

# PROGRESS REPORT

## 2023

Northern Territory Seniors Policy Implementation Plan  
2022-2024

# Introduction

**The second progress report for the Northern Territory Seniors Policy 2021-2026 and showcase the achievements made throughout 2023 to deliver outcomes under the Senior's Policy Implementation Plan 2022-2024.**

Population modelling indicates that the Northern Territory's senior population will continue to grow at the fastest rate in Australia. With this in mind, more work is required to support our shared vision that all senior Territorians are valued members of the community, are independent and healthy, feel safe and have access to opportunities to increase their quality of life as they age.

The Northern Territory Government will continue to work alongside our seniors' peak bodies, service providers and the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians, to focus efforts on areas and activities that will have the most positive impact on our senior Territorians and their quality of life. Housing, accessible transport, safety and finance also continue to form a crucial component of our future planning.

Nationally, work undertaken in 2023 by the Australian Government to improve pay conditions for people who provide care to seniors is going a long way to ensure that quality workforces are maintained.

Locally, the department will continue to work proactively with local government and Aboriginal corporations to ensure appropriate supports are accessible and available to senior Territorians allowing them to live in their chosen community, wherever that may be. We will further build relationships with advocacy groups to recognise and support the diversity of our population and ensure individual needs of the community are considered as part of service planning.

Late last year, the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians met with representatives from the Youth Round Table in Alice Springs. Synergies and friendships were formed, and the department is delighted to have played a part in facilitating this intergenerational opportunity, reflecting on the commonalities experienced by both groups, and collaboratively building strategies to break down some of the barriers into the future.

# The journey continues...



**4** Priorities



**15** Outcomes



**50** Actions

The Northern Territory is Australia's leading region for an ageing population, with a 6.4% increase in residents over 65 – well surpassing the national average of 3.6%. This trend is expected to continue, with projections indicating a 200% increase in seniors by 2056, driven primarily by the growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seniors in the Territory.

While it is expected that Greater Darwin will have a notable senior population, particularly among those over the age of 70, other regions in the Territory will also experience substantial growth in the 60-69 year old demographic. Noting these developments, the Northern Territory (NT) Government is working to address concerns regarding the cost of living and access to healthcare to improve the liveability for senior residents.

## Vision

Senior Territorians are valued members of the community and are independent, healthy and well.

All Territorians recognise and respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges associated with ageing.

In 2021, the NT Government released its 5-year *Northern Territory Seniors Policy 2021-2026*, followed the subsequent year by the *Northern Territory Seniors Policy Implementation Plan 2022-2024*. Implementation of policy initiatives for seniors enables the NT Government to work towards its shared vision for senior Territorians and plan for the future of the Northern Territory's rapidly growing ageing population.

In delivering its vision, the NT Government acknowledges the continued support from local government, non-government organisations, seniors' peak bodies, service providers and the community to improve the lives of senior Territorians.

In 2023, the NT Government continued to deliver on the Seniors Policy 4 priority areas:

- 1** **Priority 1:** Economic participation and financial security
- 2** **Priority 2:** Safety and security
- 3** **Priority 3:** Health and wellbeing
- 4** **Priority 4:** Social inclusion

# Priority 1: Economic participation and financial security

Actions to support the continuation of employment for senior Territorians is vital to their wellbeing and connectivity.

Strategies that encourage and strengthen participation and support information sharing and educational sessions on issues impacting our senior Territorians ensures many seniors can continue to work, train and actively participate in employment and training opportunities well into later life.

The NT Government values and fosters the insight and lived experience of seniors and works hard to support them in having a strong sense of belonging, emotional stability and positive outlook on life.

## Outcome 1.1: Mature age workers are supported to continue to participate in the workforce, taking into consideration their needs and preferences

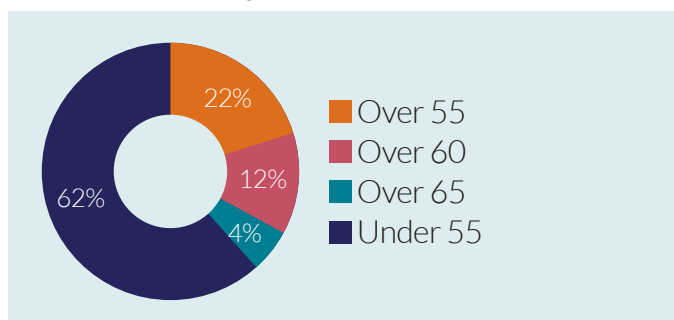
### Workforce support

In 2022-23, 38% (8,342) of public servants employed in the NT were over the age of 55.

