

APRIL 2020

President's Report

Dear Readers,

I write this President's report during a time of great uncertainty, as we face some testing times ahead for our ageing community and together as Australians during the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) global health crisis. The repercussions of the current situation are unprecedented; yet we remain committed to doing everything we possibly can to assist each other through these testing times.

In the lead up to this edition of our newsletter, we have cancelled and postponed all of our funded group social support programs, together with our other person-facing community projects and sadly, the 2020 Italian Community Volunteer Awards. These changes are temporary and we will be back again. This said, we will keep the nominations open for our 2020 Volunteer Awards with the hope of holding an event later in 2020.

Our office has been closed and our staff will be working remotely during this period. Please be aware that they will remain contactable through the contact details listed in this newsletter

and they are committed to assisting wherever possible.

Our aim during this time is to continue supporting all members of the ageing Italo-Australian community, ensuring that we keep a physical distance and stop the spread of COVID-19. What is equally as important is to ensure we stay connected by whatever means possible whether it be online or over the phone. Now is the time for unity. Now more than ever, we all have the responsibility to check in with our family and friends to see how they're going and to support one another.

On behalf of Co.As.It. (SA), I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you all for your ongoing support. I would also like to thank those who are working and sacrificing selflessly to ensure that we keep our community out of harm's way. To everyone, please be careful and remember to care for one another.

Please be safe and we'll get through this together.

Yours Sincerely,

Tina Taddeo

President, Co.As.It. (SA)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT	1
FACT SHEET: FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS ON COVID-19	2-3
2020 VOLUNTEER AWARDS	4



Like CO.AS.IT. (SA) on Facebook! www.facebook.com/coasitsa

The peak body for Italian ageing in South Australia - providing information on ageing and culturally and linguistically diverse issues relevant to Italian Australians.

Fact sheet: for older Australians on COVID-19

Only page 1 and 2 of the original 7 page document have been included in this edition of the Co.As.It. (SA) newsletter due to limited space. If you would like to access the original document please go to www.health.gov.au or www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus.



Australian Government
Department of Health

Coronavirus
(COVID-19)

Fact sheet: for older Australians on COVID-19

20 March 2020

This Fact Sheet is for the information and advice of older Australians. It outlines the COVID-19 facts and the measures you, your family and friends can take to protect older Australians. The spread of COVID-19 and Australia's response is evolving.

We will provide updated versions of this Fact Sheet when new information comes to hand at www.health.gov.au.

Older people (60+ years of age, or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) are more susceptible to getting sick with COVID-19 (coronavirus). The risk of serious illness, and in some reported cases death, increases with age, particularly those who have chronic illnesses or who may have a weakened immune system.

What is COVID-19 (coronavirus)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases. COVID-19 is the disease caused by a new coronavirus. It was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China. It has now become a global pandemic.

How is it spread?

The virus can spread from person to person through:

- close contact with an infectious person (including in the 24 hours before they started showing symptoms)
- contact with droplets from an infected person coughing or sneezing
- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have droplets on them from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to colds and flus and can include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue

While the COVID-19 virus is of serious concern, it is important to remember, at this stage, that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or fatigue may be suffering from a cold, flu, allergies or other respiratory illness – not COVID-19.

Fact sheet: for older Australians on COVID-19

Only page 1 and 2 of the original 7 page document have been included in this edition of the Co.As.It. (SA) newsletter due to limited space. If you would like to access the original document please go to www.health.gov.au or www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus.

Do I need to be tested if I have those symptoms?

If you develop symptoms within 14 days of last contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case or returning to Australia, you should seek medical attention. Your doctor will tell you if you need to get tested.

There is a global shortage of test kits, so the medical advice to date is to limit testing and target it towards people who may have been exposed to virus.

Why is this virus so dangerous for older people?

The risk of serious illness from COVID-19 increases with age. The highest rate of fatalities is among older people, particularly those with other serious health conditions or a weakened immune system. There is currently no cure or vaccine for COVID-19, or immunity in the community.

For people living with dementia or some form of cognitive impairment, the ability to follow instruction or to alert others about potential symptoms may be a challenge. This is especially so where there is a limited capacity to communicate verbally or express pain and discomfort. In this situation, observation by someone who knows the person with dementia may assist in identifying changes in their health.

To protect older Australians and those with compromised immune systems we all need to work together to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

I am an older person, what can I do?

Even if you are feeling well it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of this virus. Good hygiene and taking care when interacting with other people, are the best defences for you and your family against COVID-19. This includes:

- covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- disposing of tissues immediately they are used, into a dedicated waste bin and washing your hands
- washing your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet, and when you have been out to shops or other places
- using alcohol-based hand sanitisers, where available
- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces you have touched
- where possible, stay 1.5 metres away from other people an example of "social distancing"
- if you are sick, avoiding contact with others.

If you start to feel unwell, phone the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 or your GP who will be able to provide you with further advice. Older people aged 70+ (or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) or people with chronic conditions are able to seek medical support from their GPs through bulk-billed telehealth (videolink) and telephone services. Examples of possible video applications include FaceTime and Skype. Medical practitioners must be satisfied that the services they use to video link with their patients meet current standards and laws regarding privacy and information security.

More information

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au or www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus. The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts.

Call the National Coronavirus Help Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

For further information please contact:

- COTA at www.cota.org.au/covid-19, or speak to your state or territory COTA representative <http://www.cota.org.au/get-involved/visit-stateor-territory-cota>
- National Seniors Australia at <https://nationalseniors.com.au/news/latest/coronavirus-national-seniors-ceo-update> or call 1300 765 050
- OPAN at www.opan.com.au, or call 1800 700 600
- Dementia Australia at www.dementia.org.au or call 1800 100 500.

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.

ITALIAN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2020 NOW OPEN!

Co.As.It. (SA) is a peak body for ageing Italo-Australians in South Australia. Our mission is to advance the wellbeing of ageing Italo-Australians with access to information, support, advocacy, services and programs that promote a fulfilling life.

In 2020 we are proud to announce the Annual Italian Community Volunteer Awards. The awards will recognise volunteers for their outstanding contribution to the Italian community in South Australia. Volunteers do not need to be from an Italian background to be nominated, as long as their work has benefitted the Italian community!

The volunteer awards aim to recognise individuals who have given their time generously to the Italian community. The winners will be presented with a certificate and prize during the Co.As.It. (SA) Italian Community Volunteer Awards with a date to be confirmed for later in 2020. Simply fill in the nomination form (with the volunteer's consent) and send it to Co.As.It. (SA) as per our details below. The closing date for nominations is 5pm Friday 1st May 2020. *Late nominations will not be accepted.*

For more information and nomination forms please contact the Co.As.It. (SA) Italian Assistance Association office on **8223 3311** or email **admin@coasitsa.org.au**

AWARD CATEGORIES

Aged Care Service Award

An outstanding volunteer who has contributed at least five years of service to any aged care service provider in South Australia.

Community Service Award

An outstanding volunteer within an Italian club, Italian association, not-for-profit organisation (not including aged care), private business or other government agency that has made an outstanding contribution to the Italian community in South Australia.

Lifetime Achievement Award

A volunteer with at least 20 years of service to South Australia's Italian community. The individual may be a volunteer in the aged care or community sector.