living near or visiting wetlands are reminded to exercise caution as Ross River virus is spread through mosquitoes that can live up to three weeks during

the rainy season. Ross River virus is a debilitating disease that can last for months, with symptoms including swollen and painful joints and muscles, a red rash, fever, fatigue and swollen glands.

To prevent mosquito borne diseases, including Ross River virus, Territorians are advised to:

- avoid locations where mosquito activity is high, especially after sundown
- use mosquito-proof accommodation and camping facilities at night
- wear light-coloured clothing with long sleeves, long trousers and socks, especially between dusk and dawn in areas where mosquitoes are likely to bite
- use a protective repellent containing DEET, picaridin or extract of lemon eucalyptus (PMD) as a supplement to protective clothing, with creams providing best protection
- use mosquito coils, mosquito lanterns and barrier sprays

in patio and outdoor areas near houses

- tip out any water holding containers around the yard or store them upside down or under cover to prevent mosquito breeding
- ensure children and animals are adequately protected against mosquito bites.
- seek medical attention early.

Anyone concerned about having symptoms of melioidosis or Ross River virus should visit their local GP or hospital. People are advised to seek medical attention early so appropriate diagnostic testing can be completed and treatment started at an early stage.

More info on melioidosis is available at [nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-conditions-treatments/bacterial/melioidosis](https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-conditions-treatments/bacterial/melioidosis)

More info on Ross River virus is available at [health.nt.gov.au/public-health-notifiable-diseases/ross-river-virus/ross-river-virus](https://health.nt.gov.au/public-health-notifiable-diseases/ross-river-virus/ross-river-virus)

## Avoid heat stress

**Extreme and severe heat health alerts were issued in several Top End locations at end of 2023. Here is the advice published by NT Health to avoid heat stress.**

To avoid heat related illness the community should:

1. Stay cool in air-conditioning where possible or seek out shady areas with a breeze
2. Drink cold or iced water

3. Decrease physical activity
4. Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose clothes and a wide-brimmed hat
5. Get into cold water or apply cold substances to the body
6. Use fans and damp towels if you don't have air-conditioning

Symptoms of heat stress:

1. Tiredness and lethargy
2. Headache
3. Dizziness or fainting



4. Confusion leading to poor decision making
5. Muscle cramps
6. Feeling thirsty
7. Urinating less often

People who feel they may be suffering from heat stress should take immediate action

to bring their temperature down. If symptoms persist, seek medical advice. If you are worried, call triple zero (000) immediately. For more info, visit <https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-conditions-treatments/heat-stress>

# Parrtjima 2024

The Territory's spectacular Parrtjima – A Festival in Light returns to Alice Springs Desert Park between 12-21 April 2024, and visitor registrations are open now.

Parrtjima showcases the oldest continuous culture on Earth through the newest technology in the Red Centre's stunning desert landscape. Sharing timeless Indigenous stories in creative new ways, Parrtjima includes transforming the 300-million-year-old MacDonnell Ranges into a natural canvas. Parrtjima 2024 will be the ninth installation of this unique free festival, which continues to grow and attract new audiences each year. The theme for 2024 will highlight the importance of interconnectedness.

Register for free and be one of the first to find out more about the 2024 installations and programming. Visit <https://parrtjimaaustralia.com.au>.

# Kangaroo movie

Multi-million dollar major film, *Kangaroo*, will be filmed at The Kangaroo Sanctuary in Alice Springs.



It's a heart-warming family comedy about an ex-TV personality who becomes stranded in the outback town, where he teams up with an 11-year old girl to work together to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned joeys.

The production is expected to create 150 local jobs and use about 100 local businesses during filming. The project is expected to inject significant expenditure into the local economy, benefitting Alice Springs local businesses, hospitality and the accommodation sector. The story is inspired by the Territory's own Chris Barnes, nicknamed "Brolga" who is the founder of the Kangaroo Sanctuary in Alice Springs. Pre-production work is expected to start ramping up early next year with filming to commence in April 2024.

