PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Champions,

It has now been over a month since the Federal Government announced the Living Longer, Living Better aged care package which responded to many of the priorities in the Fight Dementia Campaign.

The driving force of the reforms are ones that consumers have been asking for, such as greater choice, easier access to care, better quality care, and an emphasis on wellness and ensuring that services are designed to build on the independence and strengths of an older person.

Initially, many stakeholders in the aged care sector welcomed the package. This positive response is a reflection of the urgent need for reform and the desire of the aged care sector finally to be heard.

After considering the details of the package however, a number of providers have raised concerns that there is relatively little “new” money being injected into the sector. Without new funding, service providers are questioning how the reforms will deliver real change to the system and provide sustainable funding for the sector over the next 10 years. Others are apprehensive that the growth of community care services will not happen quickly enough to meet the demands of people wanting to receive care at home.

It is clear that although the reform package includes a number of important measures to address dementia, concerns exist about exactly what changes the package will deliver in respect of aged care.

On a positive note, we still have an opportunity to engage with the government to bring about change in the system. So let’s not take our foot off the accelerator and lose the opportunity to do this.

Now is the time for us to press harder for those elements of the reform process that we believe need to be more ambitious – for the team at Alzheimer’s Australia, that is the government’s failure to invest additional funding for dementia research. This is vital because it is only through research that we will defeat dementia.

So the Fight Dementia Campaign will continue! Our plan to put pressure on the government for increased dementia research funds will be revealed in the next edition of Fight Dementia News. Your support won us the last battle and with your continued support – which we value greatly – we will have a chance of winning the war!

My very best wishes to you all

Ita Buttrose
National President
Alzheimer’s Australia

FEATURED CHAMPIONS!

Pat, Woy Woy, NSW
I am an aged care nurse, have been for 22yrs. I see the pain and heart ache of my lovely residents and their families, we fight a long and hard battle.

Simona, Earlville, Qld
I am a champion for dementia because so many vital people have been affected, causing ripples in their lives that affect everyone. I believe one person can inspire 10, 10 people can inspire 100, 100 people can inspire a nation and a nation inspired can aspire to anything.

POLITICAL CHAMPIONS

Jamie Parker MP, NSW
This is a significant problem that affects a number of people in the community. I believe it is important to raise awareness, support carers and families and advocate for more research and assistance for leading edge programs.
Member for Balmain, NSW

Mark Coure, MP, NSW
Dementia and related illnesses are a growing challenge for governments, health care providers and communities; including my own. I’m committed to help raise awareness of this important health issue.
Member for Oatley, NSW
DO YOU WANT MORE DETAIL?

Last Wednesday, Ita Buttrose spoke to 200 carers and 70 industry workers about the pressing need for aged care reform to be implemented in Australia.

Ms Buttrose spoke in detail about her opinion of the policy behind the reforms and how important it is for stakeholders, including each of you, to be involved in the implementation process.

"We are at the beginning of a long and difficult process for change and during that process we will have to work as diligently as ever to keep the government of the day honest in ensuring that aged care reforms put the consumer first…and that the implementation of reform leads to services that are flexible enough to respond to the individual needs of people," Ms Buttrose said.

The speech was presented at Northside Community Forum’s biennial conference. For a copy of the speech click here.

PRICELINE WINNER!

During April Alzheimer’s Australia was supported by the Prisceline Sisterhood. Priceline generously donated proceeds of sales from in store products to our charity. They also promoted the Fight Dementia Campaign on their Facebook page, so thank you and welcome to all our new Dementia Champions!

I think this would be so wonderful for her to win. To just make her feel a bit special.

Ending the month on a great note, Priceline donated a beautiful hamper pack which was put up for grabs at Facebook.com/Fightdementia. We had 69 entries and it was hard to choose a winner; your stories provided the team at Alzheimer’s Australia with a constant reminder of why we are so passionate about the Fight Dementia Campaign.

In the end we could only pick one winner, who was Steve Coleman. This is what Steve had to say:

I am 42 and have Lewy Body Dementia. My wife is my full time carer.

Steve, Glasshouse Mountains.

To read Steve’s full story click here.

RESEARCH REVIEW IN AUSTRALIA

Alzheimer’s Australia have begun the battle to secure research dollars by making a submission into the Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research in Australia, being led by 2011 Australian of the Year Simon McKeon.

Once completed, the review will provide the government with recommendations for a 10 year strategic plan for Australia’s $4 billion per annum health and medical research sector funding.

Members of the Alzheimer’s Australia Consumer Dementia Research Network (CDRN) have put forward a submission to the review which identifies three priorities:

First is the need for increased investment in dementia research, with a particular focus on building the capacity of the sector by supporting new researchers. To support this recommendation, Alzheimer’s Australia commissioned Professor Kaarin Anstey from the ANU to conduct a new analysis on 10 years of NHMRC research funding data for dementia and other chronic diseases. This analysis showed that dementia research has been falling behind research on cancer, heart disease and diabetes, and that urgent attention is needed.

Second, members emphasised that research by itself does not usually result in better health outcomes, and that processes and funding are needed to ensure effective translation of relevant research into better health and care practice. The Alzheimer’s Australia National Quality Dementia Care Initiative, being driven by members of the CDRN, was highlighted as an example.

Third, the CDRN submission raised the importance and the benefits of involving and engaging interested consumers in all aspects of health and medical research, pointing to the positive evaluation of the CDRN by the University of Wollongong Centre for Health Services Development as a good example.

For more Information click on the links below:

CDRN submission to the review.

Professor Anstey’s report on NHMRC funding levels.

A REASON WHY WE FIGHT

The team at Alzheimer’s Australia love hearing from you!

We would like to share with you one letter which was recently received by Alzheimer’s Australia’s CEO, Glenn Rees. The experiences shared in the letter encapsulate the reasons why we fought so hard to see dementia become a priority in aged care reform, and why we are now urging the government to make it a National Health Priority.

If you would like to read the letter click here.

CONTACT US

For further information on the campaign please visit the campaign website at http://campaign.fightdementia.org.au/ or email fightdementia@alzheimers.org.au

To opt out of receiving this e-newsletter please send an email to fightdementia@alzheimers.org.au with OPT OUT in the subject.