



Tasmanian  
Association of  
State  
Superannuants Inc.

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# SUPER-NEWS

No: 3/21

Spring Edition

September 2021

## Wednesday 13 October 2021

### AGED CARE INFORMATION SESSION

**Venue:** The Sebel Launceston (Cataract Suite)  
12-14 St John St., Launceston  
(Parking is available in William St or the Harvey Norman car park)

**Time:** 2:00 to 4:00pm (including afternoon tea)

**Guest Speaker:** Soula Houndalas of Council for the Ageing (COTA)

Don't miss our October Members' Forum if you are interested in finding out more about living well at home and how to navigate the aged care system.

We are fortunate to have Soula Houndalas from the Council for the Ageing (COTA) present to share her expertise and knowledge in these areas.

You will hear about ageing well at home, tips and practical tools to help you take control of your wellbeing. What will help you have a better day? What do you need to stay in control of your life?

Soula will also discuss the aged care system and how to find your way to services you or someone you care for may need one day. Would you like to know about options for aged care services at home? Would you like to know more about residential aged care services, how to access the system and how much it may cost?

If this sounds of interest to you, please come along with your questions and enjoy a pleasant afternoon tea with us. You are also very welcome to bring a friend along to what should prove to be an informative session. Don't forget to include them when sending your RSVP.

You will need to RSVP for our catering purposes and there will be a limit on numbers for COVID-19 purposes.

**RSVP:** By 5:00pm Wednesday 6 October 2021 to Charles Thomas 0422 414 861 or [info@tass.org.au](mailto:info@tass.org.au)

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021**

Winter is traditionally a quiet time – maybe the colder weather makes people hibernate, or at least move more slowly, and so less things get done. TASS suffers in this way. However, with the beginning of Spring, we are awakening and starting to get on with things again.

In this edition you will see that the Government plan to redirect \$200M of member's funds to COVID-19 recovery initiatives appears to be on the backburner.

TASS remains concerned about the reduction in the size of the Superannuation Commission to a single commissioner and is currently planning to seek discussions with a number of likeminded organisations, and a number of politicians of many persuasions.

Prior to the last election, TASS asked the Premier to commit to continue to provide concessions and rebates for older Tasmanians into the future. We also stated that the concessions and rebates should be indexed.

TASS member Forums recommenced in June after a long break caused by COVID-19 restrictions. The Southern Forum held on 30 June was the most well attended of any forum for many years with about 60 attendees meeting at the Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania at Lindisfarne. The two presenters Soula Houndalas and Margarita White-McColl from COTA (Council on the Ageing) gave a very interesting and detailed talk about ageing well at home, and about the aged care system and how to find options for aged care services at home. A similar Forum in Launceston is planned (see details in this edition of SuperNews).

The executive arranged a small forum in Hobart on the same day as its Executive meeting. The event with a presentation by the head of the Office of the Superannuation Commission (Adrian Christian) was planned with very short notice, but was well attended and well received by those that came. We hope to do more of these.

**John Minchin**  
**President**

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## CHANGES AT RBF

TASS has recently been told about some imminent staffing changes in the Office of the Superannuation Commission (OSC).

Director, OSC, Adrian Christian has told TASS he will be finishing up with the OSC on 10 September. He has been redirected to work in a new entity the Premier has created (and announced in the Budget) to progress a range of electricity reform and respond to climate change. The new unit is to be called 'Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania'. Some of the issues this may cover include Battery of the Nation, Project Marinus, the expanding role of renewables, and opportunities for the State emerging from Climate Change and adaptation.

The new entity is a permanent creation, so it is not anticipated that Adrian will be returning to the OSC. At this stage TASS is unaware of any acting arrangements and the like that will result from Adrian's departure.

Adrian told TASS that from his perspective, his contacts with TASS have enabled valuable interactions with TASS and its members, giving him an insight into how RBF is interacting with its (roughly) 10,000 life pension members. He thanked the TASS Executive for the opportunity to do so.

The Executive will inform members as soon as new staffing details are available.

TASS wishes Adrian well in his new role, and thanks him for the time he has set aside to interact with our members at forums and meetings, and his constructive responses to TASS requests and concerns over the past few years.



