



Strategic Plan

2023-2026

Revised February 2025

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Council on the Ageing Queensland

Council on the Ageing Queensland is a for-purpose statewide charitable organisation.

We are the state's Seniors Peak and Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Peak and work with and for older adults, advancing the rights, needs, interests, and futures of people as we age. For more than 60 years, we have worked to influence positive social outcomes for older Queenslanders.

We connect directly with older Queenslanders, their families, carers, and organisations, service providers, consumer advocates, special interest groups, and our federal, state and local governments. We engage with all of these groups to understand needs, aspirations, and priorities for older people in Queensland, and partner to achieve the best outcomes for people as we age.

Our work includes policy analysis, community education, representation, evaluation and research, aged care navigation, and cross sector collaborations to achieve systemic change. We deliver funded programs directly to older people in need and provide sector support to those organisations who offer aged care and other services to older people.

We seek to eliminate ageism and support healthy ageing and growth of age-friendly communities. There are many areas of policy development needed to achieve this – elder abuse, energy, social isolation and loneliness prevention, climate resilience and disaster preparedness, digital inclusion, health, housing, and transport are just a few.

Our vision is that ageing is a time of possibility, opportunity, and influence.

With the number of older people expected to double by 2050, ensuring their voices are heard has never been more important.

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Acknowledgement

*Council on the Ageing Queensland
acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples
as the original custodians of this land.*



Vision

Ageing in Queensland is a time of possibility, opportunity and influence

Mission

We advance the rights, needs, interests, and futures of Queenslanders as we age.

Values

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

Diversity - We value the great diversity that characterises people of all ages and are committed to genuine exchange and engagement.

Collaboration - We communicate and work collaboratively with older people, with each other, with our partners and with the Queensland community to achieve COTA Queensland's vision and purpose.

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

Equity - We recognise the impact of systemic inequalities, disadvantage and discrimination on some Queenslanders as we age and are committed to speaking out on these issues to achieve our vision.

Our Value Proposition



Engaging diverse community voices to inform evidence-based insights



Collaborating with local, national and international experts and networks



Creating innovative and real impact



Guiding Frameworks for Ageing Policy and Advocacy

Madrid International Plan of Action and its Implementation

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) was adopted in April 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held in Madrid, Spain. It marked a significant milestone in global efforts to address the challenges and opportunities of ageing populations. Unlike earlier approaches that focused primarily on the welfare of older persons, the Madrid Plan emphasized a rights-based, development-oriented framework. It called for the integration of ageing into national development agendas, with three priority directions: older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age, and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

To maintain its relevance, MIPAA is subject to regular five-year review cycles, coordinated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and regional commissions. These reviews allow countries to assess progress, share best practices, and address emerging trends. As of 2025, MIPAA continues to serve as a foundational global policy instrument, evolving to respond to new demographic realities and policy challenges such as digital inclusion, intergenerational solidarity, and the impacts of climate change on older populations.

UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021 to 2030

To foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people and their families and communities, fundamental shifts will be required not only in the actions we take but in how we think about age and ageing. The Decade addresses four areas for action: change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing; ensure that communities foster the abilities of older people; deliver person-centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older people; provide access to long-term care for older people who need it.

National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: a guide

Our physical and social environments are major influences on how we experience ageing and the opportunities it brings. Creating age-friendly environments enables all people to age well in a place that is right for them, continue to develop personally, be included, and contribute to their communities while enabling their independence and health. Developing age-friendly cities and communities (AFCC) is a proven way to create more age-friendly environments – for everyone. This guide provides direction to national authorities and stakeholders responsible for or involved in forming or sustaining national programmes for AFCC.



Strategic Priorities (2023-2026)

Council on the Ageing Queensland

Strategic Plan

2023 - 2026

- **Engaging** diverse community voices to form independent evidence-based insights
- **Collaborating** with local, national and international experts and networks
- **Creating** innovative and real impact



Elevate Older Voices

Ensure that older people, especially those from marginalised communities, can voice their views, and that insights are reflected in policy and service development.

Broaden Representation

Recognise and include the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of older people in Queensland during engagement activities

Empower Champions

Foster a movement of older advocates who challenge ageism and drive social change.



Leverage Partnerships

Strengthen our collaborations and partnerships to maximise impact and drive systemic change.

Protect the Vulnerable

Strengthen access for vulnerable people to aged care, reduce abuse of older adults, address social isolation, and financial insecurity through systemic reforms

Advance Social Good

Implement innovative projects that improve the lives of older Queenslanders and future generations.

cotaqlld.org.au

Advocating for the rights and wellbeing of older Queenslanders, and future generations, since 1957.

We recognise and respect the Traditional Custodians of this land and are committed to fostering meaningful relationships and inclusion with First Nations communities.



Program Logic

Program Logic	Elevate Older Voices	Broaden Representation	Empower Champions	Leverage Partnerships	Protect the Vulnerable	Advance Social Good
Activities <i>What we do</i>	- Conduct surveys and contribute to policy submissions - Promote older people's voices in blogs, newsletters, website and social media - Provide policy advice informed by lived experience	- Deliver Ageing Well Survey across Queensland - Host outreach events (e.g., expos) and fund community grants - Partner with organisations working with diverse groups (e.g. CALD, LGBTQIA+, First Nations)	- Recruit and train older advocates (e.g., CO50 and Energy4Seniors) - Support champions in delivering peer education and advocacy - Provide ongoing mentoring and coordination	- Facilitate Communities of Practice and collaboration sessions - Co-design projects and submissions with partners - Engage with councils, CHSP providers, PHNs, sector organisations and universities	- Provide aged care navigation (Care Finders) - Coordinate elder abuse policy reform - Run awareness campaigns (e.g. WEAAD) - Deliver peer education and/or community engagement	- Explore pilot project opportunities - Promote collaborative initiatives - Disseminate research and insights via the Quarterly Industry Brief
Outputs <i>Tangible deliverables</i>	- Surveys conducted - Blogs/newsletters published featuring older voices - Submissions to government inquiries - Briefings provided to government agencies	- Survey distributed and collected with demographic analysis - Events held in diverse locations - Grants awarded to culturally and geographically diverse projects - Relationships built with representative organisations	- Champions recruited and inducted - Training workshops delivered - Champion-led activities completed (e.g., talks, workshops, submissions)	- Communities of Practice hosted - Co-designed initiatives or submissions developed - Strategic relationships maintained or newly formed - Collaborative advocacy initiatives	- Individuals supported through Care Finders and Energy4Seniors - Elder abuse recommendations submitted - Campaigns and/or community information activities implemented - Community forums held	- New projects initiated with external collaborators - Tools/resources co-created - Sector briefings published and distributed
Short Term Outcomes <i>Desired change <1yr</i>	Older people are more engaged in public conversations	Greater engagement of underrepresented groups	Champions feel skilled and supported	Increased sector collaboration	Increased community awareness	New solutions proposals
Medium Term Outcomes <i>Desired change 2-5 yrs</i>	Their lived experience influences policy	Diversity better reflected in COTA QLD programs and policy voice	Champions actively lead conversations in communities	Stronger collective action on ageing issues	Strengthened safeguards for at-risk older people	Projects demonstrate change potential
Long Term Outcomes <i>Desired change >5 yrs</i>	Older Queenslanders help shape systems and services	Advocacy and service development are more equitable and inclusive	A sustainable network of older person-led advocacy is embedded	Systemic impact through sustained partnerships	Reduced elder abuse, isolation, and financial vulnerability	Stronger systems that support healthy and inclusive ageing
Performance Indicators <i>What will demonstrate success</i>	# supporters # submissions lodged - Communications metrics	% of survey responses from diverse populations # of diverse events and grant recipients # of collaborations formed with diverse organisations	# of champions # of community advocacy activities delivered by champions - Champion Feedback	# of collaborative projects or submissions # of partnerships established or maintained # engagements with new stakeholders	- Recommendations or advice delivered to Queensland Government - Number of people supported via Care Finders - Reach and engagement of awareness campaigns # of education sessions delivered	- Quarterly Industry Brief reach # new potential projects and/or opportunities explored
Key Target <i>A clear benchmark</i>	10% increase in supporter base by Dec 2025; 30% by Dec 2026	35% survey responses and/or engagement reflect diverse populations	5 active champions by Sept 2025; 10 by March 2026	5 key collaborations	2,000 occasions of service for aged care navigation per year	One funded collaborative project secured for 2026

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority	Objective	KPI	Why	What we will do
Engaging diverse community voices to inform evidence-based insights 				
1. Elevate Older Voices	Ensure that older people, especially those from marginalised communities, have opportunities to voice their views, and that insights into seniors' issues are reflected in policy and service development.	10% increase in supporter base by Dec 2025 and a total of 30% increase by Dec 2026	Elevating older voices aligns directly with COTA Queensland's mission to advance the rights, needs, and interests of people as we age. By actively engaging older people in shaping public conversations, we ensure that our advocacy is grounded in lived experience and reflects the true diversity of the ageing population. This approach strengthens our credibility as a trusted voice and positions COTA Queensland as a key stakeholder in government and community decision-making. Supporting older people to contribute through digital platforms and direct communication also helps combat social isolation, reinforces their sense of purpose, and builds stronger connections within communities. Increased visibility and engagement not only grow our supporter base but also amplify our influence on policy and service reform. Ultimately, this strategy deepens our impact and ensures older Queenslanders are not just heard—but are at the heart of shaping the systems and supports that affect them.	We will elevate older voices by coordinating surveys and submissions that inform key Queensland Parliamentary Inquiries into Volunteering and Elder Abuse, ensuring older people's perspectives are central to these processes. Through newsletters, blogs, and social media, we will support and amplify contributions from older people, expanding our reach and community presence. We will collaborate with social isolation prevention providers to embed the experiences and needs of older people in the design of service responses. Our communications will become more frequent and engaging, using direct messaging, a quarterly newsletter, and consistent social media activity to raise the profile of issues affecting older people. Finally, we will provide evidence-based insights and advice to Queensland Government departments and committees, grounded in the lived experiences of older people, our supporter base, and CO50 advocates – older people who volunteer their expertise to work closely with us to shape policy views, critiques and recommendations for policy action.

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority	Objective	KPI	Why	What we will do
Engaging diverse community voices to inform evidence-based insights 				
2. Broaden Representation	Recognise and include the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of older people in Queensland during engagement activities	35% survey responses and/or engagement reflects diverse populations	Broadening our supporter base representation ensures that COTA Queensland truly reflects the diversity of older people across the state. This inclusivity enhances the relevance, credibility, and impact of our advocacy, allowing us to speak with greater authority on the wide-ranging experiences and needs of older Queenslanders—whether they live in metropolitan, rural, remote, or culturally diverse communities. A broader supporter base also strengthens our reach and resilience. By engaging people from varied backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, multicultural groups, LGBTQIA+ elders, and those in different socio-economic circumstances, we build a richer, more connected network. This not only amplifies our collective voice but also opens new opportunities for partnerships, funding, and policy influence—making our work more representative, responsive, and sustainable into the future.	We will broaden representation of older people by leading the implementation of the Ageing Well Survey in Queensland to capture diverse perspectives. Through the Seniors Month grants, we will ensure successful applications reflect a wide range of regions, interests and experiences. Face-to-face engagement will be supported through a regular schedule of Seniors Expos, while partnerships with Western and Northern Queensland PHNs will help us connect with rural and remote communities. We will embed diversity initiatives within our CHSP Sector Development and Support Program and senior social isolation prevention activities, working alongside cultural organisations. Additionally, we will explore opportunities to strengthen ties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority	Objective	KPI	Why	What we will do
Engaging diverse community voices to inform evidence-based insights 				
3. Empower Champions	Foster a movement of older advocates who challenge ageism and drive social change.	Active pool of 5 Champions by Sept 2025 and full complement of 10 by March 2026	Empowering champions builds a stronger, more sustainable advocacy movement that is driven by the lived experiences and insights of older people themselves. By investing in the CO50 Advocacy Network and initiatives like Energy4Seniors, we amplify authentic community voices and ensure policy and service decisions are informed by those most affected. Supporting champions to lead conversations within their areas of expertise increases the reach and depth of our engagement, fosters local leadership, and builds trust within communities. Older person led advocacy strengthens our impact, creates long-term capacity for change, and helps COTA Queensland remain a credible and influential force in representing the diverse interests of older Queenslanders.	We will empower champions by strengthening the CO50 Advocacy Network, which offers a platform for advocates to access and share up-to-date information, insights, and perspectives on key policy issues affecting older people. Our CO50 advocates will receive ongoing training and tailored support to lead consumer voice activities within their areas of expertise, enabling them to speak confidently and effectively on behalf of their peers. Additionally, we will support the Energy4Seniors Energy Champions as they complete peer education initiatives across Queensland, and establish a legacy subgroup to continue advocacy and awareness around energy issues impacting older people.

