To Affinity and beyond

32nd AGM and Annual Reports

Dementia Awareness Month 2015 round-up

SUMMER 2015 ISSUE#119

TALKING ABOUT ALZHEIMER’S ACROSS AUSTRALIA
Greetings and welcome to the summer edition of Memory Matters. It has been an incredibly busy few months for us here at Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, and we have lots of exciting news to share.

We are currently celebrating the success of Dementia Awareness Month, held during September, which focused on dementia-friendly communities.

A dementia-friendly community is one in which people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.

It was my absolute pleasure to attend a number of the events hosted across the state during September, and I was inspired to see so many Victorians turning out to show their support. The public enthusiasm and commitment when it comes to learning how Australia can become more dementia-friendly was truly inspiring.

You can read more about Dementia Awareness Month 2015 on pages four, five and six of this edition.

As we approach the end of the year, I have been reflecting on everything Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has achieved during 2015. Many of these achievements are the result of partnerships with external organisations and individuals, both domestically and internationally.

Partnerships can be incredibly powerful and, as our many successes this year prove, when we collaborate with others we can accomplish great things, and deliver improved outcomes for people impacted by dementia.

I wish to acknowledge everybody who partnered with us during the past twelve months. You have enabled us to make a profound and lasting difference in the lives of people living with dementia, their families and carers.

The Power of Partnerships formed the theme of this year’s Annual Report, in which you can read specific details on some of the great recent alliances Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has formed. More information can be found on page three of this edition.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge several members of our team celebrating milestone anniversaries. Meg Orton, Counsellor has celebrated five years with us, while Jennifer Foley, Administration Officer - Data Entry and Gay Cross, Resources Design Officer both celebrate 10 years. Meanwhile, Karen Price, Dementia Consultant has been with us for an incredible 15 years.

Congratulations to you all, and thank you for your ongoing dedication and the vital contribution you make to those impacted by dementia.

As this is the final edition of Memory Matters for the year, I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the successes of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic over the past twelve months. I hope you enjoy the festive season, and I wish you all a happy and successful 2016.

Maree McCabe
CEO

Cover Affinity, the interactive light installation in the Arts Centre Forecourt St Kilda Rd, Melbourne during Dementia Awareness Month. You can read more at bit.ly/vicaffinity

Photo: Arsineh Houspian
32nd AGM hosted, Annual Report released

On 28 October, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic presented its 32nd Annual General Meeting to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements in the last financial year at Hawthorn Arts Centre. Neil Samuel, Chair Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted the meeting.

This event included the Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Research Foundation – Victoria Annual General Meeting hosted by Chair and Chief Medical Advisor Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, Assoc Prof Michael Woodward.

Victorian consumer Ray Morgan, who is living with younger onset dementia, officially welcomed members and guests who were then treated to a presentation by National Ambassador Alzheimer’s Australia, Sue Pieters-Hawke on the topic Caring For A Person with Dementia: You Are Not Alone, during which she recounted some of her experiences caring for her mother, the late Hazel Hawke.

The theme, encompassing both AGMs and the release of the Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Annual Report 2014-2015 and the Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Research Foundation – Victoria 2014-2015 , The Power of Partnerships, reflected specifically on how, by collaborating with others, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic delivers bigger and better outcomes for people impacted by dementia.

Many consumers and stakeholders shared their story of partnership with our organisation for the Annual Reports. The Reports are a wonderful demonstration of our achievements as well as an important record of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s own 32 year story.

You can read the Annual Reports or download your copies now by visiting bit.ly/vicAnnualReports. For those wishing to receive a hard copy please call 03 9815 7800.

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Above Sue Pieters-Hawke, National Ambassador Alzheimer’s Australia presents ‘Caring for a person living with dementia: You are not alone’ at the Annual General Meeting, Hawthorn Arts Centre, 28 October 2015
Photo: Darren James
Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has a vision to develop dementia-friendly communities and organisations across Victoria.

A dementia-friendly community is one in which people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.

For the month of September, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted Dementia Awareness Month 2015, and called upon all Victorians to help make their communities more dementia-friendly.

The month comprised more than 29 events held in numerous locations across the state, attended by thousands of people. The highlight event was the Public Lecture at Federation Square, Melbourne. In addition, a widespread media conversation was generated, advertising appeared in print and on television, 12 super-banners were placed on St Kilda Road to support the massive dementia-themed, interactive installation, Affinity, that dominated the Arts Centre Forecourt as a feature for Dementia Awareness Month.

To coincide with Dementia Awareness Month Alzheimer’s Australia Vic this year partnered with COTA Victoria to present Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age conference at the Pullman on the Park, Melbourne attended by more than 200 delegates.

Public Lecture

The headline Dementia Awareness Month event was the Public Lecture on 3 September at Zinc in Federation Square. Keynote speaker was the UK’s Gill Ayling, Head of Global Action Against Dementia, who reflected on global examples of dementia-friendly principals being employed
within communities, and how this might look in Australia. More than 150 people attended the event, which also featured a speech by Nathan Lovett-Murray, community liaison person for the Heywood, Hamilton and Portland communities and the Gunditjmara people.

Mr Lovett-Murray spoke about Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s recent partnership with the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Indigenous Hip Hop Projects to develop an educational music dance video for young people about dementia. You can watch the video at bit.ly/vichiphop

Shepparton couple Elva and Brian Ridden, who are both living with dementia, also spoke to attendees about their experiences and strategies for living well following a diagnosis.

