**MACA 2023 Year in Review**

## **MACA Members 2023**

Kathryn Greiner AO (Chair to June 2023)

Margret Meagher

Professor Tracey McDonald AM

Joanna Maxwell

Margaret Kay

Professor Joanne Earl

Roy Starkey

Margie O’Tarpey (A/Chair July to December 2023)

Dr Anthony (Tony) Virtue

Sally Betts

Beverly Coe

Barbara Ward

## **2023 MACA Priorities and Actions**

The MACA planning day was held on 14 February 2023 in Sydney. The meeting was facilitated by Insight Partners. The planning day refreshed range of MACA priorities to provide a focus for its work through 2023.

The MACA priorities complement and extend actions in NSW Ageing Well: Seniors Strategy 2021-2031:

1. Housing Choice and Security
2. Government services in regional areas
3. Proactive inclusion of diverse older people including CALD and ATSI people and LGBTQI+
4. Ageing and corrective services
5. Age-friendly liveable communities

In addition to progressing the 5 focus areas, MACA has identified three ongoing issues to keep a watching brief on:

* Communication and Health Promotion
* IT and the Digital Divide
* Cumulative disadvantage

## **2023 MACA Meetings and Events Summary**

In 2023 the MACA held a planning day, six meetings, and a Seniors Forum.

**MACA Meetings**

A planning day, a Seniors Forum and six meetings were held in 2023 with a range of key speakers and topics discussed, in line with the focus areas.

### First MACA Meeting - 15 February Sydney

At the planning day of 14 February, and meeting of 15 February, Council discussed areas where it could have the greatest impact for NSW Seniors, noting issues addressed in 2022 like housing that are expected to remain a focus for 2023. Council re-affirmed its commitment to working in partnership with other stakeholders to address its 2023 priorities.

Council then discussed a range of key issues with Minister Coure's advisor on seniors,

Including Housing, Suicide prevention and Loneliness. Council noted the 25 March NSW election.

### Second MACA Meeting – 3 May Sydney

The MACA met with Local Government NSW (LGNSW) representatives who presented on

the recently relaunched *Age Friendly Toolkit* funded by the Department of Communities

and Justice. The Toolkit is designed to be used by local councils as a resource to assist

them to engage with and support seniors in their communities. The MACA agreed to

support LGNSW to promote and implement the Toolkit.

The MACA also met with the NSW *Ageing on the Edge forum* representatives to discuss

seniors housing priorities in NSW in light of rising rates of homelessness, housing stress

and cost of living pressures. Discussion included the development of *Home At Last* - a

specialist housing information and support service for older people in NSW based on

existing models in Victoria and more recently Queensland. The MACA agreed to support

Ageing on the Edge to implement housing solutions for NSW seniors

The MACA also discussed ways to encourage seniors to build swimming skills and

utilisation of aquatics centres following lower levels of activity during COVID-19.

The MACA noted the change of NSW Government and look forward to engaging with the

Minister for Seniors, the Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, as the government develops its

priorities for seniors over the coming term.

### Third MACA Meeting - 22 June Sydney

The MACA met with the Hon Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Seniors, to discuss seniors priorities and current issues including:

• Ageing on the Edge 'Home at Last' Housing Information and Support Service for people 55+

• Promoting e-safety for Seniors

• Covid vaccination rates in residential aged care facilities

• Livability standards for housing

• Feedback on the Responding to Social Isolation in Seniors grants program

• Holding a Seniors Forum with key sector stakeholders

The MACA discussed the recent Sydney Community Housing conference and is curious to see how NSW Housing data on housing stock, vacancies and demand is matched with the resources of housing providers. MACA also noted the value of perspectives provided by older people with lived experience of homelessness and the challenges of negotiating the service system.

MACA noted that the Reducing Social Isolation for Seniors grant program Round 1 and 2 are currently being evaluated while Round 3 projects are currently underway. MACA looks forward to seeing more case studies about the outcomes of funded projects like the Mission Australia community garden in Byron Bay.

The MACA also noted it has recently written to the NSW Premier and all incoming government Ministers seeking to provide an 'Ageing lens' on any new government policy or program affecting seniors.

### Fourth MACA Meeting - 30 August Sydney

The MACA met with the Hon Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Seniors, to discuss seniors priorities and current issues including:

• housing issues for older people in NSW

• cost of living, regional transport and social inclusion of harder to reach seniors

The MACA discussed e-safety for Seniors particularly around online transactions. Presentations and discussions were with Service NSW and Tech Savvy Seniors. The MACA in particular noted the willingness of Service NSW to assist and support seniors with any form of online transactions either in person through their Service Centres or over the phone Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm by calling 13 77 88.

