



## Australian Capital Territory

Throughout 1999, the ACT took a three-pronged approach to the International Year - recognition, participation and outcomes. It was the combined goal of the ACT Government and AC '99 (ACT) to ensure that all Canberrans were able to recognise that 1999 was the International Year of Older Persons. We aimed to give all Canberrans the opportunity to participate in the celebrations and we have also worked closely to ensure that the ACT continues to aim towards truly achieving a society for all ages.

Sponsorship agreements, seen as an essential component of successfully managing IYOP in the ACT, were secured with Diabetes ACT, Healthpact, National Convention Centre, and Cathay Pacific. The signing of *The Chronicle*, Radio 2CC and WIN Television as major sponsors for 1999 also enabled AC '99 (ACT) to guarantee media coverage through the three main avenues. *The Chronicle*, a publication of *The Canberra Times* reproduced the events program on a monthly basis at no cost to AC '99. Radio 2CC provided \$100,000 worth of advertising sponsorship to the Year and WIN Television developed, produced and aired, from February to December 1999, a community service announcement tailored to the ACT and surrounding region.

AC '99 (ACT) ensured that at least one major event was held each month. One of the most successful events was an intergenerational activity coordinated by COTA (ACT), YMCA Canberra and the Canberra Institute of Technology. The aim of the event, entitled *Because I want to*, was to give older people the opportunity to participate in activities to which they wouldn't normally have access and to give students of the Canberra Institute of Technology Diploma in Recreational Studies the opportunity to design a program for older people as well as instruct them on various activities.

Long-lasting outcomes have always been a focus of IYOP. All partners of AC '99 (ACT) have indicated their support of this focus. However none has been as pro-active as the ACT Government and COTA (ACT). In October 1999, the ACT Government produced a discussion paper titled *Towards a Society for All Ages: A Forward Plan for Older People in the ACT 2000 – 2003*.

The discussion paper, covering topics such as community attitudes, community participation, maintaining independence, urban planning and design, shows the commitment of the ACT Government to the rising number of residents over the age of 55.

COTA (ACT) held a series of public forums which not only focused on the discussion paper but also ensured a wide range of the community was consulted before any comments were submitted to Government.

COTA (ACT) also established an IYOP Policy Committee with representatives from various organisations in the ACT who are currently focusing on issues raised at the public forums held throughout the year.

The success of all of the Canberra projects relied heavily on the active participation of the entire community. We are proud to say that Canberra has been very enthusiastic in recognising IYOP, participating in various events, and working together for positive outcomes.





## New South Wales

In 1996 the Council on the Ageing (NSW) invited some 25 organisations working with, or made up of, older people to come together to plan for IYOP. From this small beginning, AC '99 NSW was formed. The partnership soon grew to include older people's groups, organisations that provided services to older people, local government, research centres at universities and NSW Government departments such as the Ageing and Disability Department and the Department of Sport and Recreation. At the end of IYOP, 96 partner organisations were all working in some way and in varying degrees to do something for IYOP. These partnerships were one of the real strengths of IYOP.

The major achievement for AC '99 NSW was the development of the *Platform for Action on Issues of Concern to Older Persons in NSW*. Its aim is to bring about lasting changes in the quality of life for all older persons by targeting issues, raising public awareness and working for lasting changes through effective community action. Based on over 100 submissions received, the document, representing the voices of older persons, was launched in November 1999. The final stage of the Platform's development involves the implementation of actions with annual reviews by NGOs over the next three years, as well as documenting what changes have been achieved.

The Government and the community sectors created a unique partnership around IYOP. Five Government departments or statutory authorities were AC '99 NSW partners, including the Ageing and Disability Department (ADD) which was also represented on the AC '99 NSW Steering Committee. This allowed for more open information sharing and planning around IYOP activities and events.

AC '99 NSW received a total of \$135,000 from the NSW Government, through ADD. Over \$17,000 was also received from AC '99 NSW partner organisations, which helped to develop the *Platform for Action*.

The response to IYOP in NSW was enormous. There were hundreds of IYOP events and activities throughout the state. The Grey Mardi Gras on 2nd October was part of the WHO Global Embrace Walk and ended with a festival in Hyde Park. In November 1999, a national conference *Meeting of Generations* brought together older and younger people to discuss their issues of concern and learn from each other.

Printed material for IYOP was developed by the NSW Government. Three posters and a series of five postcards were developed. The postcards showed older people as active and involved members of the community. The posters and postcards were distributed directly to AC '99 partners, seniors' organisations, senior citizens' clubs and service providers. The postcards were also distributed through cafes and restaurants.

IYOP received wide media coverage in NSW. IYOP coverage by TV and metropolitan newspapers was disappointing, but this was more than made up for by the response of local newspapers and ABC regional radio. *The Bankstown Torch* even allowed itself to be 'highjacked' by a group of older people who produced an IYOP supplement 'Older People Take Over' which reflected some of the issues and concerns of older people in the Bankstown area.