To Affinity and beyond …

A feature art installation dominated Dementia Awareness Month this year, Affinity - a unique large-scale light and sound installation that depicts the dazzling complexity and connectivity of the human brain, where our precious memories are stored.

This initiative was proudly supported by Arts Centre Melbourne, and the installation was on display at the Arts Centre Forecourt on St Kilda Road between 18 and 27 September. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff and volunteers staffed the site. Thousands of people interacted with it each night while St Kilda Road car and tram passengers were treated to a nightly light spectacle which prompted many social media conversations. You can see more photos on our facebook page and read more at bit.ly/vicaffinity

Left Prof Graeme Samuel AC, National President Alzheimer’s Australia, Nathan Lovett-Murray and John Price, Service Access Liaison Officer Aboriginal, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic

Below Affinity, the interactive light installation in the Arts Centre Forecourt St Kilda Rd, Melbourne during Dementia Awareness Month
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) event

More than 100 guests from Arabic, Sinhala, Tamil, Mandarin, Farsi, Cypriot and Maltese communities attended Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s Forum for CALD Communities at Plenty Ranges Art and Convention Centre, South Morang. Family carer and Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee member, Pushpa Jayakody shared her story with attendees, who then participated in activities and workshops and discussed strategies their own communities might be able to adopt to become more dementia-friendly.

School Banners

Victorian primary schools once more put up their hands to create colourful Dementia Awareness Month banners, which were displayed during September outside each of the schools.

Yarraville West Primary School, Beechworth Primary School, Mildura Primary School, Wodonga Primary School and St Louis de Montfort’s Primary School, all took part, with creative, colourful and eye-catching results.

Below Yarraville West Primary School proudly supporting Dementia Awareness Month
Photo: Darren James

Above Pushpa Jayakody, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee member (centre), and guests at the Dementia Awareness Month Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities event in South Morang
Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age

During Dementia Awareness Month 2015, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic was delighted to partner with COTA Victoria in hosting the inaugural Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age conference.

The event, which took place on 8 and 9 September at the Pullman on the Park in Melbourne, aimed to challenge the assumptions, taboos and stereotypes that exist about the sexuality of older people.

More than 200 delegates attended the event from Australia, New Zealand, USA, UK, Ireland and Zimbabwe. Health and aged care professionals came together to understand more about their roles in supporting the sexuality and intimacy wishes and needs of those they support in residential and community care. Believed to be the first event of its kind, Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age had an extensive program which gave valuable insights and information on how best to support residents and clients in their care.

Alzheimer’s Australia National Ambassador, high profile journalist and businesswoman Ita Buttrose AO OBE was one of the many speakers.

Ms Buttrose said, “Many older people encounter barriers in continuing to have fulfilling sex lives. This shouldn’t be happening and it’s time we dealt with the myth that older people don’t have – and enjoy – sex. Sexual intimacy is good for all of us.

“The risk of developing dementia increases with age, so the topic of sex and people with dementia and the unique challenges that presents will be an important element of the conference agenda,” Ms Buttrose said.

At the conclusion of the first day, Ms. Buttrose gave a presentation entitled Sex and the Older Woman – and Man. At a special cocktail function for delegates, held at the end of the first day, Fiona Patten MP and leader of the Australian Sex Party congratulated hosts and delegates on getting the conversation started.

Other highlights on the program included:

- Never Too Old – a play by Alan Hopgood, which opened the proceedings. The performance focused on two older men in a nursing home, surprised by one of their nurses with an interesting and diverting excursion

- USA senior ‘sexpert’ Joan Price spoke about ageless sexuality

- Author Kaz Cooke gave a presentation entitled Body Image & Sex

- Dr Catherine Barrett from La Trobe University presented Sexual Wellbeing & Safety, Strategies for Service Providers

- Well known sex therapist Dr Rosie King delivered her presentation Grow Old With Me: The Best Is Yet To Be

- Saul Isbister - President of Touching Base Inc. NSW, spoke about the information, resources and referral options available to assist when supporting clients to access sex workers.

PREVALENCE DATA

Ever wondered how prevalent dementia is in Victoria?

Check out the data at bit.ly/vicstats2015
Radio National Big Ideas panel discussion on dementia research

As part of Mental Health Week, ABC Radio National’s Big Ideas broadcasted a panel discussion at The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health. Panel members presented their views on some of the promising new research into dementia diagnosis.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic consumer Jenny Lloyd appeared on the panel, and was joined by Professor Graeme Samuel AC, National President Alzheimer’s Australia; Dr Shaun Frost, Research Fellow, Preventative Health Flagship CSIRO; Dr Rachel Buckley, Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Research Foundation Fellow, University of Melbourne; Professor Ashley Bush, Deputy Director at The Florey and Chief Scientific Officer at the CRC for Mental Health.

If you missed it, you can still listen to the full program online at bit.ly/vicbigideas

Tony Walsh participates in Hackathon on ageing population

Earlier this year, consumer Tony Walsh was invited to represent Alzheimer’s Australia Vic at a Hackathon to discuss matters related to ageing, including dementia.

A Hackathon brings together computer programmers and developers to compete in teams in collaborating intensively on new and innovative software projects.

This particular Hackathon, hosted by HealthXL, brought together a mix of IT experts from all over the world. Participants each had an interest in the global ageing population, and how technology might be able to assist in overcoming some of the associated issues.

