A fairer deal for all Australians?

For people with dementia from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and their families the commitments given by Labor before and during the Election were notable in two main ways.

Firstly, Labor welcomed and supported the commitment given by the Howard Government to continuing the Dementia Initiative: Making Dementia a Health Priority Beyond 2009 with continued funding. This was one of the main planks of the Dementia Manifesto 2007-2010 issued by the Alzheimer’s Australia National Consumer Committee.

This is exciting news because it means that we can focus on the seven priorities identified in the Manifesto to improve the quality of life of people living with dementia knowing that the Dementia Initiative will continue.

Secondly, the commitment of Labor to An Australian Social Inclusion Agenda provides the framework at a high level for better coordinating a focus on those Australians who are most disadvantaged in our community. The serious commitment to this policy is evidenced by the intention to establish a Social Inclusion Board and the establishment of a Social Inclusion Unit within the Prime Minister’s Department to support it.

The commitment to better focus and coordinate policies for those at a disadvantage in our community will of course only work if all government agencies at the National and State and Territory level make a commitment to it.

With that in mind, Alzheimer’s Australia has included in its 2008 Budget Submission to the Treasurer, three proposals that we believe are consistent with the Social Inclusion Agenda and respond to the disadvantage experienced by people living with dementia.

These proposals are to:

- **Build on the experience and resources of Alzheimer’s Australia in promoting awareness and access to dementia services among people from CALD backgrounds and Indigenous people.** The partnership approach that Alzheimer’s Australia has developed with some communities gives us confidence that with increased resources we would be able to build partnership with many more CALD and Indigenous organisations over the next three years.

- **Address the issues that those with younger onset dementia (some as young as 35 years) face in trying to access appropriate services.** We have suggested that the initial priority is to improve access to ongoing support in a way that recognises the different physical, social and emotional needs of younger people. We have proposed that over three years $10 million should be provided to develop and deliver services to people with younger onset dementia including appropriate day care and respite care and cluster accommodation in residential facilities.

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“Always it haunts me” is a quote from an elderly woman who experienced the trauma of living through the terrors of the holocaust. The situations that ageing trauma survivors find themselves in can be frustrating for them and for their carers. The WA Association for Services to Torture & Trauma Survivors (ASETTS), a member of the National Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT), provides psychosocial and community development support to people who have survived trauma. It is now recognised that as people age and their physical and mental health is challenged they may experience the recurrence of post traumatic symptoms which could be misdiagnosed as dementia.

In 2006 ASETTS and Multicultural Aged Care Services WA (MACSWA) working in partnership and supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Community Partners Programme Initiative (CPP) initiated a pilot project on trauma and ageing.

The Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Older People Who Have Experienced Trauma Project

The program has been well received by service providers in Western Australia and by the diverse ethnic communities who have received information sessions.

In 2008 the project aims to produce training materials for national distribution.

For more information re the project please contact Jan Mantell at ASETTS (08) 9227 2700 or Maria Bunn at MACSWA on (08) 9346 8149 or email: macswa@health.wa.gov.au
Alzheimer’s Australia, on behalf of the National Cross Cultural Dementia Network invite you to an open Community Forum as part of the Diversity and Health Conference on Tuesday, March 11th 2008 between 5-6pm at the Sunset Workshop.

The aim of the National Cross Cultural Dementia Network (Network) is to assist Alzheimer’s Australia and its member organisations to ensure that their programs and services provide equitable access to people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Network consists of a broad range of representatives from all states and territories. The New South Wales state representatives are Yvonne Santalucia from Sydney South West Area Health Service and Nicky Hayward-Wright from Alzheimer’s Australia.

The Network enjoys the opportunity to meet with the broader community prior to its state meetings. This year, the first national meeting is taking place in Sydney and will be an invaluable opportunity for members of the Network to meet with a range of health workers, ethnic communities and organisations to discuss issues pertinent to dementia.

Some of the areas that we would like to address are:

- The availability of appropriate services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people with dementia and their carers.
- The availability of appropriate resources for CALD community needs.
- CALD community awareness of Dementia and services available.
- The availability of, and appropriateness of respite services.
- Specific training needs for CALD service providers.
- Residential and community care service needs in relation to dementia and your community.
- How can the Network better assist people at the community level?

The themes highlighted above are a guide to some of the issues that we would like to engage with the community about. If you have an issue you would like to see addressed that we have not included above, please come along to the meeting and express your ideas or concerns. Members of the Network will also be available to discuss how Alzheimer’s Australia can act as a voice for you in relation to dementia issues and your community members.

Please do not hesitate to call Helena on 08 8372 2140 or Yvonne on 9828 6931 if you have any questions. All members of the National Cross Cultural Dementia Network look forward to seeing you at the forum.
A fairer deal for all Australians? Continued from Page 1...

