Dear Minister

End-of-Term Report

Membership
The current Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing first met on 18 February 2009. The Terms of Reference for the Council provided for 16 members including a chair and deputy chair. Thirteen people were appointed covering a wide cross-section of interests in relation to ageing issues and related organisations, e.g. aged care, social inclusion, veterans’ welfare, multiculturalism, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, COTA, Probus and St Vincent de Paul. During the term of the Council three members resigned.

Three members served on the previous Council. This continuation of membership was useful in early meetings as these members were able to provide some background context to issues.

The photo below shows the 11 members¹ who attended this first meeting along with Minister John Hargreaves, and Ms Pam Jenkins of the Office for Ageing.

¹ Dee McGrath and Gayle Sweaney absent.
Ms Agnes O’Shea OAM was subsequently appointed as a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Unfortunately, she was only able to attend one meeting. Your subsequent request to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, United Ngunnawal Elders Council and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Gathering seeking a representative for the Council was not met.

The term of appointment to the Council was for two years. You extended this to December 2011 to provide continuity in MACA’s involvement in the ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing 2010-2014.

**ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing**

The major task of the Council has undoubtedly been its involvement in the development and implementation of the ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing. At the first meeting of the Council we were briefed by a consultant appointed to facilitate three community consultation forums in March 2009. These were arranged so as to obtain views and provide possible strategies to assist in development of a whole-of-government strategic plan. Council members chaired discussion groups at each of the forums. It was during one of these forums that a community representative raised the matter of the World Health Organization approach to Age Friendly Cities. As a result, the WHO concept became a key part of the strategic plan.

At the second meeting of the Council, the Chair was nominated to participate in an Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) for Positive Ageing.

In May 2009 MACA held two internal workshops to formulate recommendations to take to the IDC, based on an outcomes paper developed from analysis of issues raised from community consultations. In July 2009 MACA held a special meeting to provide comments to the IDC on a draft strategic plan. In August 2009 members facilitated discussion groups at a public information session on the draft strategic plan. The plan was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in December 2009.

Since the publication of the strategic plan, the Council has monitored progress particularly by selected members meeting with departments to discuss progress. These meetings were very beneficial in giving us an understanding of progress being made to contribute to actions for the first reporting period to June 2011 and on other initiatives being undertaken. We believe that the meetings also assisted departments to focus on their commitments to the strategic plan.

Actions for the next period of the strategic plan are now being developed through representation by MACA Chair at meetings of the Canberra Age-Friendly City Network comprising directorates, COTA-ACT, National Seniors and CIT.

You have been provided by MACA with a Report on Implementation of the ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing dated 15 November 2011 in which we assess that
‘...implementation of the Plan for the first reporting period has been successful, delivering a firm foundation for future progress.’

**Older Persons Assembly**
The Council was very pleased to be closely involved with the development and conduct of the Older Persons Assembly, which was held on 30 September 2011.

Through our representation on the Steering Committee and various other meetings the Council contributed to the development of the day and participated by chairing eight committee hearings and presenting the outcomes in the Legislative Assembly chamber.

**Representation**
MACA has been represented on the following:

- ACT Health Council.
- Elder Abuse Prevention Network (and participated in the selection in the of the Telephone Service provider).
- Steering Group for development of a community survey.
- Older Persons Assembly Steering Committee.
- Age Friendly City Survey Reference Group.

MACA members have participated annually in committees considering applications for Seniors Grants and photos entered in Life’s Reflections Photographic Competition. In addition, members participated in numerous seminars, workshops and meetings covering a variety of issues including Housing, Arts for Older People, Multicultural Seniors, Retirement Villages, Life Stages for Older Women, Ageism and Discrimination and Mental Health.

The Chair attended a meeting of the ACT Government’s Advisory Groups and the ACT Community Inclusion Board.

The Chair was sponsored to attend the 10th Global Conference of the International Federation on Ageing in Melbourne in May 2010. Information obtained at the conference was very useful in considering issues of concern to MACA.

**Submissions**
A regular feature of the work of the Council has been to provide views on various issues. Comments have been provided on the following documents:

- Issues Paper: Framework for People with Disability who are Ageing.
- Comparative Social Isolation Amongst Older People in the ACT.
- Proposed Australian Disability Parking Scheme.
- Affordable Accommodation Options Discussion Paper.
• Expansion of 40 km/h Speed Limits.
• Expanded ACT Electricity Fee-In Tariff Scheme.
• ACT Women’s Plan Discussion Paper, Looking Forward- Informing on a New ACT Women's Plan.
• ACT Health Aged Day Care Consultation.
• Update to Canberra Social Plan.
• Draft Residential Aged Care Facility Placement Policy.
• ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013.
• Rehabilitation and Aged Care Plan 2010-15.
• Draft Workplace Screening Risk Assessment Guidelines.
• Discussion paper for an ACT Language Policy.
• Transport for Canberra - Transport for a Sustainable City 2011-2031.

