



Tuesday 16 October 2018

Dementia Australia celebrates National Carers Week 2018

Today Dementia Australia joins the nation in recognising and celebrating the outstanding contribution Australia's 2.7 million¹ unpaid carers make to Australia, during this year's National Carers Week (14-20 October).

Carers provide an integral role in the care of vulnerable Australians, with their caring roles being valued at \$60.3 billion annually – more than \$1 billion a week².

Dementia Australia CEO Ms Maree McCabe said that the role of a carer is becoming increasingly common as prevalence rates of chronic illnesses like dementia continue to rise.

"There are an estimated 436,000 Australians now living with dementia. This number is projected to increase to 590,000 in just 10 years and almost 1.1 million by 2058³," Ms McCabe said.

"There is also estimated to be almost 1.5 million people involved in the care of someone living with dementia.

"These figures highlight the increasing need to support our carers, who form a vital component of our overall health care infrastructure, yet sometimes they are often unrecognised or acknowledged for their tireless work.

"Caring can be a rewarding experience that can bring families closer together. However, without support, it can also be a source of significant challenge, stress and strain for the carer.

"Dementia Australia provides essential support to carers and people living with dementia at the early stages of a dementia diagnosis, as well as at every stage along the way, to help people better understand and manage the condition, its progression and how to live well with dementia."

The **National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500** is often the first point of contact for carers, family members or people living with dementia. It provides free confidential phone, email and support services which provides information about:

- dementia and memory loss
- government support services (including My Aged Care, the Carer Gateway, Centrelink)
- services in your area and emotional support to help manage the impact of dementia.

Research has shown that one of the biggest issues people face following a diagnosis of dementia is social isolation, as friends, family and members of their communities can find it challenging to understand how to best support and continue to include people living with dementia in the community.

"Dementia Australia has developed programs and services that help reduce the sense of isolation, distress and depression that can arise and increase the confidence of people

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

² Deloitte Access Economics (2015) The Economic Value of Informal Care in Australia 2015.

³ Dementia Australia (2018). Dementia Prevalence Data 2018–2058, commissioned research undertaken by NATSEM, University of Canberra.

caring for someone with dementia, by increasing knowledge of the condition and positive perceptions of dementia,” Ms McCabe said.

“These programs include *The Living with Dementia* program, an early intervention program for people living with early stage dementia and their carers. The program provides information and support through sharing experiences with a small group of people in the same situation, and provides ongoing support after the conclusion of the program.

“There is also education available specifically for carers, along with counselling.

“For more information about any of these or other programs, contact the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.”

To get involved with National Carers week, or for more information please visit www.carersweek.com.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 436,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. 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](#).