Mr Walsh said while participants recognised the use of technology amongst older people is currently quite low, it was suggested the ageing baby boomer generation could provide an opportunity to change this.

“Teams were invited to look specifically at issues surrounding dementia, malnutrition and isolation. I was given the opportunity to talk about dementia and describe the experiences of myself and my late partner Paul, who passed away after living with dementia.”

“Participants appeared to quickly understand the issues involved, both from the patient and carer perspective.”

“Each team went on to develop proposed technological aids, and the results were fantastic.”

“One application proposed measuring the ability of older people to drive, using a device mounted on the vehicle dashboard. The device would measure rates of acceleration and deceleration, combined with any near misses over time. It was suggested this could result in a more accurate assessment than the current testing process,” Mr Walsh said.

2015 Victorian Public Health Care Awards

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic is delighted to have been shortlisted for the 2015 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards, which recognise Victoria’s most outstanding and innovative healthcare programs.

Twenty-nine health organisations, delivering 32 programs, have been selected as finalists by expert judging panels, in recognition of their leadership and excellence in the provision of publicly-funded healthcare for the Victorian community.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s Virtual Dementia Experience™ has been selected as a finalist in the category Excellence in person, family and community-centred care.

By the time this edition reaches you, the winners will have been notified, so keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter pages for further updates.

National Elder Abuse Conference coming to Melbourne

The 4th National Elder Abuse Conference is set to be hosted by Seniors Rights Victoria from 23 - 25 February 2016 at the Pullman Melbourne on the Park.

The conference will focus on the rights of older people to live life free from ageism and elder abuse.

More information can be found by visiting elderabuseconference.org.au
Reading in the Moment
Author Anne Vize recently visited Nathalia Library to share her thoughts on the benefits of reading aloud to people living with dementia.

Ms Vize has written books specifically designed for this purpose, and says just because a person has dementia does not mean they lose the ability to enjoy reading, or being read to.

According to Ms Vize, shared reading can leave an emotional memory, while strengthening companionship and enabling social engagement.

“Choosing the written material carefully is key, using uncomplicated language, forward moving plots and short sentences are most effective,” Ms Vize said.

The book Reading in the Moment by Anna Vize is available through the Alzheimer’s Australia Vic library.

Nanny’s Lights
For Sarah Holmes, her mother Jenny’s diagnosis of younger onset dementia at the age of just 54 and her eventual transition into aged care five years later was heartbreaking.

Over the years, Sarah and her family have relied on the support services of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic. Referring to the organisation, Sarah says, “If your sons and daughters are faced with the hurdles that we have encountered, I can assure you that there will always be someone there for them to reach out to, to guide them, to let them know that there is help and that they are not alone.”

Inspired by the need to find a simple, yet accurate way to explain to her two young boys what was happening to their grandmother, Sarah has written a short illustrated story entitled Nanny’s Lights.

Sarah says coping can become even more difficult at Christmas. In the lead up to the festive period, even more people will turn to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic for support.

By making a donation, you will be helping the organisation ensure it can continue to provide crucial support for people like Sarah and her family.

To donate to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic visit bit.ly/vicgive
If you are interested in receiving a copy of Nanny’s Lights, email kristin.marshall@alzheimersaustralia.org.au

Geelong Grammar fundraising event
Trent Allan, a year four Bostock House, Geelong Grammar student approached Alzheimer’s Australia Vic with his mother and asked if we would like to support him and his team – The Brain Train – in raising funds at their MAD (Make a Difference) Market.

Trent’s grandfather had recently died from dementia and he wanted to do something to honour his memory.

Each year, the year four students form teams and develop, promote and run a fundraising event for organisations they have had contact with at some stage in the school year.

The event is designed to give students the opportunity to practice skills in leadership, business and community relations and community service.

On market day The Brain Train wore Alzheimer’s Australia Vic t-shirts, sold merchandise and had set up activities to promote brain health – games on a lap top, an exercise bike, a ping-pong-ball-in-the-jar throwing competition were just a few. They had also set up a mini bed and fruit and vegetable bowl to represent the importance of sleep and good diet in dementia risk reduction.

The team raised $200 on the day. Congratulations and thank you to Trent and his team.
In memory of Heather Champan

During her three years with Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, Heather Chapman not only made an outstanding contribution to the lives of people impacted by dementia, but equally to the friends and colleagues who had the pleasure of working alongside her.

The diversity of Heather’s skills was reflected in the many different roles she held during her time with the organisation, across multiple departments and areas of the business. Heather approached every role and challenge with passion, enthusiasm and commitment. Her ‘can do’ attitude shone through and her dynamic approach to work and life became unavoidably contagious.

During a six-month period where Alzheimer’s Australia Vic was without a coordinator of volunteers, and during a time of significant change for the volunteer program, Heather willingly took on the role. She developed the program, created an invaluable and enduring rapport with the volunteers and ensured the new incumbent was able to take over a thriving and successful program.

Always ready to jump in and help wherever she could, Heather’s commitment to the organisation extended well beyond her official roles. She was a regular face at Alzheimer’s Australia Vic events across Victoria, and continually put up her hand to volunteer and provide support wherever she could.

Over and above all of this, Heather put her background as a personal trainer to good use, by running regular exercise sessions for her colleagues.

“Staff and volunteers across the whole of the organisation felt the warmth and care Heather demonstrated to everybody she encountered. From her personal training sessions, to her terrific sense of humour, her commitment to clients, Heather’s time with Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has left an enduring impact on all of us,” said Maree McCabe, CEO Alzheimer’s Australia Vic.

“We are all so grateful for everything Heather did for us, and for the difference she made to people living with dementia, their families and carers. I’m sure I speak for the whole organisation when I say it was an honour and a pleasure to work alongside her,” Ms McCabe said.

Sadly, Heather Chapman passed away at the end of August. She will be deeply missed.

Vale Heather Chapman.

Living with Lewy body disease

The Living with Lewy body disease program has been tailored to address the unique symptoms associated with this particular form of dementia, and provides information, support and strategies to help manage the condition.

Attendees will learn about diagnosis, possible causes and treatment options, as well as future planning and the support services available. The program also provides the opportunity for people living with Lewy body disease, their families and carers to meet other people in similar circumstances.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic is now taking referrals for 2016. For further information, contact a Gateway Counsellor on 03 9815 7800 or the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

Above Some of our enthusiastic participants and facilitators during the successful Living with Lewy body disease pilot program
Karen Price celebrates 15 years with Alzheimer’s Australia Vic

This year marks 15 years since Karen Price began working with Alzheimer’s Australia Vic. Since her appointment to the role of Dementia Consultant, Karen has become a vital member of the organisation’s operations in regional Victoria, and has made a huge difference to the lives of people living with dementia, their families and carers across the Gippsland region.

Vicki Powell, Program Manager Rural Services at Alzheimer’s Australia Vic said, “When Karen joined us, there were just two people looking after the whole of the region. Karen’s energy and commitment to networking allowed us to develop invaluable relationships with service providers, and paved the way for Alzheimer’s Australia Vic to establish a meaningful presence in Gippsland.

“All these years later, we now have a team of five people in the region. Karen is a crucial member of that team, and I am incredibly thankful for all she has done during her time with us,” Ms Powell said.

Maree McCabe, CEO Alzheimer’s Australia Vic said, “My congratulations and sincere thanks to Karen for her ongoing dedication and the passion she brings to her role. Her unwavering commitment to the work she does and to her clients is inspiring.

“Karen has spent 15 years striving to provide the best possible service, the most up-to-date information, and a friendly and dependable ear to the people of Gippsland. What a remarkable achievement,” Ms McCabe said.

Breaking Down the Myths

Join us in 2016 to find out exactly what dementia is, and what it is not.

During our series of seminars entitled Dementia: Breaking Down the Myths, facilitators will explain, in simple terms, the main causes of dementia, key signs and symptoms, and risk factors. Attendees will also learn about changed behaviours, common myths and misconceptions, seeking a diagnosis, available treatments, and how you can access further information and support.

Events will be held in Broadmeadows, Cowes, Sunshine and Shepparton between February and May. For specific details on dates and locations call 03 9816 5708.

Niall Rogers Media Room

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic would like to thank the Niall and Rogers families for their ongoing support of the organisation and their generous sponsorship of the Niall Rogers Media Room at Oak Street, Parkville, in memory of Rosemary Rogers nee Niall.

Nich Rogers is a major donor and member of the Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Board Fundraising Committee. His wife, Rosemary, passed away from dementia in 2014. Both families have supported Alzheimer’s Australia Vic in numerous ways over the years, including the championing of the Memory Joggers group – a band of supporters who participate in running events such Run Melbourne and City2Sea each year to raise funds for the organisation.

A painting of Rosemary, provided by her family, is now proudly on display in the Niall Rogers Media Room at our Parkville office.
Martin Hengeveld, 70-year-old Eltham resident, recently completed the trip of a lifetime, travelling over 1,800 kilometres by bicycle to Brisbane in memory of his late wife Marlene, who passed away after living with Alzheimer’s disease.

Martin’s niece Amy Freund has written an article for Memory Matters, in which she recounts his remarkable achievement:

Martin hopped onto his 25-year-old bike that held so many happy memories of Marlene, and set off from his home in Eltham with a bright orange flag saying ‘Beat Dementia’ taped to the back.

Incredibly, Martin beat his original target of one month to reach his Brisbane destination, by completing his pilgrimage in only 16 days, to the surprise of family members waiting to greet him.

Upon his return, Martin gently recalled memories of his late wife, with whom he had enjoyed many sunny afternoons cycling through the rustic outskirts of Eltham.

“With Alzheimer’s disease, the best thing is to exercise,” Martin said.

“So cycling was right up Marlene’s alley, until one day she forgot where the breaks were going down the hill. She crashed and broke her arm, and that was the end of the cycling. So in some ways, this was a pilgrimage in memory of her.”

On Marlene’s journey with dementia, Martin recalls, “It was a really special time in a way. There’s no bickering. The notion of love becomes very unconditional, and you just accept whatever’s going on. All you want to do is care for each other. And on that sort of basis, you can have a wonderful time.”

Over his two-week pilgrimage, Martin was described as amazing, unbelievable and a true testament to the saying that age is, really, just a number. But to me Martin is, and always will be, someone who I am proud to call my uncle.

How can I make sure my relative with dementia enjoys the festive period?

Traditionally, during holidays and religious festivities, families gather to celebrate, exchange gifts, and share food and drink. However, it can also be a stressful time, particularly for carers, because it represents a break from the normal routine.