## Your local radio

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • ABC Alice Springs 783 AM | Alice Springs               |
| • ABC NEWS radio 104.1 FM  | Alice Springs               |
| • 8CCC FM 102.1 FM         | Alice Springs and surrounds |
| • 8HA 900 AM               | Alice Springs and surrounds |
| • GOLD FM 98.7 FM          | Alice Springs and surrounds |
| • Sun FM 96.9 FM           | Alice Springs and surrounds |

## Local help to access aged care

Help to access government funded aged care services is on hand at the 50+ Community Centre 3 mornings a week (9am to 2pm), both face to face and over the phone.

Debbie Pepper has been the Aged Care Navigator for Alice Springs since 2019 and has a great deal of experience helping locals, their families and carers understand their rights and choices about aged care services.

Debbie also makes sure that people have appropriate and relevant information about



Debbie can help you with the 4 key steps in aged care services

1. Learn about different types of care.
2. Get assessed for care services.
3. Find a provider.
4. Manage your services

aged care options and the aged care system, access to aged care support, changing service providers and making formal complaints.

Debbie can be reached on **0423 828 558**. Leave a message if necessary and she will call you back.

## Part of the team

Community Bank  
Nightcliff,  
Coolalinga,  
Katherine and  
Alice Springs

1300 236 344

 Bendigo Bank

# Real life: letters, Qs and NT chats

## Help for clearing homes

**Is there any organisation that I can contact to help me clear, clean up removed old furniture, etc from my Mother's home as she has entered nursing home.**

Our Aged Care Navigator replied:

Unfortunately, I am unaware of any particular organisation to assist with this.

I would advise that you start by sorting through everything, keeping only those items that have sentimental value or are necessary for legal purposes. Remember some items, including photos, can go to the nursing home to be placed in your mother's room. If possible, discuss this with your mother. Also, you may have family or friends that would be happy to take some items.

The rest can be

- **donated** – contact local charities, they may pick up.
- **sold** – try a lawn sale, placing on 'gum tree' or 'Darwin NT Buy, Sell, Or Swap' or give away.
- **thrown away** – hiring a skip can be very helpful, especially for mattresses or furniture in poor condition.

## Reporting elder abuse

**I have an email drafted regarding suspected elder abuse in a remote NT community. I would like to send this through to the correct email address**

**if you could please let me know where I can send it.**

Emily

We referred Emily to:

**Relationships Australia's Specialist Elder Abuse Service Freecall 1300 458 600**

and,

**Territory FACES Freecall 1800 999 900, 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.**

You can use the FACES service as often as you need – there is no limit and it is free. The service is closed on public holidays.

FACES is a telephone hotline that offers information about and referrals to support services throughout the whole of the NT. This service can be accessed by anyone in the community from parents and carers to professionals, who are seeking advice on resources and services that can help, support and empower families and children.

FACES stands for Families and Children Enquiry & Support. It is a free service.

## Learning Italian helps care

**We are having so much fun. It will take time and practice for me. Our client is the best teacher because he pronounces the words for me and I repeat after him. Teaching me gives him so much joy and he talks about his family.**

*Graci tanto. Kind Regards  
Jennifer, Carers NT*

Thank you so much for your kind words! It's wonderful to hear that the booklet is proving to be helpful and easy to use for both you and our client.

Keep practicing, and you'll be speaking Italian fluently in no time!

If you or any team members have questions or need further assistance, don't hesitate to reach out.

Best regards, Cecilia,  
PICAC Manager 08 8941 1004

## Need for long term accommodation

**I have a client who is 62 years old and a resident at Red Shields House 49.**

**Due to age and other medical needs we have found he is struggling being a resident here due to two flights of stairs and his legs giving way at times.**

**We are struggling to find him long term accommodation. I wanted to touch base and see if use have anything that would be suitable for my client.**

**Thank you for any information you can provide.**

Our Aged Care Navigator replied:

Unfortunately, as you are no doubt aware, accommodation availability in Darwin is at an all time low.