- Empower people with dementia and their families to make decisions about their future in respect of their financial and medical choices. Current legal provisions relating to enduring powers of attorney and advance care directives are complex and vary across the jurisdictions: terminologies are confusing and inconsistent and all too often the wishes of the person with dementia are not appropriately followed. A national approach is needed to foster consistency in legislative provisions and mutual recognition in advance care planning legislation, including powers of attorney across Australian jurisdictions so that the law and documentation are nationally consistent, user friendly and readily available. In addition, an education campaign is necessary to inform the Australian community of the benefits, issues and processes involved with advanced planning for their health, their money and their lives.

Alzheimer’s Australia has put forward other important proposals in its 2008 Budget Submission including action to assist General Practitioners upgrade their skills in the diagnosis and management of dementia: a national awareness program to provide a wider understanding of the importance of lifestyle changes in reducing the risk of dementia and an increased priority for community programs including the Home and Community Care program.

For those who would like to read the full budget submission, it can be accessed on www.alzheimers.org.au together with the Dementia Manifesto.

GLENN REES
National Executive Director, Alzheimer’s Australia

Dementia Training Resources for People with Special Needs (CALD) Project

This project was funded by the Australian Government, through the Department of Health and Ageing, to develop and pilot training resources to support improved dementia awareness and care for people from CALD backgrounds. The resources are intended for a wide audience, including care staff, volunteers, ancillary support staff and interpreters who provide their services to people with dementia from a CALD background and their families.

The project has been informed by a specialist group with expertise in CALD dementia and care, including Maria Bunn from the CALD Network. Other members of the Network, including Jaklina Michael, Natalja Nesvadba and Mirjana Beresic (AAVic) and Helena Kyriazopoulos have provided significant advice and support.

The concept for the content centres around the use of storytelling and engagement with a real life situation to enhance learning. The story “A Vietnamese Family Story” is accompanied by a Notebook for learners. The content aligns with three units of competency from the Certificate III in Aged Care and should be a great incentive for further study for learners who choose to undertake the assessment. The material will be in CD-rom format; however, there will also be a DVD which is not interactive and can be used by discussion groups and in informal learning situations.

The project is in its second stage, where the filming of the content has been completed and material is being edited.

The draft resources will be piloted in NSW, Victoria, SA and ACT. After evaluation for their relevance, accessibility, educational validity and sustainability, the resources will be finalised for distribution later in 2008.

For anyone interested in finding out more about the resource, please contact Helen O’Brien at Alzheimer’s Australia (National Office) on (02) 6278 8907 or helen@alzheimers.org.au

Web Links

- Alzheimer’s Australia
  www.alzheimers.org.au
- Alzheimer’s Disease International
  www.alz.co.uk
- Australian Government
  www.australia.gov.au
- Australian Multicultural Foundation
  www.amf.net.au
- Cultural Diversity in Ageing
  www.culturaldiversity.com.au
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council (FECCA)
  www.fecca.org.au
- New Online Resource on Culturally Appropriate Aged Care:
  www.culturaldiversity.com.au
- Diversity in Health 2008
  www.dhi.gov.au/conference
Multilingual Resident Handbook Now Available Free-of-Charge

The Multilingual Resident Handbook is a valuable tool that assists residential aged care service providers to easily compile and publish resident handbooks in multiple languages, and thereby supply residents and their families with essential information in their preferred language.

The handbook is currently available in English, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Maltese, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese. Four more languages will be added in early 2008: Dutch, German, Portuguese and Tagalog.

Developed by the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing (the Victorian organisation funded through the PICAC initiative), the handbook is now available free-of-charge. See the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing website for more information on how to access and use the Multilingual Resident Handbook: www.culturaldiversity.com.au.

Learning Cross Culturally - Chinese Grey Power

Chinese Welfare Services promotes positive ageing. The project Learning Cross Culturally is to arouse the Chinese community to recognise the importance of being active and involved in lifelong learning.

Growing old is everyone’s future. Being aged is inevitable. Learning Cross Culturally recruits senior Australian Chinese who came from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. These seniors are interested in Chinese cultural activities. They join a team according to their interest, such as singing, exercise, painting, playing a musical instrument, dancing, etc. Free training is given weekly. These seniors also form the Chinese Grey Power. This is a performance group that goes out to the mainstream community such as schools, nursing homes and cultural organisations to perform a cultural workshop, such as Tai Chi, singing, etc. A Cultural Awareness Variety Show will conclude the project in June 2008. Once again, the Chinese Grey Power show-cases their talent and skills.

There are more meanings behind the scene. The project provides a free learning opportunity to older people to develop their potential skills, social responsibility and fellowship necessary to create positive change. In addition, the exposition of Chinese culture in the performance workshop bridges any cultural difference misunderstanding.

