



# An IYOP review from the States and Territories

## South Australia

The care taken in setting up Coalition '99 in South Australia in mid 1996 saw the establishment of a strong key partner network comprising over 200 partners. From the outset, the Steering Committee was widely representative of community organisations, state and Commonwealth Government.

A high level of collaboration and communication existed between the partners: Coalition '99 and the Office for the Ageing in the Department of Human Services developed a number of key initiatives. Other government department partners also consulted Coalition '99 staff regarding their activities.

There was a strong intergenerational theme throughout many partner activities. The partner program was augmented by the activities of organisations and groups who, while not formally members of the partner network, ran successful events throughout the Year.

There was an early commitment by both Coalition '99 and the State Government to activities with an impact beyond the International Year. A number of initiatives which began in the Year have additional phases already under way or being planned. These include the establishment of the Aboriginal Elders' Council; Youth-seniors: a shared future (an intergenerational program); the Rural Elders' Conference and the COTA National Congress, Older Australians: a working future.

In addition, there were many other highly successful events and activities conducted during the Year: for example a parade and launch in the grounds of Government House, the 13 Global Walks held around the state, the comprehensive year-long programs conducted by the Flinders University of South Australia and the Yankalilla Senior Citizens' Club.

As with other States, Coalition '99 (SA) was auspiced by COTA (SA) with funding from the State Government. Cash sponsorship was received from two key business partners, Simplicity Funerals and West Terrace Cemetery. This was linked to the South Australian Museum's IYOP Egyptian exhibition, *A Beautiful Burial*.

In-kind sponsorship was acquired from Cathay Pacific Airways, the Kowloon Hotel and Gainsborough Photographic Studio. These were used in the IYOP photographic competition run for four months through *The Adelaide Advertiser's* 'Looking Forward' supplement.

A year-long arrangement with 'Looking Forward' saw a two page centre-spread calendar published in January, June and October giving advance notice of upcoming key partner events and activities. The calendar was also published monthly and significant exposure was attained both via editorial and the cover image. In addition, Coalition '99 was successful in securing support from local radio stations 5AA and 5DN and Channel 9 Adelaide via bonuses for purchased air time which more than doubled exposure of the Office for the Ageing IYOP positive images campaign which Coalition '99 staff helped develop.

Other television and radio stations carried many stories about IYOP and older people and their achievements via their news and magazine programs. In the print media, both *The Messenger* (the suburban free publication) and *The Advertiser* offered a significant level of exposure.

A key and ongoing outcome to the activities of all partners was a higher level of awareness, particularly by the media, of ageing issues and of the ongoing contributions of older people to the community.





## Western Australia

A state twice the size of Texas, a widespread multicultural population as diverse as anywhere on the planet, and no money. These were just some of the small hurdles Western Australia worked to overcome in planning, preparing for and participating in the United Nation's International Year of Older Persons. COTA established the secretariat for AC '99 WA under the leadership of Deborah Kirwan.



The State Government's Office of Seniors' Interests, the Lotteries Commission of WA and community organisations themselves offered strong support and cooperation to AC '99. It was the community organisations which developed exciting initiatives through enthusiasm, ideas and an unshakable belief in the mission. These threads came together into tangible projects with short, medium and long-term benefits to WA. Partner organisations recognised that while the Year was a celebration of ageing, the activities also were focused on long-term sustainable attitudinal shift and behavioural changes.

The Office of Seniors' Interests allowed COTA to allocate some of its resources to provide a secretariat for AC '99 while the Lotteries Commission of WA provided \$100,000 in small community grants to over 120 community-based organisations from the Far North to the Deep South of the state.

The level of participation in WA was among the highest in any state in Australia and forged strong cooperative links between organisations within the sector, commercial organisations and government.

A major outcome of the Year has been the positive involvement of the state's only daily newspaper, *The West Australian*. Throughout the year positive progress was observed in challenging some of the myths and stereotypes of older people and forcing society to reconsider their attitudes and behaviours toward them. This coverage was complemented by the community and independent newspapers as well as the electronic media most notably the ABC and Channel 7.

AC '99 also held a hugely successful seminar at the end of the Year with support from the Office of Seniors' Interests. The seminar was titled *Seniors Influencing Big Business – A Voice in the Wilderness or a Cyclone on the Horizon?* The outcomes of this seminar will form the basis of the next phase in Office of Seniors' Interests strategic plan.



## Tasmania

We are all agreed - IYOP 1999 was a great success in Tasmania! We believe that we have indeed made significant progress 'towards a society for all ages'. The major achievement for the Year has been an increased awareness and understanding of the diversity of older people and of the substantial roles that older people play in society.