- Is he wait listed with Territory Housing? If he already has applied, check if he is on the priority waitlist.
- If not, he should apply. I suggest that he be assessed for priority housing due to his medical issues.  
<https://nt.gov.au/property/public-housing/apply-for-housing/apply-for-priority-housing>  
He would require assessment from a GP and a supporting letter from your organisation. There would still be a significant wait time but if he doesn't apply, he would never get any.
- I'm sure you have already check the website <https://www.shelterme.org.au/>.
- At 62 years of age, he would not normally be accepted for My Aged Care Support, but exceptions may be made if he is unable to access support any other way.
- They don't have access to accommodation but if he was accepted for assistance, he might be able to access a re-enablement program or have assistance to help maintain his independence. Call me if you think this may be an option, 8941 1004.

## My Story

**What an excellent 'life' diary is your My Story.**

**Getting thoughts, achievements, ambitions etc down on paper for posterity, and for they who come afterwards, is a wonderful idea, with the**



*My Story* is free to download from the COTA NT website.

operative words being 'on paper'.

To borrow from the great movie, 'Flesh for Frankenstein': writing on a computer keyboard is for mortals; writing on paper with pen and ink is for immortals.

The front-cover photograph is a classic. Your model makes readers want to immediately open the book.

Jotting down life's advice and tidbits is not an idea that readily springs to mind, especially not now in the computer age. In this regard, *Goodbye Guide* is a winner because inside are questions that only people with lived experience can answer, or at least opine on, with requisite consideration.

Writing by hand is good brain exercise – like bicep curls and leg extensions for the body.

**It's a curious fact that people not inclined to write often discover the depths within and once they start, they can't stop.**

**Congratulations on another gem of an idea COTA.**

*HR, Fannie Bay*

## Do Power of Attorney and Advance Personal Plans Crossover?

**In 2003 my wife and I completed Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) forms and had them registered, we have given that power to our son.**

**In 2020 we both completed Advanced Personal Plans which name each other as decision makers; these have also been registered. However these Plans make no reference to our EPAs. We would seek advice as to:**

**1) Do the two documents complement each other?**

**2) Given the age of the EPAs, should we redo these? Our son no longer lives at the address given in the EPAs, he now lives in Hobart, TAS.**

Our Aged Care Navigator replied:

The Advanced Personal Plan replaced the Enduring Power of Attorney in 2014. It is my understanding that EPAs prior to 2014 remain valid. I would expect that an APP completed after 2014 would supersede an EPA, however I am not legally trained.

I would recommend that you contact **Darwin Community Legal Service Ph 8982 1111** for more information or an appointment. They also provide free legal information sessions after hours which you could attend and ask your question.

### After Hours Legal Clinics

- DCLS Office. Every Tuesday & Thursday 5.30pm – 7.30pm. Phone or Walk ins welcome
- Casuarina Library. 2nd Saturday of each month 10.00am – 11.45am Walk ins welcome.

## Overpayment Correspondence

**Thanks Sue Shearer for your assertive response regarding the recent rates concession debacle.**

**But you were too diplomatic. As my dear old mum (RIP) used to say in such situations – 'go suck eggs' – which is what the NT Government should do in this matter.**

**To put it in the vernacular: They and-or the provider responsible for the alleged over payment should simply write off the debt. Sometimes, extenuating circumstances call for unorthodox redress.**

**The bungle – regardless of how 'innocent', to quote CM Fyles – has impacted upon innocent people, the aged. They also happen to be among society's most cash-strapped and desperate.**

**To those who were overpaid, I say: don't give back a cent. A dash of unexpected providence has come your way.**

**Life can be kind like that.**

**Feel not the slightest guilt: the NT has been known to write off debts, there being no better example than the \$12 million it owes the NT tax payer for construction of the Fannie Bay race track boozier.**

**Here's an idea: how about the government dip into the next round of travel rorts to repay the mob who made the innocent mistake.**

*HR, Fannie Bay*

Our CEO replied:

Good morning and many thanks for your e-mail.

As you are aware, it was a software issue with the overpayment – and the database is very old – back when it was called the *Pensioner Concession Scheme* – and has been added on to and is not very stable. I have had meetings with Ministers to state that while they look after infrastructure such a roads etc – their IT infrastructure is just as important and is integral to providing the services required – such as MVR, Concessions, NT Seniors Recognition Scheme and many more – so, to this end, the Department is now being funded to replace the ancient Pensioner and Concession Database.