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**TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE SUPERANNUANTS**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 AUGUST 2021**

|   |                   |                    |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>MYSTATE BALANCE AS AT 1/1/21</b>       |                   | <b>\$11,563.07</b> |
| <b>INCOME</b>                             |                   |                    |
| Member Subscriptions                      | \$5,190.00        |                    |
| Donations                                 | 1,050.00          |                    |
| Interest                                  | 463.87            |                    |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                       | <b>\$6,703.87</b> |                    |
| <b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>                   |                   |                    |
| Affiliations                              | \$ 75.00          |                    |
| Audit & Annual Return                     | 264.80            |                    |
| Functions                                 | 734.50            |                    |
| Miscellaneous                             | 73.94             |                    |
| Office                                    | 401.02            |                    |
| Phone                                     | 469.00            |                    |
| Postage                                   | 1,135.26          |                    |
| Super-News                                | 2,630.46          |                    |
| Tax                                       | 271.43            |                    |
| Zoom                                      | 184.72            |                    |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>                  | <b>\$6,240.13</b> |                    |
| <b>SURPLUS FOR PERIOD</b>                 |                   | <b>\$ 463.74</b>   |
| <b>MYSTATE BALANCE AS AT 31/8/21</b>      |                   | <b>\$12,026.81</b> |
| <b>MYSTATE TERM DEPOSIT AS AT 31/8/21</b> |                   | <b>\$63,000.00</b> |
| <b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>                        |                   | <b>\$75,026.81</b> |

**COMMITTEE REPORT:**

This Financial Statement presents fairly the financial position of TASS and the results of its operations for the period ended 31 August 2021.

Michael Walker CPA  
Treasurer

John Minchin  
President

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## PROPOSED USE OF \$200M OF RBF MEMBERS' FUNDS FOR COVID RECOVERY - UPDATE

You will recall that in our June 2021 SuperNews, we reported that TASS had written to the Premier in early April regarding our concerns regarding the proposed use of \$200M of RBF members' funds for COVID recovery.

The concerns we mentioned were:

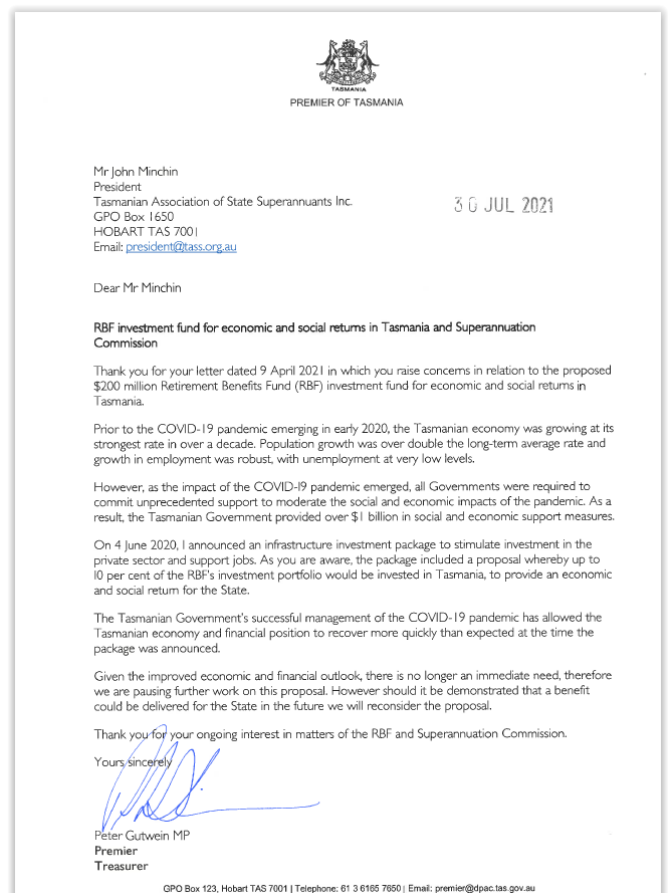
- Any shortfall in earnings to the RBF Scheme will need to be made up by Government.  
  
Can you guarantee that the Government will pay the fund a return each year commensurate with the average return achieved by the fund from its investments?
- The redirection of RBF members' funds will increase the unfunded liability for pensions and potentially increase the proportion of the Government's contribution to their pensions. Can you guarantee that if there are unintended taxation implications for members the Government will cover any payments arising from these?
- We are also concerned that reducing the amount of RBF funds invested via its contract with Russell Investments may increase investment costs to the RBF, which may be detrimental to its members. Can you guarantee that RBF will be adequately compensated for any additional expenses?

We have now received a response from the Premier. The following is the text of his letter.

