



# Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing

## Voice for Seniors

### FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Wow. It has been a bustling time for TRCOTA since the last newsletter so let's dive in.

First and foremost, we are thrilled to announce that after multiple attempts over several years, we have successfully applied for and received a Gaming Community Benefit Fund Grant. A heartfelt thanks goes out to Mr. Aaron Harper, MP, Mr. Les Walker, MP and Cllr. Suzy Batkovich, for their fantastic support and references in securing this grant. We have already put some of it to good use with new equipment and uniforms.

We are ready and able to put on our SPLaSH Musical Workshops from now until February. Bookings are filling fast so get in touch with us if you want to take advantage of some free, inclusive entertainment. (See ad right column.)

Earlier this month, we attended the International Day of the Older Person celebrations with our colleagues from SCC. This was a fantastic gig which was well received.

As we head towards Christmas, things are bound to get busy so, at this time I would like to wish all our readers a very happy and safe Festive Season. (Cont. p 2)

Lisa Paull

*Check to see if your phone will be affected by 3G switch-off by texting "3" to "3498".*

THANKS GOES OUT TO MR. AARON HARPER, MP, MR. LES WALKER, MP AND CLLR. SUZY BATKOVICH for their fantastic references which helped us secure our SPLaSH grant.

Vicki Trevanion (Pres) Lisa Paull (Sec)



### DECLINING BIRTHRATE INCREASING AGE RATE

( a reader's opinion piece)

When I look at today's Australia, I can't help but notice how drastically things have changed since my own younger days. Back then, the idea of having a large family was almost a given, a symbol of post-war prosperity and stability. It felt like everyone had to settle down early, secure a job, buy a house and start a family. Fast forward to today and what do I hear  
(continued on p.4 )

### Spring 2024

Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing (TRCOTA) is an independent not for profit organisation, created to protect and promote the interests and wellbeing of all Seniors in the Townsville region. A chapter of the Council of the Ageing Qld. Inc. (COTAQ), Townsville Region Committee on the Ageing has supported the interests of Seniors for almost 50 years, taking your views to government and the community to ensure your needs are met.

### CONTACT DETAILS

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## SPLaSH

Sing Play Laugh and Share Happiness!

AN INITIATIVE OF TRCOTA

INSTRUMENTS

SONG LYRICS

MUSICIANS SINGERS

JOIN IN HAVE FUN

BOOKINGS 0412948141

### DISCLAIMER

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## **FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK (cont.)**

The following day, we were at the Aged Care Reform Q and A session, jointly hosted by the Department of Health and Ageing and Townsville City Libraries. We gave a ten-minute presentation, answered many questions, and asked a few as well. We made some good contacts there and hope to be able to share our members' views with all levels of government at every opportunity. A special thanks goes to Helene James of TCC and Amanda Mead of City Libraries for asking us to participate.

Back in September, we met with a group of self-funded retirees who expressed their concerns at being penalized with excessive fees by service providers for their good planning. I raised the case with our parent body COTAQ and they have forwarded it to Care Finders up here plus the Commonwealth Home Support Package people. They have informed me that the new Aged Care Act will go before Senate in the New Year. The current date set for the release of the new act is July of 2025. Watch this space for news and updates.

At our September meeting, we were able to sort out some issues a member was having in getting support for her elder abuse problem. Sadly, Elder Abuse doesn't get the recognition it deserves in this country. We, and others are working hard to get better help for older people in our region.

## **WE CAN NO LONGER IGNORE THE POOR ORAL HEALTH OF OLDER PEOPLE.**

It is a sad reflection on medical care in Australia that the mouth seems to be somehow disconnected from the body. Doctors and nurses are poorly trained to

examine the mouth and oral health is not funded under Medicare.

The importance of oral health as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, respiratory ailments, diabetes and dementia is now well understood.

There is no demographic with poorer oral health than older people, especially those in residential aged care.

For this group, poor oral health has a profound impact on quality of life, including comfort, eating, speech, appearance and ability to socialise.

Poor oral health is known to increase the rate of cognitive decline, the risk of respiratory infections, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cerebrovascular disease and interferes with the management of Parkinson's disease.

It is estimated that 67,000 hospitalisations could be prevented each year by earlier detection and treatment of dental conditions.

The holy grail is to get oral care health into Medicare, but that won't help people in residential care. Recommendation 38 of the Royal Commission into Aged Care is that allied health care professionals, including Oral Health Care Therapists be retained.