MACA discussed priorities arising from a joint Housing issues paper developed with the NSW Carers Council and NSW Disability Council.

MACA continued to work closely with Local Government NSW and will be participating in a series of ageing related webinars focused on creating liveable communities and promoting use of the Age-Friendly Toolkit that helps councils plan for an ageing population through the application of a suite of resources and tools provided in the kit.

The MACA also discussed how to better promote the successful Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) ageism awareness program: C*hanging Perspectives: testing an ageism intervention*.

**Seniors Forum – 19 October Sydney**

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA) hosted its Seniors Forum on 19 October 2023 at NSW Parliament House. Invited stakeholders represented a diverse range of government and non-government organisations working with NSW Seniors. The one day Forum focused on Ageing in Place / Community, Housing, and opportunities for collaboration.

Attendees noted the pervasive effects of ageism in the broader community and that, with the vast majority of seniors living at home, strategies were needed to maintain health and independence. There is a need for accessible, adaptable and appropriate housing choices including support for silver level access standards in the National Construction Code and better coordination of services to address gaps and build community capacity to assist seniors.

The Hon Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Seniors, and the Hon Rose Jackson MP, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, also spoke at the Forum and discussed priorities for NSW seniors. Attendees saw value in:

• Recognising and combatting ageism.

• Local government support for seniors ageing in community.

• Funding for place based community centres.

• Support for the Ageing on the Edge NSW proposal to:

o Fund a specialist older person’s housing information and support service that comprises both an early intervention and crisis response, similar to the ‘Home at Last’ model in Victoria.

o Lower the priority age for social housing eligibility from 80 years as a matter of urgency.

o Build 5,000 social and affordable homes per year for 10 years, at least 20% of which should be dedicated to older people.

• Specific initiatives for older Aboriginal people to return to country, and also for rent to buy housing schemes.

• A consistent approach to ageing qualification thresholds for services.

• The role played by the many and diverse volunteer driven organisations supporting seniors.

The Seniors Forum gave voice to stakeholder views regarding issues that impact older people in NSW. This will support work to advance the Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031 and Action Plans.

Attendees also noted the opportunity for informal networking and a better understanding of each other’s work, with the potential to collaborate on issues affecting seniors. The MACA will look to hold a follow up Seniors Forum event in 2024.

### Fifth MACA Meeting - 20 October Sydney

Following the Seniors Forum the MACA held its fifth meeting for 2023 on 20 October 2023. The MACA discussed outcomes from the Seniors Forum and confirmed it will focus on Housing issues at its next meeting including Retirement Villages.

The MACA is also continuing to hold meetings with interested NSW Ministers to discuss the cross over between seniors issues and their respective portfolios. Since its last meeting in August the MACA has met with:

• The Hon Kate Washington MP, Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Disability Inclusion regarding a joint Housing issues paper developed by the Disability Council, Carers Council and MACA.

• The Hon Jo Haylen MP, Minister for Transport, regarding community transport, the Regional Seniors Travel Card, and the Bus Industry Taskforce.

• The Hon Chris Mins MP, Premier, regarding outcomes from the 19 October Seniors Forum, consultation for the NSW Housing Strategy, impacts of social isolation on mental health, importance of primary health care, and the Commissioner for Senior Victorians model.

### Sixth MACA Meeting - 14 December Sydney

The MACA held its sixth and final meeting for 2023 on 14 December at NSW Parliament House. The meeting included a farewell for departing MACA members and announcement of re-appointed and new members who will commence from 1 January 2024.

The MACA meeting included a discussion led by Can Yasmut and Maddy Williams from the Local Community Services Association (LCSA). The LCSA is the NSW peak body for the 175 Neighbourhood and Community Centres providing place based community inclusion services including for seniors and addressing loneliness. The LCSA has developed a policy platform seeking NSW Government social infrastructure funding for its members as is provided in Victoria and Queensland.

