Queensland Police Service lead the force with Dementia Australia to launch Dementia Awareness Month

The Queensland Police Service today announced it is joining forces with Dementia Australia to increase awareness and understanding of dementia among their more than 10,000 staff and across the community.

The announcement was made at the Small actions Big difference Roadshow event in Brisbane today with Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe and Acting Deputy Commissioner Alistair Dawson APM. The event also featured Dementia Australia Ambassadors Jessica and Lisa Origliasso from The Veronicas, Professor Jürgen Götz, Foundation Chair Dementia Research and Director of the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research at UQ’s Queensland Brain Institute, and Dementia Advocates Danijela Hlisi and Eileen and Dubhglas Taylor.

The Small actions Big difference Roadshow event in Brisbane is the start of a month-long series of events being held around the country as part of Dementia Awareness Month, Dementia Australia’s national awareness-raising campaign held every year throughout September.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said that with dementia being the second leading cause of death of Australians, and the leading cause of death of women in Australia, it is vital that we elevate awareness of the condition which sadly carries with it much stigma.

“We are thrilled the Queensland Police Service has wholeheartedly supported and participated in our Dementia Friends program, which is a national program that aims to transform the way our nation thinks, acts and talks about dementia,” Ms McCabe said.

“As part of this, the Queensland Police Service is actively encouraging its staff to join with Dementia Australia in becoming more dementia aware and sign up to become a Dementia Friend.

“They are also encouraging their officers to have conversations in their own communities and to become Champions of the Dementia Friends program, many of whom are joining us at today’s event.

“It is wonderful to see the Queensland Police Service leading the way and being so proactive in wanting to ensure they are part of positive change in the community in raising awareness and increasing understanding of dementia. Frontline police frequently interact with a range of vulnerable people, including older people. Their participation in this program will only enhance the great work they currently do.

“We are delighted to announce this to coincide with the start of Dementia Awareness Month, which runs throughout September.”

There are an estimated 80,000 Queenslanders living with dementia, which, without a significant medical breakthrough, is expected to increase to more than 230,000 people by 2056.

Queensland Police Service Acting Deputy Commissioner Alistair Dawson said this partnership would build organisational capacity to understand and assist people with dementia, their families and carers.

“Working with Dementia Australia to encourage education and awareness will maximise community safety and improve policing responses,” Acting Deputy Commissioner Dawson said.

“The QPS is responsible for service delivery 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, focusing on protecting the community, and partnerships like this can offer new and better ways of addressing challenges, delivering a more sustainable policing service to support vulnerable persons.”
Acting Deputy Commissioner Alistair Dawson was part of a panel of speakers, including Dementia Australia Ambassadors Jessica and Lisa Origliasso from The Veronicas and Dementia Advocates Dementia Advocates Danijela Hils, Eileen and Dubhglas Taylor, all of whom have been impacted by dementia.

During the event, Professor Jürgen Götz also presented on the history of dementia research, gave an update on his own work in the field and summarised the current status in dementia research.

Throughout Dementia Awareness Month, Dementia Australia is asking the community to pledge their support by becoming a Dementia Friend.

When registering to become a Dementia Friend at dementiafriendly.org.au, participants can use a free online learning tool, through which they can increase their understanding of dementia and be empowered to do small, everyday things that can make a big difference to a person living with dementia.

The learning tool features people living with dementia sharing just how a diagnosis of dementia impacts their lives.

An estimated 425,000 Australians are living with dementia. It impacts the individual living with the condition, as well as their loved ones who often provide the support and care.

People living with dementia can find it challenging to participate actively in the community due, in part, to a lack of knowledge or understanding of the condition among the general public and how it can impact people.

A survey by Dementia Australia found people living with dementia and carers reported ‘experiencing embarrassing situations, feel strongly disconnected, feel less competent and sometimes feel useless’.

By becoming a Dementia Friend, and increasing awareness of dementia and its impacts, it is hoped members of the community will feel empowered to help a family member, friend, neighbour or co-worker living with dementia feel accepted, included and involved. For more information about Dementia Awareness Month and the Dementia Friends program, head to dementia.org.au.

Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 425,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach more than 1.1 million by 2056. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer’s Australia. Dementia Australia’s services are supported by the Australian Government.

National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500
Interpreter service available
(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)
Dementia is a National Health Priority Area
www.dementia.org.au

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines.