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Craig Masarei – Chairman, Alzheimer’s Australia WA

Each year, Dementia Awareness Week gives us the opportunity to educate the community about Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia.

It is also a time where we can specially honour people living with dementia and raise awareness about how to reduce the risk.

Television campaign
A particular highlight of the Week was a new TV advertising campaign which was produced in conjunction with Alzheimer’s organisations throughout Australia.

The powerful commercial, which was aired on Channel 7, aimed to make people aware of the difference between an occasional lapse of memory and dementia. It also encouraged people to contact us through our helpline if they were concerned about dementia.

“Many Voices” symposium
This year, the Week started with a two day symposium focussing on the special needs of groups of people affected by dementia. These groups ranged from people from culturally diverse backgrounds to people with Down Syndrome.

The “Many Voices” symposium, held at the UWA Club, was attended by more than 200 health and aged care professionals and attracted international and local speakers.

On the move
On Sunday 19 September, Curtin University oval came alive for the second Alzheimer’s Australia WA MemoryWalk. Led by 6PR’s Glen Jakovich and Tony Mac, more than 900 walkers raised an extraordinary $100,000 (and still counting). While the funds raised are important for our work, what was most important on the day was seeing the large number of families walking with their mother or father, or walking to remember a person they loved.

Inspiring too were the staff from residential care facilities who took part including teams from Hall and Prior, Amana Living and a very large group from Southern Cross Care.

In all, 10,000 flags were planted in the centre of the oval by the walkers which marked every 0.5km lap they completed.

Walkers were also on the move against dementia in the far North as Port Hedland held its inaugural Memory Walk. We hope this is the first of many walks throughout the State in future years.

City focus
To wrap up the week we held an awareness day in the City of Perth. Hundreds of people took the opportunity to visit the Memory Van in the Murray St Mall to learn more about dementia and to try a quick MemoryTest.

Corporate partners
It gives me great pleasure to announce three new corporate partners.

Our “Silver Memories” Corporate Partners are Statewide Insurance, Invocare and Marsh. In future issues we will feature articles about our partners and let you know how our partnerships are assisting us to achieve our goals.

Please contact us if you would like to know more about our corporate partnership program or if you would like to support our work in other ways.

My best wishes for a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Changing the way we care
International speaker and authority on geriatric medicine and aged care, Dr Bill Thomas will be in WA for a tour from 6 to 10 December.

Dr Thomas has been credited as one of the world’s foremost culture change leaders in aged care. In the early 1990s, he developed the Eden Alternative philosophy which sought to deinstitutionalise care facilities by alleviating the “three plagues” of boredom, helplessness and loneliness for residents.

The philosophy proposes creative ways to “change the culture” of nursing homes by bringing life and laughter into the lives of seniors. It also calls for fundamental changes in the relationship between staff and management.

Dr Thomas has authored a number of books on ‘eldercare’ and has been the recipient of an America’s Award and was honoured as one of America’s Best Leaders in recognition of his contribution to health and aged care in America and around the world.

Opportunity to learn
Alzheimer’s Australia WA Chief Executive Officer Frank Schaper said Dr Thomas’ visit would be a rare opportunity for the health and aged care sector in WA to be inspired by one of the world’s leading change agents in ageing.

“From rethinking our paradigm of what it means to care for an elder to challenging our perceptions of elderhood, Dr Thomas is sure to make us think about, reflect on and reconsider the work we do,” Mr Schaper said.

A screen shot of the new Alzheimer’s Australia WA television commercial.

Mind Matters

Australasian College of Health Service Management
New Bunbury service

A new dementia service in South West WA will offer specialist advice to health and aged care personnel and family carers.

The new Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) will provide clinical support, information and advice to aged care providers and family carers and will help ensure care services provided to people with dementia are responsive to their individual and diverse needs.

Dementia increasing in South West WA

According to Alzheimer’s Australia WA Chief Executive Officer Frank Schaper, “the new service was set up in response to the predicted increase in the number of people with dementia in the South West”.

“Without a medical breakthrough, the number of people with dementia in the South West is predicted to rise by 422% in the next four decades from 1,800 to almost 9,400,” Mr Schaper said.

