

Seniors Peak Body Consumers Reference Group
Inaugural Meeting – Wednesday, 10 December 2025



Meeting Communique

Members Present: Frank Smith, Linda Males, Margaret Walsh, Stephen Kobelke, Michael Pemberton, Amina Schipp, Renate Van Dordrect, Ron DeGruchy and Lenka Psar-McCabe

Apology: Suresh Rajan

Also in Attendance: Bianca Marson Whait (Seniors Peak Body Manager, Advocare), Liz Harrison (Principal Policy Officer Seniors, Department of Communities), Mark Kinsela (Secretariat, COTA WA).

Opening Remarks

The Seniors Peak Body Consumers Reference Group held its inaugural meeting on 10 December 2025 at Perron Place, Victoria Park. The meeting brought together a diverse group of Western Australians committed to ensuring that older people are heard and represented across ageing, health, community services and broader public policy.

Member Introductions

Members shared their reasons for joining the group and their aspirations for improving outcomes for older people. The discussion reflected a broad range of lived experience across metropolitan, regional and remote WA. Themes included ageism, fairness in aged care, financial pressures, housing insecurity, elder abuse, communication challenges linked to cognitive decline, barriers faced by CALD communities, regional access to services and desires to contribute. A strong theme of the discussion was the determination of older Western Australians to remain active contributors to community life, drawing on a lifetime of skills, knowledge and experience. Members emphasised that older people continue to play vital roles across society and should never be viewed

as ready to be put aside, but rather as individuals whose voices, capabilities and leadership remain essential to the wellbeing and prosperity of Western Australia.

Members expressed a clear and shared commitment to shaping better policy and support for seniors in Western Australia.

Overview of the WA Seniors Strategy

The Department of Communities provided an overview of An Age-friendly WA: State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033, key priorities and the broader seniors portfolio. The presentation covered the Strategy's four pillars, State initiatives that support healthy and connected ageing, programs addressing ageism, and elder abuse prevention and response services. The alignment between the Strategy and the work of the Seniors Peak Body and the Consumers Reference Group was highlighted.

Introduction to Advocare and the Seniors Peak Body

Advocare outlined the purpose and structure of the Seniors Peak Body and the role of the Consumers Reference Group in guiding its advocacy priorities. The overview emphasised the importance of independent, coordinated representation of seniors across Western Australia.

Terms of Reference Discussion and Endorsement

Members reviewed the draft Terms of Reference and agreed on the importance of reflecting the age group of 55 years and older, ensuring regional perspectives and Aboriginal voices are represented. Members supported adjusting the wording to state that the group comprises 'approximately' twelve members. The Terms of Reference were endorsed.

Members voted to appoint Amina Schipp as the inaugural Chair.

Priorities for the WA Seniors Portfolio

The scheduled discussion on priorities for 2026 will continue at the next meeting to allow fuller engagement by all members.

Agreed Outcomes

The next meeting will be held in early February 2026.

The Secretariat will circulate proposed meeting dates for the coming year.

The Secretariat will circulate a member profile document for members to complete and then share across the group to support collaboration.

Note: This Communiqué is provided to inform members, stakeholders and the wider community of the matters discussed and the intent of the group as it commences its work to strengthen the voice of older Western Australians.