In particular the intergenerational message of IYOP has been widely promoted. There has been a recognition of the complementary roles of older and younger people with some exciting practical outcomes.

Examples include the Clarence Learning Cooperative – a compact of commitment to shared learning between Clarence University of the Third Age and the Clarence High School. A *Partnership Between Schools and Older People* project is being developed by the Tasmanian Education Department, the Seniors' Bureau (Department of Health and Human Services), Volunteering Tasmania and representative older people. This will be another of the many policies and projects begun under the auspices of IYOP and continuing to grow into the new millennium.

Ninety organisations from the community, business and government sectors formally became partners with AC '99 (Tasmania) working to promote the five principles of independence, participation, care, self fulfillment and dignity.

The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services provided the bulk of the financial and in-kind support enabling an IYOP part-time project officer to be employed and assisting Council on the Ageing (Tasmania) to convene and service the Tasmanian AC '99 committee. A small community grants program was also established, funded by DHHS and managed by COTA, enabling many groups to conduct activities that would otherwise not have been possible.

The Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs provided special financial assistance in the early stages of IYOP. Friends of Contemporary Music and the Public Trustee supported the 1st October *Countdown to '99* launch by His Excellency, Sir Guy Green, Governor of Tasmania. Other government departments provided support for activities within their own areas of interest: the Office of Sport and Recreation was very helpful in the distribution of relevant material, as well as conducting major *Active Seniors* events. Metro assisted with transport for a number of IYOP events.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE SUNDAY TASMANIAN

IYOP was promoted in diverse ways during the Year. These included a poster bearing an evocative intergenerational image and stickers with the slogan, *Ageing – everyone's doing it*. Media support was good, particularly from ABC Radio 7ZR, Magic 107 Radio and from *The Examiner* newspaper in conjunction with Launceston City Council.

Events and activities throughout Tasmania were numerous and diverse - more than 250, or five for every week of the Year. Many will continue as ongoing programs or as regular annual celebrations.

Key events included the Grey Parliament, primarily sponsored by Centrelink, which has generated enormous interest and will have an ongoing impact. The WHO Global Embrace Walk – a world wide event encouraging active ageing held on 2nd October – was marked strongly in Tasmania. All in all, we are convinced that IYOP in Tasmania has set the groundwork for a new age – a society for all ages!



## Victoria

Two hundred and thirty non-government organisations and twenty local governments representing local communities across the state registered as AC '99 Victoria to undertake projects aimed at challenging existing attitudes to ageing and pushing the boundaries of what was expected by and for older people. Five government departments worked closely with AC '99, particularly the Positive Ageing Unit of the Department of Human Services (DHS), Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

Courses introducing older persons to computers and the Internet, first set up by COTA Victoria and neighbourhood houses, were taken over by public libraries run by local government. Other projects demonstrated the contribution of older persons through oral histories, art and photography exhibitions, story and poetry writing competitions. These provide the beginning of new sources for school curricula changes which are incorporating an understanding of ageing into primary schools.

Life long learning opportunities were expanded so that the value of U3A, already acknowledged, but not adequately resourced, could be supplemented by programs which offered both vocational retraining to tackle inequality of employment opportunities for older Victorians but which redefined learning to recognise the spiritual, emotional and cognitive needs of people. As examples, choral groups toured to introduce music making into local communities particularly in rural areas; African elderly people taught their cooking and arts and Koori elders seized the opportunity to examine the role of elders in their own communities and to set up long term recognition of their importance. Grandparent groups not only recognised the social support (and frequently financial support) provided to families voluntarily but the bind that older people were caught in while fulfilling this role, particularly among certain recently arrived immigrant groups. Sometimes these dilemmas were captured in plays which then toured the state, with a powerful coalition of older writers and actors.



DHS and VicHealth put one million dollars into several important projects as partners with non-government groups in attempting to tackle the lack of employment opportunities for older workers, creative preparation for retirement, skill transfer into special communities, and sharing between generations initiatives in building a better physical environment. Most of these organisations are engaged currently in monitoring and evaluating their activities in partnership with a COTA employed researcher and VicHealth.

The relationships between the non-government and government sectors were cooperative and respectful of each other's roles. Support from DHS included financing of the secretariat (one full time officer), in-kind promotional support, sharing of events and media coverage. AC '99 Victoria provided media kits and contacts and regularly monitored the successes of partners in gaining media access for their activities and messages. AC '99 Victoria ensured that media contact was constant throughout the Year, with an emphasis on challenging negative stereotypes of ageing and promoting positive images.

At the end of the Year, partners vowed to support their initiatives with an annual forum called 1999 + 1, + 2, etc., and through their report of the Year, to provide the new government with recommendations for specific actions such as the setting up of a Ministerial Council on Ageing.