“This is because cities like Bunbury and Busselton, which are popular choices for retirees, have a bigger proportion of seniors compared to other regional areas.”

MP shares her experience

In launching the new service, Federal Member for Forrest, Nola Marino MP, said her family had no idea how to deal with her late mother’s diagnosis until they attended an Alzheimer’s Australia WA course on dementia in Perth.

She said this new service would mean people living in the South West did not have to travel to Perth to get information and support.

Wide range of services

The new Alzheimer’s Australia WA South West office will be staffed by two experienced health professionals who will provide clinical support, dementia information, care planning and education and training to care providers.

Mr Schaper said the predicted growth in the number of people with dementia in the South West means more families and aged care providers will have to take on the burden of care.

“The expansion of dementia services into the South West will ensure the current and future needs of people with dementia can be met,” he said.

Our new dementia champions

We are pleased to announce the following Federal and State members of parliament have signed up as a Dementia Champion.

- Nola Marino, MP
- Hon. Michael Mischin, MLC
- Hon. Nick Goiran, MLC
- Paul Miles, MLA

Become a Champion

You can help champion the cause for greater awareness of dementia, better services for people with dementia and their families and help end the stigma related to the condition. Sign up online at www.dementiachampions.org.au

Rose McKenney

When Rose McKenney set off on her usual walk one Sunday and did not return when expected, the alarm was raised.

Rose, who has early stage dementia and lives in an independent hostel, was reported missing by staff at 4pm.

The police were called and a search of the area was conducted but Rose was unable to be found.

When the police discovered that Rose was carrying her Safe2Walk® GPS device, they contacted the Alzheimer’s Australia WA helpline and sought the assistance of a staff member.

When it was discovered that Rose’s device was turned off, the staff member was able to reset it remotely and obtain an online location point of the Safe2Walk GPS device. The information was then relayed to the police who responded immediately.

Missing person found

When First Class Constable Stephen Ryan arrived at the location provided by the GPS device, he found Rose curled up asleep under a tree on a steep embankment close to the Canning River in Wilson - 8 kms from home. By this point, she had been missing for more than six hours and was beginning to develop hypothermia. She was taken to hospital for observation and was discharged the next day.

Good outcome

Alzheimer’s Australia WA Manager of Consultancy Services Jason Burton said if it was not for the Safe2Walk device and the police, the outcome for Rose could have been tragic.

“We were fortunate to be able to locate Rose in time as research has shown that a person with dementia who goes missing for longer than 12 hours is twice as likely to be found dead or seriously injured,” he said.

Constable Ryan described Safe2Walk as a lifesaver.

Rose’s son Noel said the Safe2Walk device has given the family confidence and peace of mind knowing Rose can still maintain her freedom and independence.

About Safe2Walk

Safe2Walk provides a person with dementia with a GPS location device that is also a one-touch mobile phone and panic alert. For more information, visit www.safe2walk.com.au or call (08) 9388 2800.
Thousands remembered at Memory Walk 2010

More than 10,000 flags were planted in memory of loved ones and friends with dementia at the 2010 Alzheimer’s Australia WA Memory Walk.

The Walk, which was held at Edinburgh Oval, Curtin University, also raised more than $100,000 for support and care services for people with dementia and their families.

Alzheimer’s Australia WA Chief Executive Officer Frank Schaper said the Memory Walk was a public show of support for people living with dementia in WA and highlighted the prevalence of the illness.

“I congratulate everyone who took part and completed laps and planted flags in memory of loved ones and friends with dementia,” he said.

The heroes
One of the larger teams that walked on the day was “Walking for Robbo”. The team was made up of family and friends who walked in support of Bill Robertson who has dementia.

Other family teams that came to walk in memory and support of a loved one included the Delane’s, the McGavock’s, the Brenkley’s, the Goldflams and many more.

“It was inspiring to see families coming together to celebrate the life of a loved one at the Walk,” Mr Schaper said.

Celebrity support the walk
Mr Schaper thanked West Coast Eagles legend Glen Jakovich and fellow 6PR personality Tony McManus for taking part and supporting the Memory Walk.

