

MEDIA RELEASE

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COTA Australia congratulates 2022 Senior Australian of the Year, Val Dempsey

The peak body for older Australians, COTA Australia, congratulates this year's Senior Australian of the Year, Val Dempsey, who has received the honour for her over 40 years of service to the St John Ambulance and the millions of Australians who rely on it.

Ian Yates AM, Chief Executive of COTA Australia, says Val Dempsey's invaluable contribution to our country should be celebrated today and every other day.

"Val is a force of nature and has changed the lives of tens of thousands of Australians through her tireless commitment to one of our country's great volunteer services.

"Over 40 years of commitment to volunteering is an astonishing effort and one for which every Australian should be incredibly thankful to Val.

"Val is living proof that our potential doesn't diminish with age. In fact, the wisdom, drive, resilience and experience of older Australians like Val is priceless and should more often be harnessed for the greater good of our nation.

COTA Australia Chief Executive, Ian Yates AM, said all finalists for the annual award should be congratulated for the incredible contribution they've made to our nation.

The 2022 Senior Australian of the Year finalists included:

- ACT Senior Australian of the Year: Valmai Dempsey, Volunteer at St John Ambulance.
- NSW Senior Australian of the Year: Abla Kadous, President of the Islamic Women's Welfare Association.
- NT Senior Australian of the Year: Robyne BurrIDGE OAM, Disability services advocate and Founder of Focus-A-Bility.
- Queensland Senior Australian of the Year: Dr Colin Dillon AM APM, Australia's first Indigenous police officer.
- SA Senior Australian of the Year: Mark Le Messurier, Educator, counsellor and author.
- Tasmania Senior Australian of the Year: Bruce French AO, Agricultural scientist and Founder of Food Plants International.
- Victoria Senior Australian of the Year: Gaye Hamilton, Deputy Chancellor of Victoria University.
- WA Senior Australian of the Year: Janice Standen, President of Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA.

"This year's finalists have worked tirelessly to make our country better, not just for older people, but for all Australians.

"In a year when we need shining lights like these finalists more than ever, they've continued to step up and show us what is truly possible.

"These award recipients, and all the finalists, are proof of the incredible and invaluable contribution older Australians make to our society every single day.

"They're changing lives and the impact of their work will be felt for generations to come."

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COTA Australia is the peak policy development, advocacy and representation organisation for older Australians, representing COTAs in every State and Territory and through them over 500,000 older Australians.