To support seniors and continue to promote strategies under the NT Public Sector Ageing Workforce Framework (the Framework) to all NT Government employees, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) fulfilled its commitment to deliver superannuation information sessions in 2023, greatly exceeding their minimum target for delivery.

OCPE also continued to provide up-to-date online information to NT Government employees through the Flexible Retirement Hub, promote resources and tools under the Framework through the biannual Hands Up for Inclusion newsletter, and offer mandatory ‘ageing workforce matters’ training to those involved in recruitment.

### NT public servant age breakdown



## Outcome 1.2: More workforce, training and education choices are available for senior Territorians

### Workforce choices

OCPE continues to consistently promote and advocate for the adoption of flexible work arrangements for all NT Government staff, including seniors; and facilitate training and development opportunities aligned to the Northern Territory Public Sector Capability Framework.

In 2023, OCPE conducted the biennial People Matter Survey, which revealed that job satisfaction among senior employees remained robust, with over 70% expressing satisfaction with their roles.



In 2023, **40** apprentices/trainees were over the age of 60. This is a **25%** increase on the previous year.

### Employer incentives

Small Business Champions from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, encourage businesses to apply for the Australian Government’s Mature Aged Workers Commencement Incentive or the Mature Aged Workers Completion Incentive.

These incentives support employers to take on an apprentice who is aged 45 years or older, in a Certificate II or higher-level qualification.



## Outcome 1.3: Seniors are well informed about their financial options with a focus on financial security in later years

### Accessible financial planning

Council on the Ageing NT (COTA NT) receive peak body funding to deliver advocacy and support services to seniors across the Territory.

They provide free financial and legal information for senior Territorians, with programs such as information on:

- making a Will
- advance personal plans
- protecting personal information
- legal advice
- seniors' rights at retirement
- protection from elder abuse.

## Outcome 1.4: Seniors are supported with the cost of living in the NT

### NT Concession Scheme

The NT Concession Scheme provides concessions on a range of essential goods and services to help with living expenses.

In 2023, the number of NT Concession Scheme members grew substantially from 15,047 to 16,343. This was a result of increased communication to maintain members through the annual renewal period, as well as increased engagement in remote and rural areas including targeted seasonal promotion material designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



**1,296** new members joined the NT Concession Scheme in 2023



## NT Seniors Recognition Scheme

The NT Seniors Recognition Scheme also experienced significant growth in 2023, particularly in remote communities. A generous Territory initiative, this Scheme recognises the valuable contribution seniors make to the Territory by providing a \$500 prepaid card each financial year to its more than 16,000 users.

No other jurisdiction in Australia offers such a generous contribution to support its seniors.



**13.5%** increase in the number of members in 2022-23

**17.5%** rise in Indigenous membership compared to the previous year

The notable increase in the number of members reflects the expanding reach of the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme and relevance to those living in rural and remote regions.

The card can be used almost anywhere in the Territory, resulting in more remote residents being able to access the Scheme, thereby increasing the accessibility of this benefit.

Like the NT Concession Scheme, the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme continues to enhance its inclusivity by attracting eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through targeted advertising promotion, outlining the benefits of the scheme and what the funds can be used for, particularly in addressing cost of living issues in regional and remote communities.

## NT Seniors Card

Over 30,000 senior Territorians benefit from the NT Seniors Card with 2,329 new memberships processed in 2023, reflecting the program's continued growth and popularity.

COTA NT manage the NT Seniors Card program on behalf of the NT Government and oversee membership administration and business partnerships.

The online Discount Directory boasts 475 Business Partners, with 22 new business registrations in 2023. The program received 151 enquiries via the website, indicating ongoing interest and engagement from both seniors and local businesses seeking to participate in the NT Seniors Card program.



There was a **12.4%** increase in the number of online applications for the NT Seniors Card in 2023

**Arnhem,**  
It's time to renew to help with electricity and get your new prepaid card.

Renew by the 30th of June

1800 777 740

[ntconcessions.gov.au/renew](http://ntconcessions.gov.au/renew)

**Tiwi,**  
It's time to renew to help with electricity and get your new prepaid card.

Renew by the 30th of June

1800 777 740

[ntconcessions.gov.au/renew](http://ntconcessions.gov.au/renew)

## Priority 2: Safety and security

The NT Government continues to address ongoing challenges regarding the safety and security of its senior Territorians.