Top fundraisers
The top online fundraising team this year was the “Joy Wynne Winners” which raised more than $4,600. The team was organised by Danielle Nicholls to honour her grandmother who recently passed away. The team included Emily Fox, Jan Wynne, Janelle Manton, Nino Orifici, Simon Jones, Ana Hill and Jane Stewart.

The highest individual online fundraiser was Glen Jakovich who raised more than $4,000.

Most laps walked
Jane Sheldrick and Elaine Morgan from the Kinross Angels team recorded the most number of laps - 94. This equates to a whopping 47kms!

The team that recorded the most number of laps was “Mum’s Mob & Nana’s Nippers”. The team walked 399 laps which equated to 199.5kms.

Port Hedland walk
For the first time, a Memory Walk was also held in Port Hedland. Organised by Elizabeth Thomas in memory of her father, the Walk raised $450.

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Memory Walk 2010 partner
Curtin University

Memory Walk 2010 media partner
6PR 882 News Talk

Walking for Robbo: family and friends walked in support of Bill Robertson who has dementia.

Danielle Nicholls and Emily Fox from Team Joy Wynne Winners

Memory Walk celebrities Glen Jakovich (left) and Tony McManus taking part in the Walk.

Some of the messages written in memory of loved ones.
Fifteen teams of golfers teed off at Meadow Springs Golf and Country Club on 2 September for the BGC sponsored annual Alzheimer’s Australia WA Golf Day and raised more than $18,000.

Alzheimer’s Australia WA CEO Frank Schaper said it was the second year BGC Construction has sponsored the Golf Day.

“We are extremely grateful to BGC Construction and to our print sponsor, B&S Printing,” he said.

Frank also expressed his thanks to 6PR’s Harvey Deegan for not only playing on the day but also taking on the role of the Master of Ceremonies for the luncheon.

“Glen Jakovich also made a tremendous contribution by donating a prize and sharing the very personal story of his late mother’s battle with dementia.”

Frank thanked all the corporate teams that participated and said that the community commitment to raising funds was an inspiration.

Seven years ago, Carolyn’s mother, Jill was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

Today, the former nurse has limited movement and has not spoken for almost two years.

Carolyn, who attends the Alzheimer’s Australia WA Moora carer support group, said her mother used to be a very outgoing and strong person but is now only able to move one leg and arm slightly and can’t turn her head.

“It’s one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to go through,” she said.

“I just wish she would come back but I know it’s never going to happen.”

Watching her mother’s decline inspired Carolyn to make a difference by holding a “Bush to Beach” trek to help fundraise for Alzheimer’s Australia WA.

She went on to mark out the 157km route, organised the support crew for the riders and horses and went about seeking donations.

Carolyn’s commitment resulted in a successful trek that raised more than $9,300.

She thanked everyone who supported the trek, particularly her husband Darryl for helping her make the project become a reality.

Two new directors have been elected to the Board of Alzheimer’s Australia WA.

Andrew Hogan is the Group General Manager of InvoCare Australia - the largest and leading provider of funeral services and grief and loss educational services in Australia and South-East Asia.

Amanda Mitchell-Lewis has worked in the financial services industry for more than 20 years and runs her own financial planning business.

Alzheimer’s Australia WA Chairman Craig Masarei welcomed the new directors at the organisation’s recent Annual General Meeting.

“Andrew and Amanda are both passionate about improving the quality of life of people with dementia and their families and will bring a wealth of experience to the Board,” he said.

He congratulated Terry Phillips on her re-election as a director and paid tribute to retiring directors Sonya Smart and Margi Shipley.

The 2010 Alzheimer’s Australia WA Annual Report is now available online at www.alzheimers.asn.au

Hard copies are available upon request by calling (08) 9388 2800.
Dementia and sexuality

A new Alzheimer’s Australia paper has called on carers and aged care providers to balance human rights and duty of care when dealing with sexual expression in people with dementia.

“Understanding Dementia Care and Sexuality in Residential Facilities” highlights the complex issues facing carers and service providers when dealing with sexuality and behaviours perceived as sexual.

