

Friday 29 March 2019

Become a Dementia Friend this Neighbour Day, help combat loneliness

On Neighbour Day, Sunday 31 March, Dementia Australia is calling for people to become a Dementia Friend and help combat social isolation and loneliness for people living with dementia, their families, and carers.

The theme for Neighbour Day 2019 is 'Loneliness: What neighbours can do to create connections'.

Although knowledge of dementia is on the rise, a [recent study](#) commissioned by Dementia Australia has shown that Australians 'don't know how to talk to people with dementia', leading to social isolation and loneliness for many people living with the disease.

Dementia Australia's Dementia Friends program aims to transform the way our nation thinks, acts and talks about dementia.

A Dementia Friend is someone who wants to make a positive difference to the lives of people living with dementia through increased awareness and support.

Dennis Frost, Dementia Advocate and passionate Dementia Friends supporter, believes community connections are vital to combat loneliness.

"People who live with dementia often face social isolation as friends, family and community struggle to understand how best to support and continue to include people living with the disease.

"My own experience of living with dementia has shown me first-hand how people misunderstand the condition, but small actions can make a big difference.

"Becoming a Dementia Friend means you have increased your understanding of dementia and how small things you can do, such as taking time to have a cup of tea with a neighbour, or allowing extra time for inclusion in a conversation, can help people with dementia remain included, accepted and connected with their community."

According to Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe, the need for Dementia Friends is more important than ever, with more than 436,000 Australians living with dementia across Australia.

"We know people living with dementia regularly feel excluded from community and regular activities once they have a diagnosis, leading to profound social isolation not just for the person living with dementia but also primary carers," Ms McCabe said.

"The impact of a kinder, more inclusive neighbour for people living with dementia, replicated in communities across Australia, is enormous."

This Neighbour Day join the more than 15,000 Australians who have already signed up to become a Dementia Friend and help us change the way our nation thinks, acts and talks about dementia.

For more information about becoming a Dementia Friend, please visit dementiafriendly.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 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 Language Guidelines](#).