The Department of the Attorney-General and Justice leads the NT Government's commitment to uphold the principles outlined in the National Plan to Respond to the *Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019-23*. As the groundwork for a new 10-year plan takes shape, collaboration with national counterparts ensures a collaborative approach to preventing older persons abuse and fostering a protective environment across the country.

Policy supporting initiatives such as the *NT Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework* underscore a proactive stance in addressing the safety and security concerns faced by seniors.

### Outcome 2.1: Senior Territorians are safe at home and in the community

#### Improving security

Victims of Crime NT (VoCNT) are a community organisation funded by the NT Government to provide practical and emotional support services for victims of crime. Seniors are identified as a vulnerable group and are prioritised for support, through Free Home Security Assessments and Security Improvement Program funding. Both initiatives are aimed at improving the safety and security of Territorians in their homes.



In 2023, **12%** of VoCNT's clients were over 65 years of age - up 2% from 2022

In 2023, VoCNT and COTA NT co-created information for their newsletter to provide seniors with strategies to keep them safe and also distributed a number of personal alarms to seniors at risk across the Territory.

### Outcome 2.2: Raise awareness of prevention strategies and respond to the abuse of older persons through specialist and mainstream services and community awareness initiatives

#### Older persons abuse

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC) continued to fund Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS) to provide information, advocacy and outreach support for senior Territorians experiencing abuse, or at risk of experiencing abuse.

DCLS implemented a new community outreach model of support from July 2023 to assist more seniors and provide greater information and advice to the broader community, raising awareness and changing attitudes. This service model builds on DCLS's past work delivering the Older Persons Strategic Advocacy Project over the previous 3 years.



DCLS received **70 calls** regarding Older Person Abuse in 2023, compared to 68 calls in the previous year.



## Outcome 2.3: Senior Territorians have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing options and are supported to age in place

### Social housing

The NT Government is committed to ensuring all senior Territorians have access to safe, secure and affordable housing. Social (or public) housing is available to all Territorians who are on a low income. A range of social housing is available including purpose-built and modified housing for people with mobility issues. Some social housing complexes are also made available for specific groups such as seniors or tenants on a disability pension.

In 2023, the number of seniors provided with social housing in the NT increase by 7% compared to the previous year.

Over 55s	2022	2023
Number of seniors living in social housing	5346	5747

### Affordable housing

For people currently working and living in the NT, the Affordable Housing Scheme provides rental options for those in key service industries. Under this scheme, the NT Government leases private properties for eligible tenants to sub-lease at 70% of market rates.

Key service industries are identified jobs in high demand or that are critical to the Territory economy and industry. The list is updated annually and some of the industries on it include:

- trades
- education and childcare
- health and emergency services
- community and social services
- transport and logistics
- tourism and hospitality.

In 2023, the number of senior clients in affordable homes increased by 31% when compared to 2022.



There are **389** affordable rental homes across the Territory



## Safe and accessible homes

Over the last 12 months, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) has significantly increased remote public housing stocks and renovated many additional remote houses. All remote homes are constructed to be accessibility ready, easily enabling installation of ramps and rails to improve the lives of older people or those living with disability.

Funding for remote houses comprises a number of programs, including (but not limited to) HomeBuild NT and the Australian Government's National Partnership for Remote Housing NT. These programs work to prioritise and tailor housing to communities' needs and ensures that new homes are built to a standard that allows for them to meet the changing needs of occupants over their lifetime, including housing for elderly residents.



**381** new and replacement homes were added to public housing stock in remote regions



## Livable Housing Design

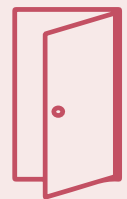
From 1 October 2023, applications for building permits for new homes must meet the National Construction Code Livable Housing Design requirements.

Livable housing design includes key structural and spatial elements that are critical to ensure future flexibility and adaptability of the home. These homes are designed to be easy to enter and easy to navigate within, making homes easier to access for our seniors, especially those with mobility issues.

### Benefits of a livable house

#### Step free entrance

There needs to be a step-free path to at least one entrance door to the home. It doesn't have to be the front door.