## **RETIREMENT VILLAGES: ARE THEY AS GOOD AS THEIR ADS?**

There are over 2,000 retirement villages operating in Australia, housing 200,000 people, two thirds of whom are aged 75 to 85.

They have morphed from a unit or villa with parking to "lifestyle villages" with pools, gardens, gyms, theatres, libraries, hairdressers, cafes and a bus for outings.

They have also morphed from church, charity or club run, to the property industry.

For many, the cost of an Independent Living Unit means selling the family home. There is also a regular charge for rates, insurance, repairs, maintenance and wages. Then there is the Deferred Management Fee upon exit, plus a fee to “refresh” the unit. And you do not get a share of any capital gains.

The longer residents stay in a retirement village, the poorer they get. Many will no longer have the funds to go into residential aged care and have to languish on a waiting list.

## REJECTION OF ALZHEIMER DRUG A BLOW

Dementia Australia is disappointed by the initial decision of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to reject Lecanemab for use in Australia. Lecanemab is a disease modifying treatment for people living with the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease or mild cognitive impairment.

Developed by pharmaceutical company Eisai, Lecanemab works by removing amyloid plaques from the brain and in doing so slows cognitive decline associated with the disease.

Lecanemab is currently approved for use in the UK, USA, Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates and Israel. In July it was rejected by the European Medicines Agency, a decision that has been criticised by [Alzheimer’s Europe](#).

Dementia Australia CEO Professor Tanya Buchanan said the decision would

deprive Australians of the choice to access the potential benefits of the new treatment.

“While we respect the TGA as Australia’s medicines regulator, should this decision be upheld it will be a blow to Australians who may be able to benefit from Lecanemab. Dementia Australia is disappointed that Australians living with Alzheimer’s disease in its early stages may be unable to access the same choice of treatments as people living in other countries,” Professor Buchanan said.

“Alzheimer’s disease is a progressive and ultimately fatal neurological condition so slowing decline when people are experiencing mild symptoms is incredibly important in supporting people to maintain quality of life for longer.

“Lecanemab is not a cure and is not for all people with a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease. Like many medicines it also comes with some significant risks. It is however, widely seen as an historic first step towards reducing the huge impact of Alzheimer’s disease and for people living with the condition it signified hope.

“While today’s news is a disappointment, we are encouraged by the significant investment in research from prevention through to treatment of dementia. There are currently more than 100 clinical trials of medicines to manage dementia happening globally. Research released this year also showed that nearly half of all dementia cases globally could be prevented by addressing modifiable risk factors.”

## DECLINING BIRTHRATE (cont. from P.1)

On the morning news? The birthrate is in decline! For the first time in my life! (Except

from when I was very pregnant, and told by some obsolete, pompous politician, to have one for ourselves, one for the family and one for the country). I was shocked to hear that back in the day and even more shocked to hear we are in decline again today.

As a result, our grandchildren are delaying or even foregoing parenthood as they buckle under the weight of the cost of living, lack of housing and sheer unpredictability of the modern world. It's a stark contrast to the predictable, linear path taken by many of us Baby Boomers. There is a touch of irony to all of this. We worked hard to build a prosperous society, but the very successes we created; such as greater educational and career opportunities for women, and improved access to contraception; are contributing to the declining birth rate. While I applaud and champion the progress, and understand the personal choice aspect, it's quite hard not to feel a twinge of concern for the future. Our economy and structures are already buckling under the weight of aged care reform. How will we be supported as we head into the latter years of our lives? It is a complex issue that requires thoughtful consideration and strategic planning.

### MAN SITS BESIDE ME ON THE TRAIN

MAN: Loads of psychopaths around here

ME: Really?

MAN: Loads Mate

ME: How'd you know

MAN: There's signs aren't there?

ME: I guess.....

MAN: I love them!

(47 minutes of awkward silence)

Man leaves train, he has a bike.

I realise he was saying

'cycle paths'.

### HOKEY POKEY

Ya put your left leg in

Your back goes out

You're creaking and cramping

And you've got a dose of gout

You twist and shout

And a little wee comes out

That's what it's all about!!

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I wish to become a member of TRCOTA

*Please circle*

Single Member (\$5) Associate Membership (\$10)

Mr.....Mrs.....Miss.....Other.....

Surname.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Email.....

Phone.....

Direct Deposit BSB 633000 ACC 140704263

(Post this form to TRCOTA

PO Box 92, Garbutt East 4814 or scan and email to [trcota @bigpond.net.au](mailto:trcota@bigpond.net.au))