I would also like to point out that it is not just pensioners who received the extra payment. You might recall

# Letters – final words

that in 2017/18 there was a review of the whole Pensioner and Concession Scheme and that then became the *NT Concessions Scheme* and the *NT Seniors Recognition Scheme*.

Right up until 2017, women over 60 and men over 65 could access all these concessions, even if they're still working and their economic status was not taken into consideration.

When the scheme changed those on it were grandfathered over, people who were still working, self-funded retirees and others. Now as you know, the NT Concessions is just for seniors who are on a pension of some sort.

So, to assume that the overpayment only went to pensioners is not correct. It definitely went to home owners, and other concessions members who were on it and grandfathered over in 2018. However, with XMAS coming – nobody will have to pay it back before XMAS – and payment plans can be made, but we have had a lot of calls with people wanting to pay it back asap.

I hope that this answers your queries.

**Thanks Sue**

**I wasn't entirely au fait with the scheme so I am better educated, thanks for that.**

**You were right to take the standpoint you did. And my letter was sent after I discovered that the year's final issue of 'COTA News' was already out, so I guess that will be**

**going the way of all things – even though the points made will remain valid long after I'm gone.**

**Still valid, too, is another earlier letter I wrote complimenting the photograph on that final issue's lovely front-page. I now realise that that also is unlikely to see the light of day.**

**Anyway, you're doing a great job. Merry Christmas and I hope you have an enjoyable Festive Season.**

*Cheers R I-S*



*We received numerous compliments on the front cover of Seniors Voice, Oct-Dec 2023. And we agreed, it was one of our favourites!*

**Are the Ambos free in the NT?**

**I have received an invoice for an ambulance service and I have been told that I am entitled to a free service.**

NT residents who are the holder of a current NT Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card, or Veterans Affairs

Card may be entitled to free ambulance transport in the Northern Territory.

St John NT requires your card details to verify that the card is valid at time of transport. Note: Spouses/ Partners listed on cards are not necessarily be entitled to free ambulance transport. The office can check their Centrelink Reference Number via the Centrelink Portal to verify their entitlements.

If you hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card, NT Concession Scheme card, or NT Seniors Card, you are NOT covered for ambulance transport in the Northern Territory.

If you have received a bill from St John NT, and you hold private health care cover please contact your health insurer to verify whether they will cover the costs of your bill. Please notify their office that



you are claiming against your insurance cover. Depending on the insurer, payment will either be sent directly to St John NT, or the patient will receive a cheque made out to St John NT, which you will need to forward to us.

If you are having trouble paying the invoice by the due date, contact the accounts department on (08) 8922 6200 or email [transport@stjohnnt.asn.au](mailto:transport@stjohnnt.asn.au) so an amicable agreement regarding payment can be made.

Visitors to the NT can purchase a 21 day Ambulance cover policy if necessary.

## Have your say

**Send your letters, questions or comments to the Ed.**

- Letters should be no longer than 300 words and can be positive, negative or informative in tone.
- Provide name and address.
- Letters should state a problem or issue.
- Explain your view and an opinion or recommendation.



**By post**  
NT Seniors Voice  
GPO Box 852  
Darwin NT 0800

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

# The perfect wet season movie escape!

James Parker, Deckchair Cinema

**The Darwin Film Society is back at BCC Casuarina with Flix in the Wet, bringing the eclectic programming that we all enjoy at Deckchair Cinema inside for the Wet Season.**

In 2024 the Flix program has a great range of films ranging from the quirky left field hit POOR THINGS starring Emma Stone, right through to multi award winning international films such as FALLEN LEAVES from Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki – a love story set in Helsinki that features on many critics' picks for the Oscars this year.