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority	Objective	KPI	Why	What we will do
Collaborating with local, national and international experts and networks 				
4. Leverage Partnerships	Strengthen our collaborations and partnerships to maximise impact and drive systemic change.	5 Key collaborations	Leveraging partnerships allows COTA Queensland to expand its impact, influence, and reach by working collaboratively with organisations that share our commitment to improving the lives of older people. Through strategic alliances with service providers, government bodies, universities, and advocacy networks, we can deliver more effective, coordinated, and innovative responses to the challenges facing older Queenslanders. Partnerships also bring diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise that enrich our work—from shaping inclusive policy to improving service delivery. By aligning with like-minded organisations, we can amplify our voice, strengthen our advocacy, and create sustainable change across sectors. These collaborations ensure our efforts are responsive to local needs, inclusive of all communities, and focused on delivering better outcomes for older people, especially in underserved and remote areas.	We will leverage partnerships to strengthen support systems and outcomes for older Queenslanders by working closely with CHSP providers—particularly in rural and remote areas—to support the transition to Support at Home. The Seniors Social Isolation Prevention Community of Practice will be reshaped to foster greater collaboration and innovation among over 60 service providers. We will build relationships with local governments by supporting the Queensland Government's Age-Friendly Grants Program and seek collaboration with universities on ageing-related research. By convening organisations serving older people, we will help shape policy priorities for small, community-based groups. Partnerships with Primary Health Networks will focus on improving health outcomes for seniors. We will also align efforts with Queensland Walks and the Australian Network of Universal Housing Design to promote accessible, age-friendly environments, and work with LiveUp to promote supports that help older people maintain their independence.

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority	Objective	KPI	Why	What we will do
Creating innovative and real impact				
5. Protect the Vulnerable	Strengthen access for vulnerable people to aged care, reduce abuse of older adults, address social isolation, and financial insecurity through systemic reforms.	40 Care Finders active client case load	COTA Queensland delivers Care Finders – a key program to support older people from CALD backgrounds, who may experience disability and other vulnerabilities to access aged care and related support services. Leading elder abuse advocacy related activities to improve prevention and response initiatives will strengthen safeguards for vulnerable people at a statewide level. Energy4Seniors offer practical, direct support on reducing the costs of energy bills and addressing increasing costs of living for those on fixed incomes. Many older individuals face heightened risks—from abuse and neglect to social isolation and financial hardship—especially those without strong support networks or living in rural and remote areas. By proactively addressing these vulnerabilities through our policy and advocacy work, we help ensure that every older person can age with security, respect, and access to the services they need.	We will protect vulnerable older people by leading and coordinating key initiatives that promote safety, support, and access to essential services. In North Queensland, we will deliver Aged Care Navigation (Care Finders) to help isolated older people access appropriate care. A statewide World Elder Abuse Awareness Day campaign will be delivered in partnership with sector organisations to raise awareness and foster community action. We will lead the Elder Abuse Interim Advisory Committee to guide the development of a robust elder abuse response system in Queensland. To address social isolation, we will establish a forum series in collaboration with ADA and the Queensland Public Guardian, focusing on prevention strategies and future investment priorities. Additionally, the Energy4Seniors program will provide peer education on reducing energy use and managing living costs, targeting those most at risk of financial stress.

