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MEDIA RELEASE

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LANDMARK REPORT SHOWS OVER 20% OF OVER 50s RATE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE AS POOR

The Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland is today calling for greater focus on older person's health and wellbeing, in response to a new landmark national report launched in Canberra.

The State of the (Older) Nation 2018 Report is the most comprehensive national study ever undertaken to seek the views of Australians aged over 50.

COTA Queensland Chief Executive Mark Tucker-Evans said the report highlighted the need for older people to not only be valued but to feel valued in society. Support systems need to in pace for those who are at risk or are vulnerable, and to have adequate access to health and mental health services in Queensland.

"Whilst the report shows that a high percentage of people rated their quality of life highly, seven percent rated their lives as mediocre citing health, financial, and negative emotional issues as the top three contributors.

Today most Queenslanders can expect to live into their eighties and some beyond. Longer life provides the opportunity to reconsider not only what older age might be but how our whole lives might unfold.

Yet the extent of the opportunities that arise from these extra years of life will be very heavily dependent on one key factor: health.

If people are experiencing these years in good health their ability to do things that matter to them will be little different from that of a younger person. If these added years are dominated by decreases in physical or mental capacity the implications for older people and for society are much more negative." Mark Tucker- Evans said.

Key findings in the report with particular relevance to Queensland were:

- The vast majority of older Australians feel younger than their current age, with more than half feeling at least 10 years younger.
- Women feel 12 years younger than their actual age, whereas men feel 10 years younger on average.
- On average, those aged 80-89 feel 13 years younger than their age. More than three quarters of survey participants (78%) rated their quality of life highly, at 7 or more out of 10, including a quarter who feel particularly positive (26% rated their quality of life a 9 or 10).
- Meanwhile, just over one in five (22%) rated their quality of life at the mediocre or poor end of the scale, with 7% giving a low rating of just 0-4.

COTA is seeking a commitment from all political parties to develop a comprehensive long-term national strategy to address the needs of older Australians – including raising rent assistance by 40%; taking a whole-of-government approach to budget funding; and reducing ageism, particularly age discrimination in the workplace.

The report investigated issues including employment, age discrimination, cost of living, financial security, health, home and aged care, housing, later life planning, consumer rights and transport.

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