## Queensland

IYOP in Queensland has been a triumph for cooperation. 'A distinguishing feature was its grass roots support with thousands of Queenslanders of all ages taking part in events to celebrate older people's contribution to our community,' said The Hon. Anna Bligh MLA, State Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care.

The Year impacted on the whole community and a recent survey confirmed an overall awareness. This was largely due to the work of Older People Speak Out (OPSO) who in 1998 used established community groups to hold meetings and set up IYOP committees. The Queensland Government supported this initiative and 148 government grants totalling \$647,000 were directed to community groups throughout the state to stage events. Local government also funded many events.

AC '99 Qld and its 285 partners benefited and developed individual events of diverse kinds. Many events attracted no funding but all required the enthusiasm and hard work of volunteers. Sponsorship was received from Forest Place Villages, *The Sunday Mail* and RetireInvest and sponsorship in-kind from the Australian Council of Trade Unions, E.K. Williams, (printer), CMRS Solutions (computer expertise) and the Queensland Concert Party. Donations to AC '99 Qld from partners totaled \$5,766 including \$2,896 from COTA Qld for seeding and covering shortfall.

A major achievement of AC '99 Qld was the calendar of events published in *The Sunday Mail* through the cooperation of the sponsors and partners. At the same time a website was established and maintained with a grant of \$20,000 from the Government.

Several recognition ceremonies acknowledged the contribution of older people to the community. The 50th Anniversary of Australian Citizenship celebrated by the Ethnic Communities' Council was a highlight.

Another outcome was the publication of *Our Shared Future – Queensland's Framework for Ageing* by the Government after extensive consultation with older people in the community. A Council for Older Persons to advise the Minister will also be established.

The campaign to break down the stereotypes surrounding older people has been most successful. This was largely influenced by the State Media Awards and the National Media Awards, organised by OPSO.

The University of Queensland, Griffith University and the Queensland University of Technology introduced courses of study, initiated research and conducted conferences associated with the well-being of older people. Hospitals and service providers aimed at making older people aware of the importance of healthy, active ageing and of the services available.

In addition, the State Library and the Soroptomists set up projects to introduce seniors to the Net, retired firemen from the Fire and Safety Service instructed large groups in shopping centres about fire safety and Home Secure/Home Assist gave presentations on home security and raised awareness of their service. As well as the longer lasting outcomes, there were many events which were just good fun including the World Health Organisation's Global Walk which captured the imagination of Queenslanders, resulting in 43 walks held around the state.

Overall IYOP was a wonderful success especially for those who were actively involved. For them it was a creative and uplifting experience.





## Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, IYOP maintained a distinctively Territorian perspective throughout 1999. Projects and events held throughout the Year encompassed the multicultural nature of the Territory from Kunbarllanjja Community in Arnhem Land to Government House in Darwin.

The variety of activities, projects and functions was reflected in the diversity of IYOP partners recruited throughout the Year. The 36 partnerships established included 13 from the non-government sector (health and advocacy); 6 government agencies (federal, territory and local government); 5 educational institutions (schools and Northern Territory University faculties); 4 arts/media organisations; 5 community interest organisations; 1 Aboriginal Council; and 1 corporate partner.

In keeping with the Territory's outdoor image, recreational pursuits featured throughout the Year's celebrations. During August and September 1999, the Office of Senior Territorians, in conjunction with Life Be In It, organised the *Senior Territorians Active in Recreation Program*. This provided senior Territorians with a range of activities emphasising good health, well-being and active lifestyles. Activities included aerobics, aqua aerobics, rock climbing (not to the top of Uluru!), walking, arts and crafts. Dragon boating – a significant link to the Top End's Asian connection – was particularly popular with all participants.

Recreational pursuits were not simply limited to the metropolitan populations of the Northern Territory. The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory launched the *Older Persons' Recreation Program* at Kunbarllanjja Community in June 1999. From February to April 1999, the Community's Government Council renovated and upgraded the Women's Resource Centre, providing older community members with a meeting place and a venue for delivery of recreational and social activities twice a week.

The Tangentyre Council of Alice Springs launched the *Wise Use of Medicines* project which developed video and written resources for Aboriginal families and agencies in relation to the use of medications for illnesses experienced by older family members. COTA (NT) developed the *Travelling Seniors' Book Fest* - a collection of twenty children's stories about older people. This collection was made available to any children's organisations within the Northern Territory.



The Territory's arts community came to the fore with an intergenerational theatre production by Corrugated Iron Youth Arts and a cabaret performance, *Reluctant Retirees*, by the Grey Panthers and TRACKS dance groups. The Office of Senior Territorians, in conjunction with the Moran Health Care Group, sponsored the *Portrait of a Senior Territorian* arts contest. The overwhelming success of this venture has led the Minister for Senior Territorians to propose that the venture continues as an annual event.

The establishment of the Office of Senior Territorians and the Seniors Card has exemplified the NT Government's commitment to Senior Territorians. The Office's *Small Grants Program* funding senior organisations and projects has strongly encouraged Senior Territorians to continue their valued contributions to our community.

All these and many other projects and functions during IYOP have laid the groundwork for Senior Territorians to continue to receive future acknowledgment and programs well into the new millennium.