*Thank you for your letter dated 9 April 2021 in which you raise concerns in relation to the proposed \$200 million Retirement Benefits Fund (RBF) investment fund for economic and social returns in Tasmania.*

*Prior to the COVID - 19 pandemic emerging in early 2020, the Tasmanian economy was growing at its strongest rate in over a decade. Population growth was over double the long-term average rate and growth in employment was robust, with unemployment at very low levels. However, as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, all Governments were required to commit unprecedented support to moderate the social and economic impacts of the pandemic. As a result, the Tasmanian Government provided over \$1 billion in social and economic support measures.*

*On 4 June 2020, I announced an infrastructure investment package to stimulate investment in the private sector and support jobs. As you are aware, the package included a proposal whereby up to 10 per cent of the RBF's investment portfolio would be invested in Tasmania, to provide an economic and social return for the State.*



*The Tasmanian Government's successful management of the COVID- 19 pandemic has allowed the Tasmanian economy and financial position to recover more quickly than expected at the time the package was announced.*

*Given the improved economic and financial outlook, there is no longer an immediate need, therefore we are pausing further work on this proposal. However should it be demonstrated that a benefit could be delivered for the State in the future we will reconsider the proposal.*

*Thank you, for your ongoing interest in matters of the RBF and Superannuation Commission.*

The letter did not address the concerns that we had outlined. However, TASS is satisfied with the decision to do no further work on this proposal. Should that decision change in the future, we will again seek to raise any concerns we have and seek to have them addressed.

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## **HAPPENINGS ON THE NATIONAL SCENE FOR DEFINED BENEFITS PENSIONERS**

Nationally defined benefit pensioners, such as members of the RBF Defined Benefit Scheme are represented by the Australian Council of Public Sector Retiree Organisations (ACPSRO). TASS is a member of this Council and in 2019 I was elected as Vice President. ACPSRO was formed in 1997 as a peak body to give a united, and therefore greater, voice to the retirement issues relevant to Commonwealth, State and Territory public servants and Defence retirees.

The current President of ACPSRO, John Coleman, announced during August that he was stepping down from his role. As Vice President I have taken on the role of acting President until the next ACPSRO Annual General Meeting. I have taken on this acting role at a time when ACPSRO is giving strong consideration to its future lobbying activities on behalf of its members. To date ACPSRO has had a very strong focus on the indexation of defined benefit pensions and the adequacy of those indexation arrangements.

As we all know our pensions are indexed by the CPI twice each year. We also know that wages are generally rising faster than the CPI and that the CPI does not necessary reflect changes in the cost of the basket of goods purchased by retirees. As a result, over time the value of our defined benefit pensions declines relative to the expenses we face and the general level of incomes in the community. In recognition of this even the Age Pension is indexed by the greater of the movement in the CPI or the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI). They are then 'benchmarked' against a percentage of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE) to ensure that those on the age pension are not falling behind the underlying level of wages in the community.

Governments have a dead ear when it comes to changing the indexation of our pensions and in recognition of this ACPSRO is reviewing how to improve its lobbying efforts on our behalf and is looking to expand the issues to be raised with Governments. In this regard ACPSRO is looking to have the issue of indexation considered in the broader context of how the various payments provided by the Governments across Australia are adjusted over time. Notably rent assistance is lagging behind the cost of rent, and concessions for items such as energy, rates and transportation, large expenses for retirees also lag the rate at which these expenses increase.

ACPSRO is also reviewing the taxation arrangements applying to retirees. At present retirees face a complex set of taxation provisions depending upon how their retirement income is sourced. These complex arrangements impact on whether or not retirees pay income tax and the level of income tax paid, the eligibility retirees have to the age pension and a Commonwealth Health Care Card, the concessions they may receive from both State and Commonwealth Governments, the way asset and income tests are applied, the way other investments are taxed, the extent to which a retiree may earn additional income and the way defined benefit pensions are funded by Governments amongst other things.

We are also seeing more communication occurring between the various State based public sector retiree organisations. TASS is planning a Zoom conference call with the South Australia based superannuants group to discuss common issues and we are also opening communications with the West Australia organization which lobbies on behalf of West Australia's defined benefit retirees.

There is also an advisory group being formed which is being led by retirees from South Australia. The preliminary agenda for this group covers the items identified above and the work of this group will feed into the work of the State organisations such as TASS and ACPSRO as well.

Retirees in receipt of a defined benefit pension are characterized as being much better off in retirement than other Australians. However, for many this characterization is a mirage with many defined benefit pensions facing declining real incomes over their retirement. The current reality is that Australia's retirement income system provides significant benefits for those who have earned a good income and have had continuous employment over their working life.

For those who have had fractured employment and those who have received average levels of income, and that includes those public sector retirees who have spent their working life as teachers, nurses, police officers and departmental staff performing the necessary day to day tasks of government, the retirement income system is not performing so well.