Here is the Flix in the Wet program, for more information on the films including trailers head over to [www.flixinthewet.com](http://www.flixinthewet.com)

- Charcoal – 4 Feb & 3 Mar
- Fallen Leaves – 21 Jan & 18 Feb
- Lie With Me – 11 Feb & 10 Mar
- Poor Things – 4 Feb & 10 Mar
- Saltburn – 11 Feb & 17 Mar
- The Boy and the Heron – 21 Jan
- The Last Night of Amore – 28 Jan & 24 Mar
- The Old Oak – 17 Mar & 24 Mar
- The Royal Hotel – 28 Jan & 3 Mar
- Theatre Camp – 21 Jan & 18 Feb

While Flix in the Wet is running the Deckchair Cinema staff are hard at work planning for the year ahead. Seniors



A sold-out night at the Deckchair Cinema, Paz Tassone

Month and Grandparents Day are high on our agenda. If you have suggestions for the cinema management or Committee, we would love to hear from you. There is a new counter window at Deckchair Cinema that will be open during the day on weekdays from the first of April. We will also be at the Seniors Expo on

the 29th of June. Come and say g'day.

Important contacts: [www.deckchaircinema.com](http://www.deckchaircinema.com) for all things Deckchair Cinema, [www.flixinthewet.com](http://www.flixinthewet.com) for tickets to the Flix films and [info@deckchaircinema.com](mailto:info@deckchaircinema.com) or **08 8941 4377** for general enquiries and help with memberships or gifts.

## The Northern Territory Emergency Service has adopted the Australian Warning System for cyclone, flood, and storm emergencies.



### Why is the Northern Territory Emergency Service (NTES) implementing the Australian Warning System (AWS) for cyclone, flood, and storm emergencies?

The AWS is being introduced as a national standard for all types of emergencies including bushfire, heatwave, floods, storms and cyclones.

As the Northern Territory hazard management authority for cyclone, flooding, and storm (severe weather), Northern Territory Emergency Service (NTES) is implementing the AWS. The warnings provide a set of call to action statements to advise the public what to do during these emergencies.

### How many warning levels are there and what do they tell me?

There are three warning levels: Advice (Yellow), Watch and Act (Orange) and Emergency Warning (Red). Read more about the levels over the page.

When a warning is issued, it will include information on the location of the emergency, expected or estimated impact, summary of relevant Bureau warnings, community information, and a set of action statements.

These will assist people to make informed decisions regarding their safety during these emergencies.

### Is the Australian Warning System replacing the Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau) warnings?

No. Bureau warnings will still be issued. Bureau information is used to inform an AWS alert level.

NTES considers a wide range of factors before issuing a cyclone, flood or storm warning, which includes Bureau data such as cyclone tracking, direction of travel, flood severity, expected impact and other required information. This assists NTES to issue the appropriate AWS warning level.

### How do I know if a warning has been issued?

NTES will issue warnings to the media that are also posted on the SecureNT website [www.securent.nt.gov.au](http://www.securent.nt.gov.au).

You can also see the warnings on the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) and SecureNT social media channels and hear them on the ABC radio and local media channels.

### So, what should I do now?

Visit SecureNT and learn about the warnings, so that when the next emergency event comes you can make an informed decision about your safety.

Make sure you follow SecureNT and NTPFES on social media to receive all the relevant warnings as they are issued.

## Warning levels and action statements

There are three levels within the AWS - Advice, Watch and Act and Emergency Warning. For each level, there are a series of clear action statements to guide positive action by the community. These may include 'stay informed', 'prepare to evacuate', 'move to higher ground' and 'Take Shelter Now' as shown below.



Each warning has three components:

**The warning level:** The severity of the natural hazard event based on the consequence to the community.

**Location + Hazard:** The location and the type of hazard impacting the community (e.g., Kalkarindji flooding).

**Action statement:** For each warning level there are a range of action statements to guide protective action by the community. These statements evolve as the warning levels increase in severity. Statements range from 'stay informed' at the Advice level, to 'prepare to evacuate' at the Watch and Act level, to 'evacuate now' in the Emergency Warning level. As the situation changes and the threat is reduced, the level of warning will decrease accordingly.