Case studies

The paper provides a number of case studies to illustrate some of the issues that need to be addressed by those providing care for people with dementia.

A lady living with dementia who is admitted into residential care and is unable to recognise her husband may form a romantic attachment with another male resident who is also living with dementia. The husband may react in an angry manner and blame staff for not protecting his wife.

In another example, a wife is upset after visiting her husband who has severe dementia. The husband is a tall, well built man and has shown severe dementia. The husband may react to his demands for sex.

Another scenario includes a man in a same sex relationship who enters residential care as his dementia worsens. His partner of 40 years overhears a staff member making derogatory remarks about their relationship.

The supervisor needs to let the partner know that the facility does not condone such behaviour from staff and that knowledge of their same sex relationship will not alter his partner’s care in any way.

A number of occasions and the manager approached the wife about it. The wife explained that she tried to control her husband’s rough behaviour by giving in to his demands for sex. The wife needs to feel that she has support from the facility as she faces this challenging situation. If required, staff could help them stay in public spaces or suggest other forms of sexual relief for the husband.

Sensitive and confronting topic

The paper’s author Adjunct Associate Professor Sally Garratt said dementia and sexuality is a sensitive topic and can cause embarrassment and upset to people with dementia, their families and carers and care staff.

“Issues relating to sexuality are confronting even though sexual expression is part of every human being,” she said.

“A person with dementia will have a need for sexual expression in some form and the challenge is to recognise differing values, feelings and morals while ensuring rights, self-esteem and duty of care are not compromised.”

Resource available

The “Understanding Dementia Care and Sexuality in Residential Facilities” paper is a valuable resource for family carers, community care and residential care providers and other health care professionals.

The paper is available at www.alzheimers.org.au or by contacting Alzheimer’s Australia WA on (08) 9388 2800.

Available now from our Library

Vitamin B may reduce Alzheimer’s risk

A study has found people who eat a diet rich in vitamin B12 may be protecting themselves from Alzheimer’s disease.

Researchers led by Dr Babak Hooshmand, from the Aging Research Center at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, tracked the homocysteine levels in the blood of 271 Finns aged 65 to 79 who did not have dementia at the beginning of the study. In the seven year study, 17 people developed Alzheimer’s.

The team looked at homocysteine as high levels of this protein have been linked to stroke. They also looked at levels of holotranscobalamin, which is the active protein of vitamin B12 and lowers blood levels of homocysteine.

The study found that for each small increase of homocysteine, called a micromolar, the risk of Alzheimer’s rose 16 percent. However, with each small increase in vitamin B12, called a picomolar, the risk fell by two percent.

Dr Hooshmand said that for every 10 micrograms per milliliter increase in vitamin B12, the risk of Alzheimer’s fell by 16 percent. He said the study was encouraging, but more research is needed before there can be any conclusive evidence on the role of vitamin B12 supplements on neurodegenerative diseases.

“Previous studies have reported that vitamin B12 deficiency is a common condition in the elderly,” Dr Hooshmand said.

“Elder rage or take my father... Please!”

By Jacqueline Marcotte

This book contains practical caregiving tips, startling statistics and information on long term care insurance, eldercare services and advice on how to hire live-in caregiving help. The book is suitable for anyone facing the challenges of caregiving and for everyone who thinks it will never happen to them!

“Life worth living”

William R. Thomas, MD

This book describes the philosophy of the Eden Alternative model of nursing home care which embraces the idea that nursing homes can be places that are dynamic, living, growing environments where residents and staff make choices together to provide quality care. The environmental changes discussed include the introduction of a range of animals, birds, plants, gardens and children to help eliminate the three “plagues” of loneliness, helplessness and boredom.

“Dementia: from diagnosis to management”

By Michelle S. Bourgeois and Ellen M. Hickey

This volume provides essential reading for clinicians and administrators seeking to improve the lives of people living with dementia. It contains a comprehensive description of a functional and behavioural approach to assessing and treating persons with dementia. The practical information is embedded in a scientific context of the causes, neuropsychological manifestations and complications of dementia.