#### Bathrooms

More space is to be provided in bathrooms and include the provision of at least one shower in the home having a hob-less and step-free access.



The walls near one toilet and one shower are to be constructed strong enough to allow grab rails to be installed in the future, if required.

## Priority 3: Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of senior Territorians is vital to fostering a thriving and inclusive community. Access to comprehensive healthcare services is essential to maintaining vitality and quality of life.

In a survey conducted by COTA NT in 2019, it was found that senior Territorians rated their physical health and mental health as good to excellent, a reflection on the range of programs and services offered that support our seniors to be active participants in Territory life.

Initiatives like the NT Government's Seating Equipment and Technical Service, and the Territory Equipment Program demonstrate a tangible investment in enhancing the quality of life for senior Territorians. By promoting culturally secure healthcare practices and safeguarding the wellbeing of seniors, including through national engagement, the NT Government aims to create an environment where every individual can age with dignity and resilience.

### Outcome 3.1: Senior Territorians have access to high quality, culturally secure, preventative, primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare

#### Understanding diversity

TFHC continued to partner with the Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council to deliver Silver Rainbow Training to aged care workers and allied health service providers.



Silver Rainbow Training delivered training to **37** participants in Darwin and Alice Springs in June and October 2023

Many senior members of the LGBTQI+ community have experienced discrimination, violence, isolation and stigma throughout their lives. Quite often they do not or cannot disclose their identities or histories to services and can remain invisible in the aged care sector and broader community.

The Silver Rainbow course supports aged care organisations and individuals caring for senior LGBTQI+ people to better understand the unique needs of this group as they navigate the aged care sector and help provide carers with the confidence and knowledge to deliver an inclusive, best practice service.

#### Expediting Aged Care Assessments

In 2023, NT Health made notable progress in conducting Aged Care Assessments promptly for both hospital patients and community-based seniors.

To build upon this success, NT Health are working to address workforce recruitment and retention barriers, especially in the Darwin Urban region, by improving recruitment strategies and implementing strategic planning initiatives.



**75%** of hospital patients and **62%** of community-based seniors received timely Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) comprehensive psychosocial assessments.

An improvement from 2022 which were **72%** and **60%** respectively.



## National engagement

NT Health continue to engage with the Australian Government in national governance frameworks, such as the National Health Reform Agreement and the Intergovernmental Health and Aged Care Senior Officials Group, ensuring a collaborative approach to healthcare delivery and aged care reform.

This ongoing engagement allows for Territory opportunities to be identified to increase capacity and accessibility of medical facilities, focus on preventative health, and reduce the impacts of age-related illness, chronic disease and injury through screening and early intervention.

## Outcome 3.2: The health and wellbeing of senior Territorians is promoted and protected

### Transport subsidies and incentives

DIPL's Transport Subsidy Scheme and Lift Incentive Scheme have experienced a notable increase in user participation compared to 2022. This increase in usage underscores the vital importance of these schemes to seniors within our community.

Territorians with mobility issues or challenges in safely accessing public transportation will benefit significantly from these ongoing initiatives.

#### Transport Subsidy Scheme

The Transport Subsidy Scheme aims to promote greater community engagement for NT residents with disability or significant mobility restrictions that prevents them from being able to safely use public transport. The scheme provides eligible individuals with a subsidy covering half of the total fare for rides taken in taxis, minibuses, private hire cars and rideshare vehicles.



The Transport Subsidy Scheme assisted **1,033** seniors in 2023, a **24%** increase from 2022

#### Lift Incentive Scheme

The Lift Incentive Scheme provides a payment of \$20 directly to drivers of an approved wheelchair accessible vehicle for each journey completed involving the carriage of a passenger travelling in a wheelchair.



Lift Incentive Scheme assisted **241** seniors in 2023, a **38%** increase from 2022

The significant increase in users across both subsidies reflects the growing recognition of the critical role these schemes play in ensuring seniors maintain their independence and access essential services and activities.

By alleviating financial burdens associated with transport, these schemes empower seniors to remain active and engaged members of the community, promoting inclusivity and enhancing overall quality of life.

## End-of-life care

To enhance choice and self-determination, NT Health continues to support seniors to develop Advance Personal Plans and Goals of Care. NT Health works with clients to ensure their goals and plans are respected, providing certainty to family and loved ones and communicating health care decisions at a time when the ability to communicate those preferences may be compromised.