# Aged care contract tools offer essential guidance

Cecilia Chiolero, PICAC NT

**In an era where information is as vast as it is varied, empowering ourselves with the right knowledge, especially in complex fields like aged care, is crucial.**

Sir Francis Bacon's saying, "knowledge itself is power," resonates profoundly here. Understanding our situation, weighing options and making informed decisions are all facets of this power. However, the challenge often lies in navigating the deluge of information, more so in sensitive areas like aged care services.

The abundance of data can also be overwhelming, particularly when we are faced with the responsibility of making decisions for ourselves or our loved ones in aged care. The challenge is heightened for those encountering the aged care system for the first time or under the pressure of time-sensitive decisions. Amidst this, the risk of feeling intimidated or embarrassed by our lack of understanding is real and understandable.

In recognition of these challenges, two instrumental tools have been developed to simplify and guide the decision-making process in aged care.

## 10 Questions

The first tool is "10 Questions" ([www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)), an initiative by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

alongside the NSW Aged Care Roundtable partners.

This resource consists of a series of leaflets, each delving into different aspects of aged care. Authored by seasoned nurses, doctors, and aged care experts, these leaflets serve as a guiding light, ensuring that critical questions about Commonwealth-funded Home care or residential aged care are not overlooked. They provide a foundation for understanding and clarity in a field often clouded with complexities.

## Contract Checklist for Clients

PICAC NT has also developed the "[Contract Checklist for Clients](#)". This checklist is a streamlined resource designed to simplify the process of signing contracts with aged care service providers. It comprises nine tick boxes, all of which people should be able to tick before signing any contract.

This tool is particularly beneficial for clients, families, and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds. It highlights the necessity of having access to documents and contracts in preferred languages — a service that has become increasingly feasible due to an initiative introduced by the Federal Government in 2023.

This initiative allows peak bodies and aged care service providers to take advantage of free translation services, thereby ensuring that essential documents are



These invaluable resources are freely available for download at [PICAC NT Resources](http://PICAC NT Resources), [www.cotant.org.au/picac/resources](http://www.cotant.org.au/picac/resources). Call our office on 08 8941 1004 if you want a printed copy.

accessible in the languages required by diverse Australian communities. Australia's rich multicultural landscape means the need for translations varies significantly across regions.

Both the "10 Questions" leaflets and the "Contract Checklist for Clients" are available in multiple languages, reflecting this diversity.

The Contract Checklist, for example, is now available in languages including Chinese (simplified and traditional), Greek, Hindi, Italian, Tagalog,

Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Swahili, Portuguese, Tamil, and Sinhalese. Further languages can be added upon request.

By sharing and utilising these tools, service providers, clients, and their families can make more informed, confident decisions in the complex world of aged care.

**For more information and resources contact Cecilia Chiolero, PICAC NT Manager**

Email: [picac@cotant.org.au](mailto:picac@cotant.org.au)  
Phone: 08 8941 1004  
(Mon to Fri, 9am to 3pm)



Use these leaflets when you are **searching** for a high quality residential aged care facility, **reviewing** the quality of your current residential aged care facility and **deciding** between two residential aged care facilities that appear similar. Free to download at [10questions.org.au](http://10questions.org.au).

# Seniors in the Bush

Dr. Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow

**My husband and I moved to Darwin River in 2013. I was driven by a wish to return to the 'bush living' I had known as a child and through work. Our place is made magical by a grove of large tropical cypress, a wetland carpeted with cerise wildflowers, a city of cathedral termite mounds and rare, vulnerable and undescribed species of flora and fauna.**

But there are issues with bush living including health, safety and isolation. Serious health issues can be frightening. An ill neighbour fearing that he might not be able to drive, but not wanting to rely on neighbours to help, moved interstate. This is an ongoing issue.

Another concern is crime and safety. While low in the rural area some do feel vulnerable (although many seniors do own dogs to reduce opportunistic crime).

In 2023 we attended a Personal Safety course that was organised by COTA NT and delivered by Victims of Crime, Neighbourhood Watch NT and Personal Protection Strategies. This proved very instructive.