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According to Dr Hooshmand the results showed that vitamin B12 and related metabolites may have a role in Alzheimer’s disease but more research is needed before there can be any conclusive evidence on the role of vitamin B12 supplements on neurodegenerative diseases.

“Previous studies have reported that vitamin B12 deficiency is a common condition in the elderly,” Dr Hooshmand said.

He said a balanced diet that includes eggs, fish, poultry and other meats is the best way to get the vitamin B12 one needs rather than supplements.

The findings from the study were published in the October issue of Neurology.

Available now from our Library

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Workshops and courses

Family and friends

Family members and friends course
These free workshops are for people who know or care for a person with dementia. They provide an understanding of dementia and how to achieve better communication and care strategies.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park

*Format one: two full days, a fortnight apart (lunch included)
Time: 10am to 3.30pm
When: 1 & 15 December, 5 & 19 February 2011, 16 & 30 March 2011

Mind your Mind©
This free workshop covers the seven lifestyle changes you can make now to reduce your risk of developing dementia later on in life.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park

When: 8 December (2.00pm to 4.00pm)
24 January 2011 (10.00am to 12noon)
22 February 2011 (6.00pm to 8.00pm)
24 March 2011 (2.00pm to 4.00pm)

Using reminiscence and life stories
This free workshop provides participants with the knowledge and skills to engage in reminiscing and create a life story book with a person with dementia, along with the support of their family and friends.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park
When: 9 March 2011 (1.00pm to 3.00pm)

Depression and dementia
This free workshop will help family carers understand the impact of depression on people with dementia, ways to help the person and how to access available support services.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park
When: 17 March 2011 (1.00pm to 4.00pm)

Health and aged care staff

Positive dementia care
This one-day workshop provides the underpinning knowledge and skills needed to interact effectively with people who have dementia.

Where: Arthritis Foundation Seminar Room (17 Lemnos Street, Shenton Park) Time: 9.30am to 4pm
Cost (2010): $75+GST (lunch included)
Cost (2011): $120+GST (lunch included)

Experiencing dementia
This simulation and workshop offers people working in aged care, the chance to experience some of the feelings and emotions that may be associated with having dementia.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park
When: 20 January 2011, 17 February 2011, 10 March 2011
Cost: $150+GST

Changing worlds – building human habitats
Participants will learn from culture change expert and founder of the Eden Alternative, Dr Bill Thomas about creating a sense of self-worth and contentment in the lives of elders and carereavers through the principles of the Eden Alternative.

Perth workshop
Where: Wollaston College Conference Centre, Mount Claremont
Tuesday 7 December 2010
Time: 1.30pm to 5.00pm

Albany workshop
Where: Motel Le Grande, Albany
Thursday 9 December 2010
Time: 1.30pm to 5.00pm
Cost: $55 (incl GST) per person

Dementia care in hospitals
This workshop provides information and strategies for all staff working in acute care to provide effective person-centred care to patients with dementia.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park
When: 21 March 2011 (8.30am to 3.30pm)
Cost: Free for staff working in acute care.
Attendance attracts 6.0 RCNA CNE points as part of RCNA’s Life Long Learning program (3LP).

Nature in dementia
This workshop provides an overview of the principles of best-practice garden and landscape design for environments that will be used by people with dementia.

Where: Alzheimer’s Australia WA 9 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park
When: 3 March 2011 (1.30pm to 4.30pm)
Cost: $70+GST
Attendance attracts 3.0 RCNA CNE points as part of RCNA’s Life Long Learning program (3LP).

For a complete list of workshops or for bookings, please call (08) 9388 2800 during office hours or visit www.alzheimers.asn.au

As Australia’s oldest and largest dementia organisation, Alzheimer’s Australia WA is at the forefront of dementia care services, with world-class research, risk reduction and education and training programs designed to meet the challenge of what has been described by Access Economics as “a national dementia epidemic”.

Milestones Editor
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Disclaimer
Articles in this publication provide a general summary of the subject matter covered. Any person with dementia should seek professional advice about their specific case. Alzheimer’s Australia WA is not liable for any error or omission in this publication. Permission should be sought from the Editor before reproducing articles and/or images. Should permission be given, the source must be acknowledged.

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