Palliative care provides care for those who are terminally ill and responds to patient needs through a physical, social, psychological and spiritual program.

The 12-bed standalone unit within the Darwin Hospital provides support to those in the Top End region, with the Alice Springs facility providing care to the Central Australian community.

NT Health employs an Aboriginal Liaison Officer who advocates for a culturally secure palliative care approach and provides support, advice and guidance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients across the Territory.

## Voluntary assisted dying

Every Territorian has a right to receive compassionate, high quality and accessible care at the end of their life. Freedom for Territorians to make choices regarding their end-of-life journey is a fundamental right. The introduction of the *Restoring Territory Rights Act 2022 (Cth)* in December 2022 means the Northern Territory can now consider legalising voluntary assisted dying.

The NT Government is developing a framework for voluntary assisted dying that will meet the needs of community members, ensuring this care is accessible, appropriate and safe.

An expert advisory panel is leading the consultation process with events to be held Territory-wide in 2024, encouraging collaboration and community discussion. The consultation process includes regional and remote areas and ensures that community questions and feedback are heard, addressed and take into account perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other cultural and religious groups.

The panel will further consider public submissions when making recommendations to government to inform the framework, culminating in a written report to the NT Government by July 2024.







Photo credit: Green River Aboriginal Corporation



## Priority 4: Social inclusion and diversity

Promoting social inclusion and diversity lies at the heart of cultivating a vibrant and cohesive society within the Northern Territory. Access to a diverse array of activities, recreation and events provide for social engagement and connection among seniors is vital.

The NT Government continues to promote and build social inclusion through initiatives such as free specialised buses for seniors' events, concessional transport fares and annual grant funding for senior focussed events. These initiatives reaffirm the NT Government's commitment to enhancing social inclusion and supporting the active participation of senior Territorians in community life, no matter where they live.

Through the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians, a vital connection to various platforms for advocacy and collaboration inform the Minister on issues affecting Territorians and ensure that senior voices are heard, and community needs are addressed effectively.

### Outcome 4.1: An inclusive society that values, respects and contributes to the positive role that seniors bring to the NT

#### Seniors Month

TFHC funded an annual grant round offering grants of up to \$2,000 towards events and activities held during Seniors Month in August.

Over 40 organisations were funded through the grants program for Seniors Month events with all events well attended across the Territory. Many organisations reported that their membership and/or participation numbers grew as a result of the Seniors Month event.

Every year a diverse range of events and activities are held during Seniors Month to encourage seniors to live healthy and active lives, inspire them to learn and experience new adventures and celebrate their contributions to family, friends and communities across generations.

Participating seniors acknowledged that opportunities to share experiences, have conversations and form connections was invaluable and highlighted the spirit of the Territory community. In many cases, these community and sometimes intergenerational events, helped seniors to prevent feelings of loneliness, depression and anxiety.

Building on this connection and supporting the group learning environment, organisations also reflected on many improvements for their next Seniors Month event to include health messages and other information sharing opportunities on issues including older persons abuse, community and personal safety initiatives and healthy living strategies when you live alone.



## Seniors Month events

More than 50 seniors enjoyed an active morning of Zumba and Yoga organised by the Vietnamese Community in Australia - NT Chapter during Seniors Month 2023. They also took the opportunity to connect over some healthy Vietnamese food and dessert following the sessions.

To celebrate and foster connection across generations, Darwin High School hosted the Seniors' Morning of Entertainment, held at the School auditorium with a delicious morning tea and performances from students.

Morning tea was catered by the Year 12 Catering Class and incorporated healthy nutritious (and delicious) food. The school band, choir and performing arts students presented a variety show to entertain and encourage their senior guests to join in the music and dancing celebrations.

Student Representative Council members ensured that each guest was supported from parking to making refreshments for attendees.

This event is now in its 15th year and is considered by many a highlight on the Seniors Month calendar, with over 200 guests attending annually.

Darwin High School are looking forward to hosting this event again in 2024 and continuing to foster a stronger relationship between seniors and youth.



Photo credit: Darwin High School



## Outcome 4.2: All senior Territorians have access to activities, recreation and events that encourage social participation

### Physical wellbeing

TFHC through its Sport Recreation and Strategic Infrastructure team, conducted an annual review of funded sport and recreation organisations delivering physical activity programs targeted at senior Territorian participation.