Consider the best time to share a celebratory meal, keeping in mind a change in routine may be confusing for a person with dementia. Try sticking to their routine if possible, to minimise any insecurities or stress.

Create opportunities for family members and friends to share the caring role, by organising events at different homes or planning a group outing.

Remember, rest and quiet times are important. Taking on too much, or trying to maintain past traditions may increase the feeling of being overwhelmed. Pace yourself and allow time for rest, both for the carer and the person with dementia.

Use the holidays as an opportunity to engage with the person living with dementia. Involve them in gift planning, preparation and giving, according to their interest and ability. Bake biscuits, wrap gifts or write cards together. Equally, allow the person with dementia to assist in event or meal planning activities. You can modify tasks where necessary, or provide an alternative activity such as folding serviettes.

Keep in mind, the festive season may trigger memories of past family events. Listening, sharing recollections and encouraging reminiscence can be a reassuring and validating experience for everyone involved. Singing traditional songs and watching old movies can be helpful and enjoyable.

The holiday season is a time when both the person with dementia and their family members might feel an increased sense of loss. Recognising emotional needs and seeking support during this period may reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

For more information on enabling social engagement for a person living with dementia, visit bit.ly/vichelpsheets or call the National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500 for a chat.
REGIONAL ROUND UP

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s regional offices and staff are located in Geelong, Ballarat, Drouin, Bendigo, Warrnambool, Mildura, Albury, Shepparton, Lakes Entrance and Cowes. Our staff within these regional areas welcome your contact on 1800 100 500.

In Warrnambool, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted a dementia information session to coincide with RSL Seniors Week in October. The event was facilitated by Jason Kelly, Counsellor Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, and was attended by 20 seniors.

A similar information session was presented in Portland, in conjunction with Portland Workskills – an organisation that exists to provide training, education and employment services to the community, in order to assist job seekers to find employment and enhance their quality of life.

An introduction to dementia and the support services available session was presented to 20 family carers at the Western District Health Service Education Centre in Hamilton.

During November, the Warrnambool Alzheimer’s Australia Vic team visited Ingenia Communities - an Australian property group that develops seniors communities. A Your Brain Matters™ session was delivered, focusing on brain health and dementia risk reduction.

Another Your Brain Matters™ session was presented in Nhill by Glenda Hipwell, Dementia Consultant Alzheimer’s Australia Vic and June Rolleston, Counsellor Alzheimer’s Australia Vic. The event, which took place at the Nhill Probus Club in October, was attended by 55 people, and was organised by Lorraine Ruse and Dorothy Bowden.

During Dementia Awareness Month, a ‘What Is Dementia?’ general information session was presented in Wodonga, whilst a forum entitled ‘Walking with Dementia, Health and Wellbeing’ was hosted at Shepparton, during which expert speakers advised on keeping well, negotiating the system, seeking support and reconnecting.

An ongoing Living with Dementia program is currently being delivered in Benalla, with positive feedback received from the large number of attendees.

A successful Dementia Awareness Month event was held at the Market Place shopping centre in Bendigo, with a special outside broadcast by local radio station 3BO. This provided great networking opportunities with local service providers, who were given the chance to join Alzheimer’s Australia Vic with their own information stands.

Christmas lunches for carers are currently being planned for early-December in Bendigo and Mildura.

In Gippsland, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted three Dementia Awareness Month events at retirement villages across the region.

MEMBERSHIP

As December approaches, it’s time to start thinking about renewing your Alzheimer’s Australia Vic membership.

You can do so at bit.ly/vicmembers or contact Rebecca McCormick on 03 9816 5783 or rebecca.mc Cormick@alzheimers.org.au

Sudoku

Medium

Created by Ric Allport – www.brainfoodfactory.com – Challenge your Brain

These puzzles are provided for entertainment purposes only. To keep your brain healthy, it’s important to engage in mentally stimulating activities, be physically and socially active, eat a healthy diet and look after your heart by getting regular health checks.

The Detect Early website provides resources and tools to help healthcare professionals make a real difference to the lives of people with dementia and their carers.
detectearly.org.au
RESEARCH FOCUS

Are we there yet? How far away is a cure for Alzheimer’s disease?

Last year, the World Dementia Council set a goal of finding a disease modifying therapy for Alzheimer’s disease by 2025. Unfortunately, we aren’t there yet, but clinical results are moving in the right direction.

Global pharmaceutical companies have been investing billions of dollars into experimental therapies that target the amyloid plaques and tau tangles that damage and kill brain cells during dementia. While a lot is known about these plaques and tangles, researchers are still trying to fully understand their cause and how to remove them from the brain.

Pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly has been trialing Solanezumab - an antibody therapy designed to target amyloid plaques and remove their toxic function. The latest analysis of a clinical trial involving thousands of people have been published in the Journal *Alzheimer’s and Dementia: Translational Research and Clinical Investigations*. The results suggest this therapy may delay memory deficits in people in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease.

Based on these results, the researchers reiterate that, if they could detect and treat the disease before symptoms occur, it may be possible to slow and delay the disease process. They now plan on repeating the trial to see if similar results are observed.

No, Alzheimer’s disease is not contagious

Recent headlines have claimed Alzheimer’s disease might be contagious. These claims were far from true. After delving into where this came from, it appears this story dates back to 1958 when around 30,000 people (mostly children) received injections of human growth hormones. These hormones were extracted from the pituitary glands of human cadavers - or, to put it bluntly, dead bodies.