Letters have been written to you or your predecessor on the following topics:

• Nomination for a member of MACA to the ACT Health Council.
• Strategic Review of Elder Abuse Prevention Program.
• Initiatives of Seniors Clubs in relation to the International Day of Older Persons.
• Feedback on the draft Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing.
• Australian Disability Parking Discussion Paper.
• Parking at Canberra Hospital.
• Certificates of Appreciation on the International Day for Older Persons.
• Size of membership of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing.
• Involvement of older people in arts programs.
• Options for Tenure of MACA.
• UN Convention of the Rights of Older People.
• Older Persons Commissioner.
• Canberra Seniors Centre Facilities.
• Retirement Villages Bill 2010.
• Future of Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing.
• Grandparents Day.

Substantial reports have been provided to you on:

Presentations
At a number of MACA meetings presentations were provided to members. These included:

- **Housing matters**: David Matthews, Director, Housing ACT, DHCS; Elisabeth Judd, Senior Manager, Strategic Project Facilitation, CMD; Brent Fitzsimons, Manager, Portfolio Management, DHCS.
- **Village Network**: Ross McKay, Director, Strategic Project Facilitation, Land and Property Services (LAPS); Tanya Saad, Senior Manager, Strategic Project Facilitation, LAPS.
- **Activities of Ageing Research Unit ANU**: Professor Kaarin Anstey and Dr Kerry Sargent-Cox.
- **Village Network Pilot**: Tanya Saad and Nyaree Bolas of LAPS and Camilla Roundland of Communities@Work.
- **Northside Community Service Social Isolation Report**: Adele Chadwick and Tracey Hill Northside Community Service.
- **National Seniors Australia Productive Ageing Centre**: Peter Matwijiw, General Manager, Policy and Research.
- **Canberra City Area Action Plan 2010-2016**: Rod Baxter, LAPS.
- **ACT Police**: Helen Judd Seniors Liaison Officer, Sgt Mike Smith, Crime Prevention ACT Policing.
- **Role of the Commissioner responsible for services to older people**: Mary Durkin, the Health Services Commissioner, Cate Mahanay, Senior Review Officer, HRC.
- **Ageing Research Unit, ANU – Age-Friendly City Survey**: Trish Jacomb, Dr Kerry Sargent-Cox.
- **Transport for Canberra**: Kirstin Blume, Senior Manager Transport Policy, ESDD.

Other matters
The Council contributed to the development of the ACT Business Guides to older customers and employees and met with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Canberra Business Council during their development.

The Chair and Deputy Chair attended a number of meetings with LAPS about options for relocation and development of Canberra Seniors Centre.

Thank you for attending three of our meetings and providing an insight into the Government’s approach to various issues. The photo below was taken following our meeting with you on 9 August 2010:
At our final meeting you suggested that we might identify matters of continuing interest to the next MACA. At paras 37 to 49 of the Council’s Report on Implementation of the ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing a number of issues have been listed in relation to the Strategic Plan priorities. Additionally, in a letter to you on 10 August 2010 the Council proposed the appointment of an Older Persons Commissioner. Although this was not accepted by the Government, we recommend that this matter is re-examined.

Support
We appreciated attendance at a number of our meetings by your staff members, Jennie Mardell and Neil Finch. We found their advice very beneficial.

The support of the staff of the Office for Ageing has been of the highest order under the successive leadership of Pam Jenkins, Nadine Stephen and Jacinta Evans. Council members have frequently expressed their appreciation of the detailed planning and execution of challenging events and general support to our meetings by the small staff of the Office for Ageing.

We have also been fortunate to have the attendance at our meeting by the Senior Director, Governance, Advocacy and Community Policy, Meredith Whitten or Acting Director Michelle Callen.

Without exception members have felt privileged to be appointed to MACA and to be given the opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing of older people in the ACT. We have been provided with a real insight into the issues through our involvement with in the Council and its interaction with many government officers and other people with special knowledge.
We will all look back with pride in being appointed members of this important advisory body.

Yours sincerely

Alan Hodges

Alan Hodges AM
Chair
Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing
13 December 2011