

Thursday 25 July 2019

People living with dementia and carers present federal government with solution to quality dementia care

Dementia Australia today delivered a Communique, *Our Solution: Quality care for people living with dementia*, to the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, outlining what quality aged care means to people living with dementia, their families and carers.

Written from the perspective of people with lived experience, the Communique marks the first turning point in Dementia Australia's Quality Dementia Care initiative, which seeks to develop baseline and 'gold' standards of care and link them with the new Aged Care Quality Standards which came into effect 1 July 2019.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said people with a lived experience of dementia want to ensure that their voices are heard, that quality care involves them and that their contribution leads to greater inclusion, support, respect and ultimately, improved quality of life.

"This is not just about quality dementia care; it is about providing quality aged care to people living with dementia as well as their families and carers," Ms McCabe said

"The introduction of the eight Standards are welcomed and their release has led to a series of discussions about quality dementia care. This discussion articulates how quality dementia care looks and feels and identifies the key points of difference between quality dementia care and aged care more generally."

The Communique reflects a human rights based approach and outlines the collective consumer views against each of the eight Standards. Dementia-specific recommendations are applied to each Standard reflecting the needs of a person living with dementia, their families and carers.

This includes dementia specific training shared and supported decision making that centres on the person with dementia; flexibility and continuity of care; meaningful activities to maintain a sense of community connectedness; providing a sense of community and transparent accountability for quality dementia care, with key performance indicators that are specific, clear and measurable embedded into practice.

The Communique was informed by material collected from a series of 31 focus groups held across Australia. This was followed by a National Consumer Summit held in Canberra on 26 June 2019, and attended by Dementia Advocates, together with a range of observers including leaders from aged care peak bodies and the Department of Health.

Dennis Frost, who has been diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia (FTD), participated in the development of the Communique and is pleased that the government is hearing from people who are living with dementia.

"People with dementia need to represent themselves and be included as equal partners and decision-makers when talking about quality care" Mr Frost said.

"If you can get it right for dementia, you can get it right for everyone else."

"Dementia Australia and consumers are asking that government formally adopt the perspectives and information provided to them in the Communique in accreditation standards for aged care homes to ensure a quality of life now and into the future for all people impacted by dementia," Ms McCabe said.

The full Communique *Our Solution: Quality care for people living with dementia* is available [here](#).

Dementia Australia's Quality Dementia Care initiative is a three stage project starting with the National Consumer Summit and incorporating a National Sector Roundtable on 12 November and a National Symposium on 24 March 2020 in Sydney. To register interest in the Symposium please visit <https://www.dementia.org.au/conferences>.

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 447,000 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](#).