The road ahead will be challenging. Getting a good hearing from Governments given their preconceptions in relation to our pensions will require careful analysis and good communications. This is especially so given we are a shrinking proportion of the retiree population who are ageing fast.

As ACPSRO, TASS and other defined benefit retiree organisations proceed down this path we would encourage you to identify issues you think we should consider and should be raising with Governments to ensure the well-being of defined benefit retirees. To this end please do not hesitate to bring issues to the attention of the TASS executive.

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## **SURVIVING SPOUSE – CHANGES TO THE REGULATIONS**

A timely reminder for TASS members.

If the RBF is satisfied with its initial inquiries on the passing of the Superannuant that there is a surviving spouse, they are reluctant to immediately cease the pension while the proper inquiries are made to clearly confirm the surviving spouse's details. In such cases under the current arrangement the RBF will continue to pay a reduced pension to the Superannuant's account but only if ***“the account is in the joint names of the superannuant and their spouse with EITHER able to sign”*** (NOT both required to sign).

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## RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP – CHANGE

1. When renewing your future membership with TASS you will only need to complete the renewal form in full **if there have been changes to any of the following:**
  - Death of Superannuant / Spouse or Partner
  - Postal address
  - Email address
  - Mobile / Phone (addition, change, deletion)
2. If you now require Super-News electronically, please just email saying “YES” to [info@tass.org.au](mailto:info@tass.org.au).
3. It is very important when paying by bank transfer that you always provide your **surname and given name(s) or initial(s) (e.g. Shirley S. Smith).**
4. **Should you make payment by “Money Order” or “Cash” (preferably not) you must complete the Membership Renewal form.**
5. There are a number of members whose email address is not recorded on the TASS database and this creates difficulty when sending out reminders for forums, luncheons or general information flyers. It would be appreciated if you have not previously provided TASS with your email address that you do so when renewing your membership.
6. The renewal form for membership will be included in our November edition of Super-News.

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## REPORT ON THE TASS AGED CARE SOUTHERN FORUM - JUNE 2021



The TASS Aged Care Forum held in June at the Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania (MYCT) attracted the best attendance ever (58 attendees) for a TASS forum suggesting this is a subject our members are keen to learn more about. Aged care is certainly a subject we will all have to address as we grow older and it is a complex area particularly when it comes to fees and charges for Home Care Packages or for a placement in an aged care home.

Numbers for the Forum were limited by Covid requirements but over sixty members attended and enjoyed a very informative Aged Care Navigators presentation by two enthusiastic expert presenters from COTA (The Council of the Ageing), Soula Houndalas and Margarita White-McColl.



For the benefit of those who could not attend here is a short summary.

Soula conducted the first session. After a warmly received Welcome to Country, Soula's presentation focused on Living Well at Home and took us through her top tips for wellness concentrating on body, mind and social connection.

#### *Mind*

- Learn something new or take up an old hobby
- Talk to someone if you feel down, stressed, sad, anxious, angry or nervous
- Smiling Mind-Easy listening exercises for a healthy mind

#### *Body*

- Eat well and exercise
- Talk to your GP regularly
- Review your medications with your GP or pharmacist regularly
- Stay COVID safe, assess your risk, keep your distance, hand hygiene, cover your cough

#### *Social connection*

- Call a friend or family member
- Any old hobbies you'd like to take up again/maybe a new activity?

#### *Meet new people*

- Connect with local community events and activities (loneliness can be as dangerous as smoking!)

Soula also gave us many top tips including how to stay strong at home and the importance to stay positive and set wellness goals.

COTA has an excellent small booklet on strength and balance training for older Tasmanians which is available from their offices.

After a short break for afternoon tea including sandwiches and the delightful MYCT scones and cream (jointly funded by COTA), Margarita White-McColl took us through the support available to stay in your home with the assistance of a Home Care Package. Margarita outlined the range of Home Care Packages available with costs and charges and how to apply for an aged care assessment.

The Commonwealth Government subsidises a range of home support services for people who need help with daily tasks to live well and independently at home.

There are four levels of Home Care Packages designed to give you the care you need:

- Level 1 - basic care needs
- Level 2 - low-level care
- Level 3 – intermediate care
- Level 4 - high care needs

Home Care Packages are income tested. The amount you pay will vary depending on your income.

Eligibility is determined by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).

Margarita provided an outline of the costs and charges for Home Care Packages but they are too lengthy to cover here. Unfortunately, there is a waiting list for Packages.