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority	Objective	KPI	Why	What we will do
Creating innovative and real impact				
6. Advance Social Good	Implement innovative projects that improve the lives of older Queenslanders and future generations.	One funded collaborative project is secured for 2026	Advancing social good reflects COTA Queensland's commitment to creating a fairer, more inclusive society where all older people can thrive. By partnering with trusted organisations across health, aged care, legal, digital, and community sectors, we can address complex, systemic challenges with collaborative solutions that have lasting impact. These partnerships enable us to contribute to innovation, improve care quality, and expand access to vital information and services. Our initiatives aim to empower older people to make informed choices and live with greater independence, dignity, and wellbeing. Sharing knowledge through the Quarterly Industry Brief further helps the entire ageing sector stay responsive and connected. Ultimately, advancing social good strengthens communities and reinforces our leadership role in shaping a Queensland that respects and values ageing.	To advance social good, we focus on building partnerships that drive meaningful outcomes for older Queenslanders. We will support the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in partnership with Inala Primary Care, and collaborate with organisations working to strengthen the aged care workforce to ensure high-quality, accessible care. By engaging with the COTA National Alliance, COTA Australia, National Seniors Australia and other seniors interested advocacy organisations, we align on key priorities and initiatives that amplify impact across the sector. We will also explore collaboration with the Queensland Public Trustee and ADA to deliver education-focused projects on topics like Enduring Powers of Attorney, wills, end-of-life planning, and transitions to care. Recognising the importance of digital inclusion, we aim to partner with groups focused on improving digital literacy and confidence among older people. Through our Quarterly Industry Brief, we will keep the sector informed of the latest research and developments, supporting informed decision-making and continued innovation.

Governance and Compliance Statement

1. **Board Monitoring:** Progress will be assessed at each Board meeting through the provision of a CEO report against the key actions. Performance against the Key Performance Indicators will occur annually via Board review.
2. **Annual Reporting:** An Annual Report on activity is produced for stakeholders at the end of each calendar year, in line with the Annual General Meeting.
3. **Funding Sources:** The Strategic Plan activity occurs within the constraints of funded programs. Where this is not possible, the Board may decide to invest in a strategy to support its achievement.
4. **Risk Management:** The Board has established a Strategic Risk Management Plan which is reviewed for change by the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee, and presented at each Board meeting.
5. **Staff Safety:** We are committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all staff, ensuring compliance with workplace health and safety regulations. We prioritise risk management, staff well-being, and continuous improvement through training, policies, and proactive safety measures.
6. **Quality Assurance:** Council on the Ageing Queensland is ISO 9001 accredited, demonstrating our commitment to quality management, continuous improvement, and high-standard service to our stakeholders. Each year, we are independently assessed for our conformance to the standard.
7. **Information Security:** Funds have been dedicated to actively working towards increasing our Essential 8 maturity, strengthening our cybersecurity resilience and protecting stakeholder information.
8. **Information Management:** Salesforce is used as our principal platform for managing stakeholder information and engagement, streamlining operations, and enhancing the quality of our advocacy and program services for older Queenslanders.
9. **Privacy:** We are committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and organizations by ensuring that all personal contact information is handled in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (*Cth*) and the Information Privacy Act 2009 (*Qld*). We collect and store only necessary contact details for engagement purposes, maintain strict security measures, and provide transparency in how information is accessed, corrected, and used, in line with the Australian Privacy Principles.
10. **Compliance Training:** COTA Queensland uses Safetrac to provide compliance training and ensure easy access to policies and procedures, supporting staff awareness and adherence to regulatory and governance requirements.
11. **Business Continuity:** COTA Queensland has established comprehensive emergency response and business continuity plans to ensure resilience, minimise disruptions, and maintain critical services in times of crisis.
12. **Regulation:** COTA Queensland operates in full compliance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) regulations and the Corporations Act 2001(*Cth*), ensuring transparency, accountability, and good governance. We uphold our legal obligations by maintaining accurate financial reporting, adhering to governance standards, and acting in the best interests of our stakeholders and the community.
13. **Environment** - we have been an EcoBiz Start Partner via the Business Chamber Queensland since 2023, designed to support us to minimise energy and water usage, lowering our impact on the environment.



Council on the Ageing Queensland

