COTA

For older Australians

Strategic Plan

2026 - 2029

A. Our Strategic Environment: An age of Opportunity to be Seized

Australia is at the cusp of a profound and positive transformation. Our strategic environment demands that we leverage the significant opportunities that increased longevity and accumulated experience offer to our nation while also acknowledging the inequities within our ageing population and take action to address them. Our strategy is designed to navigate a dynamic landscape to ensure the contribution of older Australians is recognised and central to our society and economy.

A New Era of Contribution

Longer, healthier lives are reshaping our society and economy. This demographic evolution presents a remarkable opportunity to unlock the immense value that older people contribute as citizens, active consumers, experienced workers, significant investors, and dedicated carers. By shifting the perception from burden to benefit, we can design systems that support all older Australians in differing financial and societal circumstances, to participate fully in community life, including enriching our workplaces and economy for generations to come.

Improving Care Systems & Outcomes

The national policy landscape is in a period of active reform, particularly in aged care and health. This provides a critical window to influence the design of new systems, ensuring they are built on a foundation of rights, respect, a focus on individual wellbeing and inclusion of the diverse experiences and needs of all older people. It is a moment to move beyond incremental fixes and drive lasting, structural change that enables people to live well and with dignity as they age.

Harnessing the Digital Age for All

The accelerating pace of digital innovation is transforming how we all live, work, and connect. The digital ecosystem offers powerful tools to enhance independence, improve access to services, and foster new forms of community engagement. But not everyone is able and confident to utilise these tools. Our focus is on bridging the digital divide and empowering older Australians to thrive in a connected world, while ensuring that non-digital options are always maintained.

Unlocking Economic Potential & Equity

Older Australians are a powerful economic force. As holders of wealth, active consumers, and a deep pool of skilled talent, their economic participation is essential for national productivity and growth. Our strategic environment requires a focus on dismantling the barriers, such as ageism in the workplace, that prevent this contribution. By promoting flexible work, lifelong learning, and secure retirement incomes, we can unlock the full economic potential of older Australians, creating a stronger and more equitable economy for people of all ages.

Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's First Peoples and the traditional owners and custodians of the lands upon which we work.

B. COTA Australia's Identity

Our Vision:

"Ageing is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence within an equitable, just and inclusive society in which the voices of older Australians are respected and strong."

Who we are:

COTA Australia is the peak body representing all older people over 50.

Our role:

We are the trusted voice for older Australians and the leading organisation shaping an ageing Australia.

We listen, advocate for people's rights and interests, and increase the voices of older Australians to build opportunities that improve outcomes for everyone.

Our Values:

Respect:

We respect and value the contribution and lived experience of Australians as they age and support each person's right to make choices and to participate in their community.

Rights-Based Approach:

We adopt a rights-based approach – from communication and engagement to policy and operations – shaping our culture, our conduct and the strength of our advocacy.

Diversity:

We value the great diversity that characterises Australians of all ages and are committed to genuine exchange and engagement with all older people in Australia.

Equity:

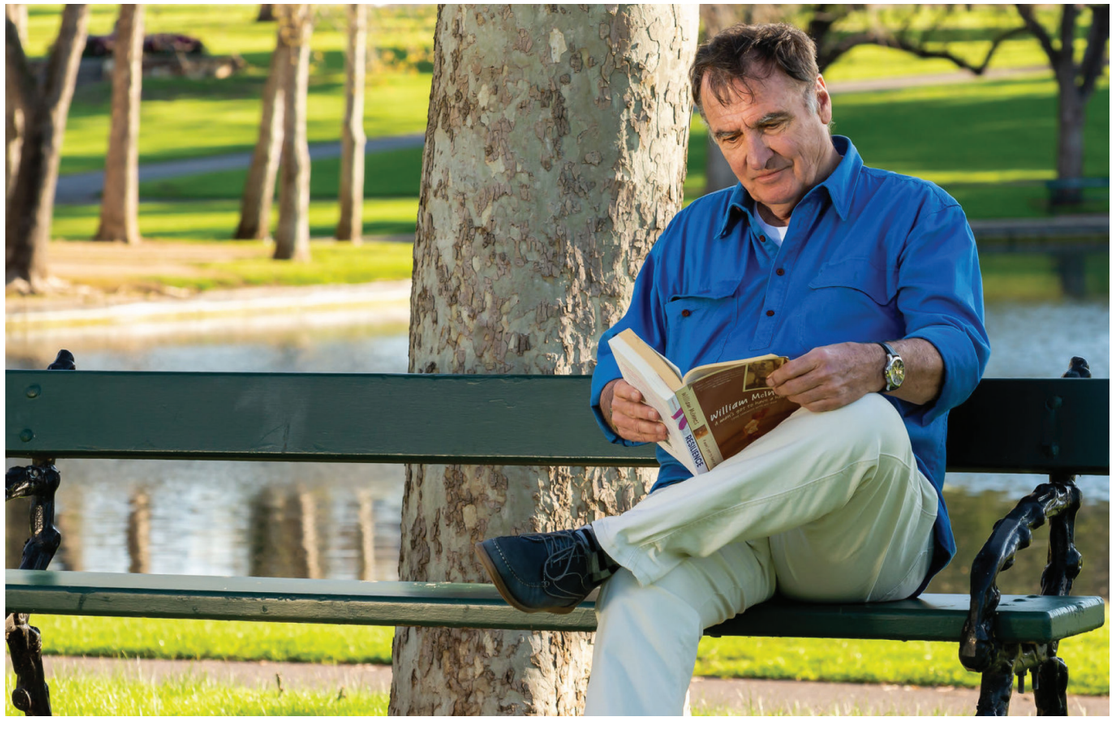
We recognise the impact of systemic inequalities, disadvantage and discrimination on Australians as they age and are committed to speaking out on these issues to achieve our vision.