If you would like to know how much you might have to pay towards your Home Care Package or age care in a home, the fee estimator on the [www.myagedcare](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) website can give you an estimate to help you plan. The information available on the [www.myagedcare](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) websites is very extensive and helpful.

Useful websites are:

[www.agedcare.gov.au/how-much-will-i-pay](http://www.agedcare.gov.au/how-much-will-i-pay)

[www.agedcare101.com.au](http://www.agedcare101.com.au)

[www.agedcare.gov.au/aged-care-homes](http://www.agedcare.gov.au/aged-care-homes)

If you feel you need some assistance to complete the fee estimator COTA have experienced people who can assist you. COTA can also assist you with making an application. You can give them a call in Hobart on 62313265, in Launceston on 0439417634 or the North West and West on 0477221 557.

As a general guide the fees and charges for a person to be admitted to residential aged care home accommodation are also largely determined by an assessment of the person's income and assets carried out by the Government. The Means Tested Amount then determines what fee, contributions or payments the person will have to pay. The first step is to contact My Aged Care on 1800 700 600 to arrange an ACAT assessment. Once again COTA can provide assistance if required.

Lifestyle Retirement Villages are another option that may be considered by some members. The villages are designed for retirees who are able to live independently but without the burden of home and garden maintenance. The cost and pros and cons of entering a retirement village is another extensive topic that could be subject of a future TASS Forum. Please let us know if this would be of interest to you. Just send us an email to [info@tass.org.au](mailto:info@tass.org.au).

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You may be interested to attend the Independent Living Expo which is to be held in South Launceston on Thursday 14 October. There will be over 20 different providers attending the event, all of them with interactive displays so people can learn more about services and technology to help them live independently.

Details are noted below, please register as indicated on the poster or <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/independent-living-expo-tickets-166116483875>



THE INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRE TASMANIA PRESENTS

**the independent living expo**

- Assistive technology
- Smart home technology
- Building design for independent living
- Community support services
- Community healthcare services
- Interactive displays, demonstrations and forums

**OCTOBER 14TH**  
10AM to 3PM

**DOOR OF HOPE**  
50 GLEN DHU ST  
SOUTH LAUNCESTON

**FREE ENTRY**

A photograph of an elderly couple smiling and embracing each other.

### About this event

The Independent Living Centre Tasmania presents the first annual Independent Living Expo.

Lifestyle and healthcare are rapidly changing as we age. More and more people are living longer at home in the community. With increasing developments in technology, home design and community healthcare, living at home in your community of choice is becoming easier.

The Independent Living Expo is the one-stop-shop showcasing the latest developments in:

- Assistive technology
- Smart home technology
- Building design for independent living
- Community support services
- Community healthcare services
- Interactive displays, demonstrations and forums

If you or someone you know may be wondering about independent living options, then this is the event for you!

Sponsored by the Independent Living Centre Tasmania, a charitable not-for-profit organisation.

[www.ilct.com.au](http://www.ilct.com.au)

## USEFUL CONTACTS FOR TASS MEMBERS

(Revised March 2021)

### Retirement Benefits Fund (RBF)

All enquiries 1800-622-631  
Website [www.rbf.com.au](http://www.rbf.com.au)

### Australian Taxation Office (ATO):

Personal taxation information 13 28 61  
Website [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

### Centrelink:

(Access Centrelink and Medicare services)

Older Australians and Financial Information Services 132 300  
Disability, Sickness and Carers 132 717  
Website [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

## TASS EXECUTIVE – ADMINISTRATION

### TASS:

**Postal Address:** GPO BOX 1650, Hobart, TAS 7001  
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**Ph:** 0448 731 845  
**Website:** [www.tass.org.au](http://www.tass.org.au)  
**Facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/TASSTasmania](http://www.facebook.com/TASSTasmania)

|  |                |                            |
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| <b>Secretary &amp; Public Officer:</b>     | John Chalmers  | Ph: 6249-1240/0409 491 245 |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>                          | Mike Walker    | Ph: 0428 376 741           |
| <b>Membership Officer:</b>                 | Charles Thomas | Ph: 0422 414 861           |
| <b>Super-News Editor:</b>                  | Jeneane Thomas | Ph: 0408 485 902           |
| <b>Northern Tasmania Representative:</b>   | Vacant         |                            |
| <b>North-West Tasmania Representative:</b> | Donald Wells   | Ph: 6432-3641              |

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR EMAIL

Should you change your address and/or email details please advise the **Membership Officer, Charles Thomas**, so that he can update our records. Tel: 0422 414 861

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