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1 September 2014

Hon Ms Tracy Davis MP
Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
ccsds@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister

I write in relation to the Queensland Seniors Card program. As you would know, COTA Queensland is an active supporter of state government concessions for seniors, pensioners, veterans, carers and people with a disability. Many older Queenslanders access energy, health and transport concessions with a Seniors Card, and have done so since the card was introduced in 1989. COTA Queensland appreciates the efforts made by your government to maintain the value of these concessions against significant financial pressures.

The eligibility criteria for the Queensland Seniors Card has been unchanged since 2001, and I would like to propose an important change. COTA Queensland favours the removal of the 'work-test' from the eligibility criteria, which currently excludes resident seniors who work 35 hours per week or more in paid employment. In our proposed reform, all other criteria would remain the same, namely: resident of Queensland, 65 years of age and older, or 60 to 64 years of age and hold a Commonwealth concession card.

As your department would realise, the number of hours of paid employment for Seniors Card eligibility varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction throughout Australia. It is a criterion that relies on the self-reporting of applicants and is difficult to interpret for older business owners or other self-employed people. The removal of the work-test from the eligibility criteria would streamline the application process for upgrading a Queensland Seniors Business Discount Card to a Seniors Card. Such a reform would also indicate your government's practical support for mature age employment, which is a positive goal of the Queensland Plan.

I hope your department will consider this potential customer service and program improvement. If you would like further information about COTA Queensland's proposal, I can be contacted on telephone 3316 2903 or 0411 389 946.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Tucker-Evans", is written over a blue horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mark Tucker-Evans
Chief Executive