Collaborative Engagement:

We communicate and engage collaboratively, especially with the diversity of older people, with our members and partners, and with the Australian community to achieve the vision and purpose of COTA Australia.

Integrity:

We operate ethically, openly, honestly and with accountability in all our interactions.



C. Focus of Effort

Objective 1: LEADERSHIP

Create opportunity that benefits everyone.

Economic Security:
Ensuring the Means to Live a Dignified Life
Champion policies that guarantee a dignified life for all by ensuring income adequacy and security, stable housing, strong consumer protections and equitable support for people experiencing abuse, vulnerability or financial stress.

Quality Aged Care:
Championing Rights-Based, Accessible, and Affordable Services
Champion a rights-based approach to aged care, focusing on improving access, affordability, and quality of services, whether at home or in residential settings.

Equitable Health Outcomes:
Building a Responsive, Age-Inclusive Health System
Advocate for health system reforms that reduce ageism, improve care navigation and integration, and ensure affordable, accessible healthcare for all older Australians.

Digital Inclusion:
Access, Affordability, and Confidence for All
Support and encourage digital uptake by building confidence and capability, whilst ensuring those who cannot or choose not to use digital services are never left behind.

Age-Positivity and Human Rights:
Challenging Ageism, Celebrating Contribution
Call out ageism, champion the participation and contribution of older Australians, and shift public attitudes to recognise ageing as a valued stage of life.

Objective 2: LEGITIMACY

Be the trusted authority on ageing.

Build an Authoritative Base:
Build on qualitative and quantitative data including the State of the Older Nation (SOTON), living experience and organisational expertise and partner with other entities strategically to generate powerful quantitative insights on critical issues.

Create a Message:
Drive evidence-based policy positions through compelling storytelling and social media to bring issues to life, ensuring the lived experiences and diverse voices of older Australians are heard.

Forge a Powerful Movement:
Mobilise strategic alliances and partnerships with aligned organisations, and community members, to build collective power for shared advocacy.

Objective 3: LEVERAGE

Secure the resources to match our ambition.

Strengthen Our People:
Invest in the influential and relational capacity of our people.

Secure and Diversify Funding:
Protect and preserve core government funding while generating new revenue streams.

Result Area	Key Measures (What We Will Track)	Target Range (2029 Ambition)
1. Policy & Systems Impact	**1.1. Direct Policy Influence:** Number of COTA Australia recommendations adopted or reflected in major federal government policies, budgets, or legislative and program reforms.	**Recommendations** explicitly adopted annually.
	1.2. National Agenda Setting: COTA Australia's key priorities are consistently featured in relevant government consultations and parliamentary inquiries.	COTA Australia is an invited **consultee** on all major policy initiatives affecting older Australians.
2. Visibility & Recognition	**2.1. Media Share of Voice:** COTA Australia is cited as the primary consumer advocate voice in top-tier national media coverage concerning ageing.	**Top 2 consumer voice** in media analytics reports.
	2.2. Evidence-Based Advocacy: Number of COTA Australia policy positions and reports that are underpinned by quantitative insights.	**Published positions** feature COTA Australia evidence.
	2.3. Sector Leadership: COTA Australia successfully initiates and leads at least one major, formal cross-sector alliance on a critical issue.	**1-2 major alliances** established and active by 2029.
	2.4. Direct Digital Engagement: Growth in the number of older Australians directly engaged through COTA Australia's digital channels (e.g., website, social media, newsletters).	**50% growth** in total digital audience by 2029.
	2.5. Diversity of Engagement: Increased representation of diverse cohorts (CALD, First Nations, LGBTQI+, regional/remote) in COTA Australia's consultations and surveys.	Engagement demographics **trend towards** national population statistics.
3. Organisational Capacity	**3.1. Influential people:** Number of COTA Australia staff recognised by partners as highly influential.	Policy, Engagement & Government Relations staff have strong relationships with stakeholders, including government and political contacts.
	3.2. Attract, retain and build the best team to achieve optimal outcomes for older people	
	3.3. Revenue sustainability: Non-government revenue as a percentage of total operational funding.	**15-20% of total revenue** from diversified sources by 2029.
	3.4. Revenue durability: Percentage of revenue that is multi-year.	**50% of total revenue** from multi-year sources by 2029.
	3.5. New revenue: Percentage of revenue that is multi-year.	**15-20% of total revenue** from new sources by 2029.

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www.cota.org.au