In 1985, the procedure was halted when doctors noted 200 recipients had received contaminated injections and developed Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a form of dementia that causes rapid brain degeneration from misfolded proteins known as prions.

The researchers looked in more detail at the brains of eight of the deceased, and published their results in the journal *Nature*. They found the injections may have also spread amyloid beta proteins. From this, they hypothesised that amyloid beta proteins might be transmissible through medical procedures such as brain surgery, but this has not been confirmed.

There is certainly no evidence to suggest that you could ‘catch’ Alzheimer’s disease from someone like you would a cold or flu. Nor is there any evidence to suggest a connection between surgical procedures and the increased risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease.

A glass of red, some dark chocolate, and a treatment for Alzheimer’s disease?

Not quite – once again, speculation has been rife thanks to a study showing daily consumption of a compound known as resveratrol can delay the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. While resveratrol is found in products such as red wine and chocolate, it is actually being tested in tablet form. To get the same amounts of resveratrol in a tablet as from red wine, you would need to drink 1,000 glasses per day, and that is certainly not recommended.

The results of a recent study, published in the journal *Neurology*, showed participants taking resveratrol supplements showed little or no change in their levels of amyloid beta, while those in a placebo group saw their levels diminish, as usually occurs with the disease progression.

However, alongside the positive results, some participants noted side effects such as nausea, diarrhea, and weight loss. The researchers plan to undertake further clinical trials to fully assess the effects of resveratrol supplementation.
Consumer stories shine at Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age

You may have already seen details on September’s Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age conference on page seven of this edition. Some of the more moving and candid presentations were given by people living with dementia and their partners.

Anne Fairhall, Consumer Advisory Committee member at Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, spoke passionately about the changing, but still loving, relationship with her husband, Geoff. Having developed frontotemporal dementia 25 years ago at the age of 51, Geoff now lives in a residential care facility. Geoff and Anne, however, maintain their closeness and intimacy through tender touch and visits to their regular café.

Fellow committee member, Tony Walsh, spoke about finding a suitable residential facility for his late partner, Paul Wenn. Following encountering some reluctant managers and difficult site tours, Tony and Paul eventually found a welcoming and supportive facility. When asked whether LGBTI-specific facilities were the way forward, Tony said he hoped that eventually all facilities will become inclusive.

The audience was deeply touched by Faith, Brian, Beverly and Richard, who shared their personal experiences of embarking on new romantic relationships during a spouse’s journey with dementia. And partners Anne Tudor and Edie Mayhew, and Trish and Robert Underhill each gave inspiring and thoughtful opening addresses over the two days.

These presentations were the highlights for many attendees. And, not only did these consumers generously share their experiences at the conference, they also assisted in starting a broader conversation on the subject by getting involved with media interviews.

Consumer advocate recognised by Volunteering Victoria

It has been a busy few months for Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee member Pushpa Jayakody, who has tirelessly been promoting dementia awareness in her own Sri Lankan community, and a diverse array of other Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

During Dementia Awareness Month, Pushpa not only spoke to guests about her own personal experiences of caring for somebody living with dementia at an event hosted specifically for CALD communities, but also spoke to numerous media outlets, including Channel 31, Radio 3ZZZ and Whittlesea Leader.

To acknowledge Pushpa’s contribution, Volunteering Victoria recently profiled her on their website. Read her interview by visiting bit.ly/vicpushpavol

If you would like to be involved in dementia advocacy, please contact Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Engagement Officer Celina Day on 03 9816 5720.

Driving positive discussions for people with dementia

The loss of a driver’s license is often highlighted as one of the most difficult changes following a dementia diagnosis. It impacts not only on the person’s mobility and lifestyle, but also on their sense of dignity and autonomy.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic is delighted to see the general practice community getting behind its recently developed Dementia and Driving GP’s Toolkit, which comprises a quick reference card showing the licensing and clinical pathway for a driver with dementia and a tip sheet for approaching conversations on the topic.

Good Practice magazine, read by GPs across Australia, spoke to consumer advocate Anne Fairhall and Alzheimer’s Australia Vic CEO Maree McCabe for an article focusing on the resource. During her interview, Anne discussed the process she went through as her husband Geoff eventually became unable to drive due to his diagnosis of dementia.

You can see the full toolkit at bit.ly/vicdanddgps

If you are experiencing issues relating to dementia and driving, check out our Dementia and Driving - Changed Conditions Ahead resource at bit.ly/vicdrivinganddementia

Above Trish, living with dementia and her husband Rob Underhill, officially open the Let’s Talk About Sex conference
10341 Nat Certificate IV in Dementia Practice

Last chance to apply for the Madeline Crump and Madeline Williams Trust Scholarships for Certificate IV in Dementia Practice, applications close Monday 14th December!

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic is offering half-scholarships for individuals to complete the Certificate IV in Dementia Practice course in 2016. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic will award two scholarships per course for Hawthorn each worth $1675.

This accredited course for health and aged care workers provides you with a great opportunity to challenge current dementia practice using a relationship-centred approach. The course comprises interactive workshops across a wide range of dementia topics, which includes guest speakers from industry. You will learn to transfer this knowledge into practice and improve dementia care in your organisation. This course can be a pathway for those wishing to pursue leadership roles within their workplace and build on existing skills with up-to-date and innovative strategies that assist you in staying current in the sector.