The MACA meeting also included a session about current issues and the development of proposed reforms for Retirement Villages building on the earlier Greiner Review Report. MACA Member Dr Tony Virtue introduced the topic with a brief presentation. Expert input and further discussion points were also provided by: Katerina Pavlidis, Director Real Estate and Housing Team NSW Fair Trading, Caitlin Novak, Policy Officer, NSW Fair Trading, Ken Beilby, Principal Solicitor, Seniors Rights Services and Craig Bennett, President, Retirement Villages Residents Association

Continuing MACA’s Housing priority the meeting noted the many announcements and changes happening in the sector including:

• Homes NSW will be operational from 1 February 2024

• The NSW Homelessness Strategy targeted consultation

• State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Housing) 2023

• Commonwealth announcement of the Housing Australia Future Fund

The Hon Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Seniors, attended the MACA meeting as part of a farewell function for departing MACA members:

• Kathryn Greiner AO (Chair to June 2023)

• Professor Tracey McDonald AM

• Professor Joanne Earl

• Margret Meagher

The Minister also announced re-appointed and new members who will commence from 1 January 2024:

• Joan Hughes (new Chair)

• Margie O’Tarpey (re-appointed in new role of Deputy Chair)

• Adrienne Withall (new)

• Hakan Harman (new)

• Joanna Maxwell (re-appointed)

• Kristy Robson (new)

• Margaret Kay (re-appointed)

• Paul Sadler (new)

• Roy Starkey (re-appointed)

• Unis Goh (new)

These 10 MACA members will join the existing four whose current terms end 31 December 2024: Barbara Ward, Beverley Coe, Sally Betts, and Tony Virtue.

## **MACA Media Awards Review**

Following a review in 2022 the MACA Media Awards were rested in 2023. The planned ‘Internship competition – positive ageing story to win an internship’ did not progress and future MACA media strategies will be revisited in 2024.

## **MACA participation in government meetings and external conferences**

Government meetings

MACA members have participated in a range of internal NSW Government meetings, committees and panels:

* Joint meeting of MACA, Disability and Carers Councils
* Ageing and Disability Commission Board
* Ageing Well: Seniors Strategy 2021-31 Interdepartmental Committee
* Ageing Peaks meetings

External conferences attended

* Sydney Community Housing conference 10 – 11 May 2023
* Liveable Housing Forum (NSW Government consultation) 19 September 2023
* AHURI National Housing Conference 10 – 12 October 2023

### Correspondence and submissions

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| 6 February 2023 | To Minister Coure, Seniors | Re Land and Housing Corporation Commonwealth debt repayments of $50m being re-directed to NSW Social Housing |
| 27 March 2023 | Reply to MACA from Land and Housing Corporation | Re Commonwealth debt repayments of $50m being re-directed to NSW Social Housing |
| 23 May 2023 | To Minister Harrison, Seniors | Appropriate first responder responses to people with impaired cognitive ability (tasering in aged care home) |
| June 2023 | To all incoming NSW Ministers | Introduce the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA) |
| June 2023 | To Minister Hoenig, Local Government | Promoting use of the LGNSW Age Friendly Toolkit |
| 11 July 2023 | To Minister Harrison, Seniors | Joint housing issues paper developed by MACA, the Carers Council, and Disability Council |
| 21 July 2023 | Reply from Minister Catley, Police and Counterterrorism | Reply to MACA priorities plan for 2022-23 |
| 4 August 2023 | Reply from Office of Local Government | Reply correspondence from the NSW Office of Local Government (OLG) about Senior’s Advisory Groups and use of the Age Friendly Toolkit. |
| 4 September 2023 | To CREATE NSW | Submission to the NSW Government’s Arts, Culture and Creative Industries policy development process. |
| 29 September 2023 | From private citizen | Budget neutral suggestions for the NSW Government to increase the supply of housing with basic accessibility features (NB: MACA replied in early 2024) |
| 18 October 2023 | Reply from Minister Butler (Commonwealth – Health) | Regarding behaviour management training of aged care staff. |
| 27 October 2023 | To Minister Chanthivong, Better regulation, endorsing NCC silver level access | Outcome of 19 September Liveable Housing Forum (NSW Government consultation). Letter CC’d to Hon. Kate Washington, Minister for Disability Inclusion, Hon. Jodie Harrison, Minister for Seniors, Hon. Rose Jackson, Minister for Housing, Hon. Paul Scully, Minister for Planning, John Tansey, Executive Director, Policy & Strategy, Better Regulation Division, NSW Department of Customer Service. |
| 14 November 2023 | Reply from Minister Catley, Police and Counterterrorism | Reply to MACA correspondence re training for first responders to aged care homes |
| 30 November 2023 | Reply from Minister Chanthivong, Better Regulation and Fair Trading | Reply to MACA introductory letter outlining Retirement Village reforms |
| 4 December 2023 | To Mr Graeme Head Secretary NSW Department of Customer Service | Joint letter from MACA, Carers Council, and Disability Council re Land tax issues when Service NSW triggers ‘change of ownership’ following death of a spouse. |