**21 organisations in 2023 offered targeted physical activity for seniors across the Territory**

Notable programs included:

- **Netball NT** introduced walking netball for seniors, featuring modified rules such as no running or jumping and extended time for ball passing.
- **Bowls NT** facilitated social bowls tailored for individuals aged over 60.
- **Squash NT** organised Masters Squash events, where participants in their 80s actively engaged in weekly games and social gatherings.
- **Darwin Table Tennis** provided seniors with bi-weekly Seniors Social Sessions.
- **The YMCA** offered the Senior Territory Active and Resilient initiative, offering aqua aerobics sessions at various pools throughout Darwin.

## Outcome 4.3: Physical environments are safe, accessible and appropriate for seniors – including buildings, recreation spaces, roads and footpaths

### Safe and accessible environments

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics is committed to road safety infrastructure improvements and accessibility enhancements to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all residents and visitors. Various initiatives and projects are underway and aimed at addressing key areas of concern and ensuring compliance with regulations.

The NT Government also continues to work with Local Government Association NT through its representative on the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians to promote and advocate for age-friendly strategies for outdoor spaces and buildings.



Photo credit: H. Tagell - Alice Springs Masters Games

The 2023-33 NT Shared Path Network Review Outcomes Summary was released in 2023. The review assessed the existing NT Government shared path networks across Greater Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. It identified path improvements to meet the needs of cyclists, mobility device users and pedestrians now and into the future.

It provides recommendations for:

- improvements to existing shared paths
- enhanced connectivity and network extensions between the existing network including between NT Government roads and local council roads
- long-term planning, monitoring and review.



**118** shared paths identified for future upgrades across the Territory

Improvements are prioritised into short, medium and long-term groups to help ensure expenditure is applied to the regions or 'hot spots' of most significance for Territorians. Finalisation of the review followed 2 stages of community and stakeholder consultation which was a critical input into the final list of improvements.

### Safe crossings

To enhance pedestrian safety in high-use areas through targeted road infrastructure upgrades, the NT Government has committed to install 6 Pelican and Puffin (Pedestrian User-Friendly Intelligent) crossings across Darwin.

These new crossings are ideal for seniors, incorporating pedestrian operated signals that monitor the progress of pedestrians on the crossing. This feature allows the crossing time to be extended for slow-moving pedestrians or to be reduced when a pedestrian has crossed quickly. Crossings also include a flashing yellow phase for drivers allowing them to proceed once pedestrians have cleared the crossing. Crossings are expected to be operational by mid 2024.



## Outcome 4.4: Government information is accessible and useful for seniors, acknowledging there is a digital divide for some Territorians

### Affordable training

Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education is a joint initiative of the Australian and NT Government's, providing tuition-free training places to students wanting to train, retrain or upskill.

Participants can choose from a range of courses that are areas of national priority, including:

- care (aged care, childcare, health care, disability care)
- technology and digital
- hospitality and tourism
- construction
- agriculture
- sovereign capability.

The first round of this initiative saw significant participation and engagement from older learners and prioritises women facing economic insecurity.



**146** enrolments were for Territorians aged over 55. This is almost 10% of all enrolments in the program.





## Outcome 4.5: Safe, accessible transport is available for seniors and ensures they can maintain involvement and independence in social, health and other essential lifestyle pursuits

### Accessible public transport

Bus travel continues to be free for all seniors, across all networks in the Territory.

Following a comprehensive compliance assessment aligned to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics has committed to enhancing accessibility at all bus stops, including eight upgraded bus stop shelters across the network.

Significant upgrades have been completed at the Palmerston Bus Interchange, including the construction of a new roof structure over previously uncovered traveller boarding points. Other features include seating, lighting, directional tactile for people with vision impairment and an accessible toilet facility, designed to improve overall user experience for senior commuters.

Plans are in place for further improvements at the Palmerston Bus Interchange and at the Coolalinga 'Park and Ride' facilities, demonstrating a continued commitment to accessibility across the Territory's transportation infrastructure.

### Safe public transport

DIPL has increased the number of platform security officers from 2 to 3 at Casuarina and Palmerston Bus Interchanges to assist with managing anti social behaviours. In addition, the Department continues to contract 14 security officers to travel on identified bus routes across the greater Darwin region.