Gamba grass carries dangerous wildfire risk of which we rural seniors have to stay aware. In 2022, two-thirds of our place burned, courtesy of neighbours who didn't or couldn't clear the weed. Gamba threatens the ground water supply many rely on (per hectare it uses nearly the same amount of water as an Olympic-sized swimming pool). Pulling it up is very difficult even for a fit person and spraying glyphosate may pose

*About the Author: Denise is the President of COTA NT Berry Springs Seniors and has been a financial Member of COTA NT for many years. She gives rural seniors a voice on the COTA NT board.*



*Meetings, outings and morning teas help seniors in the Berry Springs region stay in touch and find out the latest news.*

health risks. (I simply flatten the weed and pour vinegar on the base. Four metre-high clumps die within a day.)

Living here can be isolating, and to Berry Springs Seniors members, our fortnightly morning teas provide important, even essential social life.

They are also an effective means of dispensing information such as sharing news about services that COTA NT as well as other organisations can provide.

As President, I represent

the interests of Berry Springs Seniors on the COTA NT board, for example speaking out on the issue of gamba grass and the fire risk it poses.

Living in the rural area is wonderful in so many ways. But it can also be challenging. We at Berry Springs Seniors with the backing of COTA NT hope to make it a little easier.

**If you want to be included in Denise's email updates and attend the fortnightly meetings, please contact COTA NT Head Office on 08 8941 1004.**

## Stay connected with COTA NT

**COTA has lots of regular activities and they are open to the community. Costs apply for fitness classes (\$7 for Member, \$9 for Non-Members). For more information call our Head Office on 08 8941 1004.**

**Spillett House Programs – 65 Smith Street Darwin**

- **Pilates** (face to face or ZOOM) Mondays at 9.30am
- **Strong and Functional Fitness** Tuesdays at 9am

- **Chair Aerobics** (face to face or ZOOM) Wednesdays at 9.30am **Contact Sharon 0438 890 089**
- **Tai Chi with Tom** Thursdays 9.15am–10.15am
- **Beginners Thai Chi** Thursdays 10.30am–11.30am
- **NEW Beginners Thai Chi** Starting 7th March Thursdays 10.30am–11.30am **Contact Tom 0439 844 115**
- **Musical Jam** Tuesdays 10am – 12pm Returns 6th February Sing or play (or both). Gold coin.
- **Our Common Threads**

Wednesdays from 11am Returns 31st January. Social sewing. Machines provided. Gold coin.

- **Timorese / Portuguese Group** Mondays from 9am.
- **Italian Social Group** Fridays from 9am @Spillett.

**Palmerston & Rural**

- **NEW Tai Chi** Wednesdays 11.30am – 12.30pm & Fridays 10.30am – 11.30am at Gray Community Hall. Contact Tom 0439 844 115
- **EOI – Walking Group** Want to join a new morning walking

group staying in the aircon? Date and time TBC. Due to begin mid February. Email [activities@cotant.org.au](mailto:activities@cotant.org.au) or ring 8941 1004 with your name and preferred contact details to register your interest.

**Coomalie Region**

Activities in the Batchelor/ Litchfield Region include Bus to Gateway & Coolalinga, Morning Teas, Quiz Nights, Grey Panthers Dance, Agemoves Exercise and Gardening groups. **Contact Prue for info, [cotacoomalie@gmail.com](mailto:cotacoomalie@gmail.com)**



## Finding the smile in every day

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COTA NT  
The voice of senior Territorians  
since 1969

# Katherine SENIORS EXPO

The one day of the year that brings Katherine seniors together with people they want - and need - to see!

Thursday 7 March 2024  
10am to 1pm  
Free entry and morning tea

Henry Scott Recreation Centre  
(YMCA) – Roller Rink,  
Lot 2525 Stuart Hwy,  
Katherine

**Exhibitors register online today!\***

**[www.cotant.org.au/katherine-seniors-expo-2024](http://www.cotant.org.au/katherine-seniors-expo-2024)**

**THE ONLY EVENT DESIGNED  
FOR KATHERINE SENIORS**



\*Registration fees apply

- \$25 for COTA NT Club and Associate Members
- \$45 for Non-for-Profit Organisations
- \$100 for Businesses and Government Agencies

Registrations close 26 February 2024

**Now in its  
4th year!**