Chinese Grey Power officially formed on November 7, 2007. So far we have recruited 35 members and 14 volunteers with 8 instructors included. Members join the Calligraphy & Ink Painting class, Cantonese Singing class, Cooking class, Dance class, Mandarin Singing class, Qi Gong class and Tai Chi class. Craft class and Musical Instrument class will organise soon.

Even before the formation, Chinese Grey Power has performed Qi Gong, Singing and Tai Chi in different events, such as Moon festival, AGM of Chinese Welfare Services.

This project is funded by the Department for Families and Communities. Project coordinator: Peony Brown
Activity aprons for CALD client with dementia

Lack of meaningful activity for a person with dementia can lead to boredom and an increase in behavioural issues. This in turn can place an enormous amount of stress on carers and family members. In order to tackle these issues, Baptcare introduced activity aprons as part of their Diversional Therapy program. The purpose of activity aprons is to provide occupation and activity for a person who has dementia, which can in turn lead to a reduction in agitation or disruptive behaviour. An apron can stimulate memories of various household routines and tasks that may have been forgotten and give the wearer many hours of pleasure through sensory, cognitive and physical stimulation. These aprons can be custom made to suit a persons cultural and lifestyle background and can include: soft tactile fabric for touching; a zipper to zip; buttons to undo; beads to touch and feel; pockets to place things in; shoe laces/string/ribbon to tie and untie; touch and feel; pockets to place things in; shoe laces/string/ribbon to tie and untie.

Mrs. V. was a widow aged in her eighties from a Dutch background with diagnosed dementia. Every morning Mrs. V. would sit at the kitchen table and lift up the hem of her skirt and place it on the table. She would then bend over the material, looking closely at it as she proceeded to run her fingers along the hem, picking it up and smoothing it out. This behaviour had everyone baffled especially when Mrs. V. also began undressing herself during the day and walking around in her underwear during the day and walking around in her underwear and becoming quite agitated. After Baptcare’s Diversional Therapist conducted an assessment and a social profile for Mrs. V, it was discovered that she used to work from her home as a tailoress. The behaviour of lifting her skirt onto the table was explained by Mrs. V as “I’m sewing a dress”. Likewise, the habit of undressing was related to Mrs. V. undertaking client dress fittings.

Armed with this information, the Diversional Therapist decided to try using an activity apron that utilised Mrs. V’s sewing background. A layered apron was made, taking into account her Dutch heritage, complete with zips, buttons, lace, ribbons and bobbins. The apron was an instant success with Mrs. V. as she now had material that she could pick up and ‘sew’. Mrs. V. spent many happy hours keeping her hands and fingers busy and her mind occupied.

The apron was used by carers, visitors and family members to prompt reminiscing with Mrs. V. about her life, giving them opportunities to communicate with her.

The apron was used by Mrs. V. until the day that she died.

World Alzheimer’s Day Celebrated Around the Globe

As the tradition of World Alzheimer’s Day grows and ADI’s membership expands we are very pleased to see the day being celebrated by many new and emerging Alzheimer associations. The Caribbean island of Aruba launched the Alzheimer’s Teal Ribbon Week, a campaign which involved a well attended ‘Jazz in White’ Gala Dinner fundraising concert. In Lithuania, a marathon was held in honour of the day in the country’s capital, Vilnius, and in Armenia a memory walk and round table attracted the attention of the country’s media and research community. Alzheimer’s Jamaica was fortunate to receive a visit from Keith Turner from the UK, a man living with dementia who flew to Jamaica for World Alzheimer’s Day with his wife Lillian to help raise awareness of the disease. After meeting Keith and Lillian at an ADI Alzheimer University, Alzheimer’s Jamaica were inspired by the role people with dementia can play within an Alzheimer association and how they can help to attract the attention of the media. The association in Jamaica also received a visit from Orien Reid, chairman of ADI, which secured them three television interviews and provided a great start to their awareness campaign. The participation of governments and policy makers was another prominent feature of World Alzheimer’s Day 2007. In Argentina the Ministry of Health sponsored a documentary on dementia which was screened on the day; in China a public seminar in Beijing was attended by the government’s vice premier and leaders of the public health ministry. In Turkey, a press conference was held to introduce a new belt to help locate patients with a tendency to wander.

As in previous years, ADI produced brightly coloured materials to help members raise awareness around the world. We are proud that the global dementia community continues to unite each year to remind the world that the people with dementia have ‘no time to lose’.

This article is an extract from World Alzheimer’s Day, taken from the Alzheimer’s Disease International’s Global Perspective Newsletter, December 2007. For full article please see their website at http://www.alz.co.uk/adi/publications.html.