



19 August 2025

Apolline Kohen
The Senate
Standing Committee on Community Affairs

Dear Ms Kohen

Re: Aged Care (Accommodation Payment Security) Levy Amendment Bill 2025 and Aged Care and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to comments made about COTA Australia in a submission to the Inquiry.

COTA Australia's role has always been, and remains, to represent the voices and interests of older Australians – not government, industry, or consultants. We have participated in government committees, consultations, and alliances over many years because those forums are where decisions affecting older people are made. Our involvement has been to advocate for better outcomes for older people, not endorsing any particular ideology or market framework.

COTA Australia uses various consultative and advisory processes to hear directly from older people including in the lead up and during the 2012 reform process. This approach continues to the present day.

It is not correct to say that COTA Australia “developed” the aged care system introduced in 2012. We advocated strongly at that time for reforms that increased choice, transparency, participant control over their care, and consumer protections. Some of our positions were accepted and some were not. We also raised concerns about areas where regulation was insufficient and have continued to call for stronger regulation, better safeguards, and an effective regulator to ensure robust enforcement that helps to prevent the neglect and abuse identified by the Royal Commission.

We have consistently argued for changes that put older people at the centre: stronger rights, faster access to care and support, clearer quality standards, independent oversight and complaints handling, and genuine co-design with consumers. That includes publicly challenging governments – of all political persuasions – when policies fall short.

We accept that being part of advisory bodies can create perceptions of alignment with government or industry. However, we see it as our responsibility to bring the lived experience and priorities of older Australians directly into those rooms.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Sparrow
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COTA Australia