



MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PEOPLE - 1 OCTOBER

Senior Victorians play a vital role in our community and the theme of this year's International Day of Older Persons, "Rights of Older Persons", is especially apt in this year in which marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Promoting the independence, participation and dignity of older persons has long been on the agenda of the United Nations and is embraced by COTA Victoria," said Sue Hendy, Executive Director of COTA. "COTA Victoria marks this important date with its annual Seniors Conference, which brings together older people from all walks of life to discuss their roles and contributions beyond work, and other issues that are important to them, "

Australia is a signatory to the UN's Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and it's stated aim of '*eliminating all forms of discrimination, including age discrimination*' and recognition that '*persons, as they age, should enjoy a life of fulfilment, health, security and active participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies.*'

"Despite this commitment, the rights of older people are violated every day, and they often face age discrimination, and experience lack of recognition and respect," said Ms Hendy. "Acknowledging the crucial role that seniors play in society is an important pillar of the Madrid Plan of Action."

"This year the theme of the Seniors Conference is ***Shaping the Climate for Change – Seniors Leading the Way***, highlighting the important roles seniors play in affecting change in their communities. Older people bring the skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout their life to their neighbourhood, community organisations and broader social and community issues. They continue to be, and seek to be, active and involved in shaping a better environment for all members of the community."

A panel of well-respected and influential seniors will explore with conference participants, the challenges, opportunities and barriers to active participation in shaping social change as older people.

"At a time when seniors' issues are being highlighted and considered by our politicians, the International Day of Older People provides an opportunity to reflect on ways to protect and empower older persons to enjoy full status as citizens in our communities."

Contact: Sue Hendy, Executive Officer: 0413 80 20 54

Council on the Ageing Victoria