6 new Transit Officers recruited in 2023



## Outcome 4.6: All Territorians including those from diverse backgrounds are engaged to enjoy active and productive senior years and provide seniors with opportunities to maintain connections with their cultural traditions

### Grandparents Day

Grandparents Day, celebrated in October each year, celebrates the love, respect and gratitude Territorians have for their grandparents and older kin. It is also about making sure grandparents and older kin get the support and recognition they so richly deserve, for what they have done and continue to do for their families, friends and the broader community.

TFHC funded COTA NT to coordinate activities and events across the Territory in support of Grandparents Day each year.

In 2023, a *Story Telling* competition asked Territorians of all ages to share their 'grandie' stories, poems, words of advice and letters to celebrate the role grandparents and older people play in our society.

### 2023 Winner – Middle/High School Category

When nana was young in the 70's she used to play around with her kids taking them to the playgrounds.

In 1974 December 25, Cyclone Tracy destroyed Darwin. Darwin was gone. Lucky nana survived.

I decided to look after nana, I give her food and drink when she's sick. Me and nana just laugh and laugh sometimes about a funny ad on tv where the car crashes and about farts.

Nana and I order breakfast hash browns at Maccas, nana has a big mac and I like quarter pounders.

Nana goes shopping at Casuarina for her grandkids, it makes her happy. Nana likes me to do scratches on her back. I hope I'm good to my nana, happy grandparents day 73 year old woman.

*By Kaleb Collins*



Kaleb receiving his prize from COTA NT CEO.  
Photo provided by COTA NT



## Intergenerational meeting

In September 2023, the Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians and the Northern Territory Youth Round Table (Youth Round Table) met in Alice Springs to discuss intergenerational issues.

A shared lunch session between the two groups facilitated by Mr Adam Drake of Balanced Choice allowed both groups to present their ideas, proposals and areas for support to the NT Government.

Balanced Choice is a Central Australian organisation, developed by Mr Drake to improve outcomes for young people, particularly those with involvement in the youth justice system. His inspiring and motivational direction developed an engaged and positive interaction between the groups, with a focus on genuine connection across common themes.

The success of both groups meeting together, and the relationships that were built during the event, have fostered a desire from both groups to meet at least annually, to keep connection strong. The benefits of the 2 groups regularly discussing issues and potential ways forward include:

- the sharing of stories and experiences
- the challenging of stereotypes
- two way mentoring
- intergenerational perspectives on issues impacting our communities
- leaning in and learning from each other.

The continued networking between the 2 groups will be used as a resource for change and to foster improvements in synergy between both groups. The Department of People, Sport and Culture will develop an Accord between the groups and plan activities to promote interaction between members of both committees.



# Looking forward

## Second Implementation Plan

The Northern Territory Seniors Policy first Implementation Plan will conclude in 2024 after 3 years of implementation. In 2024 a second Implementation Plan will be developed to guide the NT Government's actions through to 2026.

## Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians

The Minister's Advisory Council for Senior Territorians continues to provide their expertise to support the implementation of the Seniors Policy Implementation Plan 2022-24 and enhance the wellbeing of seniors in the Northern Territory.

The NT Government acknowledges the Council's dedication and invaluable insights, which shape our approach to addressing the needs of senior Territorians. Their role as an independent voice, to share the concerns and interests of the seniors' community, remains crucial to ensure that the NT Government's actions and policies are current, inclusive and responsive.

## Community updates

Further highlights will be shared by the Office of Senior Territorians, as milestones are met and new initiatives are rolled out. The next progress report will be available in 2025.

## Community feedback

The first Implementation Plan, from which this report is generated, is a living document. This report reflects the actions identified in the Plan and assists in assessing the NT Government's performance to ensure we continue to revitalise pathways to services and programs for senior Territorians and achieve the vision of a sWociety where all seniors are valued members of the community and are independent, healthy and well.

Senior Territorians are entitled to the same benefits as the rest of our community, and to have access to any specialised services available tailored to their needs.

The Office of Senior Territorians values all input from seniors with lived experience, and from the general community to identify further actions or strategies that may be implemented to achieve this vision.

## Access to report

This progress report will be published online at: [tfhc.nt.gov.au/social-inclusion-and-interpreting-services/seniors](https://tfhc.nt.gov.au/social-inclusion-and-interpreting-services/seniors)

## Contact

For further information and to provide feedback please contact the Office of Senior Territorians:

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*Photo credit: Green River Aboriginal Corporation*