This course also offers an opportunity to undertake the local and international award-winning Virtual Dementia Experience™. This course is offered ONLY in Victoria by Alzheimer’s Australia Vic and places are limited.

Duration: 11 full-day workshops (1 per month) COST: $3,350 (paid in three instalments)

To request enrolment or scholarship forms, or if you would like more information about the course please contact Mary-Lou Doswell on 03 9816 5797 or email marylou.doswell@alzheimers.org.au

Please Note: This qualification is issued by Alzheimer’s Australia W.A RTO Code: 4755

Dementia - Breaking down the Myths

Join us to find out what dementia is and what it is not. This seminar will explain, in simple terms, what dementia is including main causes, especially Alzheimer’s disease, key signs and symptoms and risk factors. It will also explain why changes to behaviour occur. Common myths and misconceptions about dementia will be addressed as well as concerns you might have. In addition, the seminar will explain the importance of seeking a diagnosis if noticing changes and how you can access further information as well as appropriate support and services if and when needed.

At this session, we will discuss:
- dementia, including main causes, key symptoms and risk factors
- myths and common misconceptions about dementia
- relationship between brain changes and behaviour
- support services available and how to access these

Meaningful engagement

Understand the capacities and abilities of people with moderate to advanced stages of dementia. Learn how to best engage the person through activities which are meaningful, purposeful and pleasurable using a strength-based approach.

On completion of this module, you will understand:
- the individual needs of people living with dementia
- relationship of meaningful engagement to behaviour
- how to plan suitably engaging activities

NEW 2016 COURSE GUIDES AVAILABLE

To view the latest courses visit vic.fightdementia.org.au/education

Bookings: vic.fightdementia.org.au/education | vic.education@alzheimers.org.au | 03 9816 5708
Our dementia resources blog
dementiaresources.org.au

We will update you every three to four weeks with a different topic. Some recent posts have been on spirituality and dementia, how to design a more dementia-friendly home, younger onset dementia, films and fiction that have a theme of dementia, along with many others.

Take a look and if it is of interest to you please sign up for regular posts.

Our library catalogue
dementialibrary.org.au

This national catalogue contains information about items held in the Victorian collection along with other states and territories. You can visit online or call the library if you would like to check something.

Audio books in the library
If you haven’t the time or inclination to sit and read a book have you thought about audio books? These CDs are great for listening together, in the car or as background while you attend to other daily activities. Contact the library if you would like to listen to any of these stories.

Still Alice
Lisa Genova (2009)

Alice Howland is a Harvard professor with a successful husband and three grown children. When she begins to grow forgetful, she finds herself in the rapidly downward spiral of Alzheimer’s disease. She is fifty years old. Alice is a remarkable woman. Discover more about her and her family, in their quest to keep the Alice they know for as long as possible.

Elizabeth is missing: a novel
Emma Healey (2014)

Maud, an ageing grandmother, is slowly losing her memory - and her grip on everyday life. Yet she refuses to forget her best friend Elizabeth, whom she is convinced is missing and in terrible danger.

But no one will listen to Maud - not her frustrated daughter, Helen, not her caretakers, not the police, and especially not Elizabeth’s mercurial son, Peter. Armed with handwritten notes she leaves for herself and an overwhelming feeling that Elizabeth needs her help, Maud resolves to discover the truth and save her beloved friend.

We are not ourselves
Matthew Thomas (2014)

This novel is light on racy subplots and heavy on the messy, claustrophobic fog of family life. It is by turns wrenching in its portrait of a family battling illness and plodding in its depiction of the sociological realities of mid-century middle-class American life. At its centre is Eileen Tumulty, who grows up in a working-class Irish enclave of Queens, New York. When she meets her husband, Ed, a young neuroscientist, she believes she is finally climbing the ladder into the respectable upper-middle-class. But then in midlife, just as the couple’s son is entering his teens, Ed is diagnosed with younger onset Alzheimer’s disease.

The memory book
by Rowan Coleman (2014)

When time is running out, every moment is precious…

When Claire starts to write her Memory Book, she already knows that this scrapbook of mementoes will soon be all her daughters and husband have of her. But how can she hold onto the past when her future is slipping through her fingers…?
A Trek to Remember

Between 26 October and 9 November, an intrepid band of explorers embarked on the adventure of a lifetime in Nepal.

For two weeks, Rosalie, Bianca, Alice, Mary, Kristin and Warwick discovered new worlds, new landscapes and new cultures as they trekked to raise funds for Alzheimer’s Australia Vic.

The trek was hosted in partnership with Huma Charity Challenge, and included a visit to Alzheimer’s and Related Dementia Society of Nepal (ARDS Nepal) in Kathmandu.

This challenge saw the team venture into Nepal’s deep forests and roam the high alpine pastures to the base of the fluted peak of Machapuchare. They trekked through Hindu villages and pristine forests, and were treated to sweeping panoramic views of the Annapurna Range.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic would like to thank and congratulate the team on their efforts and, even though they have recently returned to Australia, there is still time to show your support.

Donate by visiting bit.ly/victreknepal

Mark Moroney raising funds through music

If you attended our A Night To Remember fundraising gala dinner in May, you will recall musician Darren Percival’s sensational performance in tribute to his grandmother, who is living with dementia.

Recently, Darren has been working with another musician, Mark Moroney. Mark’s current project, Chasing Fairytales, includes a song that tells the story of a friend’s experiences with dementia.

On the song, Mr Moroney said, “I understand now why they call it ‘the long goodbye’. I called the song More Than Memories and it captures the heart of the moment my friend realised his father didn’t recognise him anymore.

“He said ‘you remind me of someone I used to know’. This stopped me in my tracks. I began to cry and I knew that my next step was to do my best to create a piece of music that reflected how the families of people living with dementia go through so much along the journey with their loved ones.”

Mark recently launched a crowd funding campaign with Pledge Music to help fund his new project. For every dollar received over his pledge target, 25 per cent will be donated to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic to help fund dementia research.

If readers would like to support Mark’s campaign, visit pledgemusic.com/projects/markmoroney

Memory Walk & Jog

During 2015, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted two Memory Walk & Jog fundraising events.

The first was held in Geelong during Dementia Awareness Month in September, with more than 800 people turning out at Eastern Park to get involved. In October, Bendigo’s Strathdale Park was the venue, with more than 200 people taking part and enjoying the day.

And the good news is, it’s not too late to get involved! We have three more Memory Walk & Jog events planned during 2016. Make sure you save the following dates …

- 24 January 2016, Point Nepean, Mornington Peninsula
- 17 April 2016, Ruffey Lake Park, Doncaster
- 22 May 2016, Belvoir Park, Albury/Wodonga

You don’t need to be a fitness fanatic to be a part of the Memory Walk & Jog – it has something for everyone. You can run, walk, skip or even dress up and dance your way through the day!

And remember, the earlier your register, the more time you have to rally friends and families for donations. To find out more, visit bit.ly/vicmwaj or call 03 9816 5746

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic would like to thank major supporter OPAL Aged Care for making these events possible.
PLANNING AHEAD

Do you have an up-to-date Will? What about an Enduring Power of Attorney?

Did you know about the new Powers of Attorney laws that came into effect in Victoria on 1 September 2015?

Planning ahead ensures your financial and legal affairs are well managed in case one day you lose capacity to make those decisions for yourself.

Being involved in planning while still legally competent will ensure the wishes of a person living with dementia are carried out in the way they would like. This also makes it easier for families and carers to manage the affairs of the person with dementia.

Your Will

A Will gives instructions on how you would like your estate to be distributed when you die. It is only legal if you make it or update it while you are still considered legally competent to sign. If you die without a legal Will, your property will be divided by a court-appointed administrator.

Planning ahead means having an up-to-date Will, knowing who the executor is and where the Will is kept.

Managing your capacity

From 1 September 2015, all Powers of Attorney appointments except for the Medical Enduring Power of Attorney, must be made under the new Powers of Attorney Act.

The laws include a new type of attorney – the Supportive Attorney – who can assist people who still have capacity to make decisions for themselves.

Appointing an Enduring Power of Attorney involves a new legal document that allows you to appoint another person or people to make decisions on your behalf about financial and/or personal matters when you no longer have the capacity to make them for yourself.

A Medical Enduring Power of Attorney is a legal document that allows you to appoint a ‘medical agent’ to make medical decisions on your behalf, once you no longer have capacity. There have been no changes to this document.

Who can help?

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has produced a free resource booklet to help you make or update your Will. For your free copy of Planning Ahead Instructions for My Will please contact Natalie Sikora on 03 9815 5776

State Trustees and Alzheimer’s Australia Vic have formed a corporate partnership focused on mutual professional education. As a special offer, State Trustees is offering 20 per cent off the cost of preparing your Will and Enduring Power of Attorney, for those who book an appointment by 30 June 2016. To take advantage of this offer, simply cut out the voucher below and quote ‘Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’ when making your appointment.

Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) - The new online forms can ordered by calling 1300 309 337 or can be downloaded from the OPA website – publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/power-of-attorney

Get 20% off the cost of preparing your Will and Enduring Power of Attorney*

Help protect your loved ones, take advantage of this special offer and ensure you are prepared for the future. Please call State Trustees on 03 9667 6444 or 1300 138 672 from outside Melbourne and quote “AAV”.

*Book your appointment by 30 June 2016. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Available to Victorian residents only.

For your free copy of our Will Instruction Booklet, information about bequests, or a confidential discussion please contact Natalie Sikora on 03 9816 5776 or natalie.sikora@alzheimers.org.au

Special offer for Alzheimer’s Australia Vic from State Trustees

Who can help?
Please accept my donation of $______

☐ My cheque is enclosed  OR  ☐ Please debit my credit card

Please debit the above amount from my credit card:

☐ Monthly  ☐ Quarterly  ☐ Half yearly  ☐ This time only

Card details

☐ Mastercard  ☐ VISA  ☐ AMEX  ☐ Diners

Expiration date  _______  _______  _______  _______

CCV

Cardholder’s name

Signed

☐ I would like to find out more about making a bequest to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic
☐ I have already included a gift to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic in my Will
☐ Please contact me about organising my own fundraising event
☐ I would like more information about becoming a member

Title  First Name

Family Name

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Postcode

Telephone  Mobile

Email

Donations of $2 or more to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic are tax deductible.

Please send your donation to:
Alzheimer’s Australia Vic
Locked Bag 3001, Hawthorn 3122

For more information contact:
Telephone 03 9815 7800  Facsimile 03 9815 7801