Media Release

Dementia is core business for aged care

- Shortfall of 279,000 aged care places by 2050
- Dementia is a key driver of this increased demand
- Shortages in both community and residential care places

A new report from Access Economics warns that Australia is facing a shortage of 279,000 aged care places by 2050.

Increasing rates of dementia largely drives this shortfall, and in NSW this will result in an estimated 95,200 older people who may not have access to the aged care services they need by mid-century.

The report, Caring Places Volume 2, which is a follow-up to Caring Places Volume 1 released in August 2010, looks at how this will impact on every federal electorate in Australia. The shortages are for both residential care places and community care packages and the projections are based on current Government policy.

The report, commissioned by Alzheimer's Australia, comes one month after the release of the Productivity Commission’s draft report on aged care reform.

Alzheimer's Australia NSW CEO The Hon. John Watkins said: “The reform of aged care should recognise the extra demands that dementia care places on family carers as well as the additional costs on service providers.

“A comprehensive plan is needed to address the dementia epidemic that embraces not only aged care reform but ensuring timely diagnosis for people with dementia.”

Aged care provider, Bupa Care Services (BCS) is working in partnership with Alzheimer's Australia to develop better treatment and management strategies for people with dementia.

“Sixty-five percent of residents in Bupa homes currently have a diagnosis of dementia,” BCS Managing Director, Paul Gregersen said.

“Although everyone desires to stay in their own home, our research reveals that caring for someone with dementia can be an overwhelming burden on the family. We hope the Government gives priority to funding dementia specific aged care to meet the needs of our ageing population,” he said.
Ita Buttrose AO, OBE, President Elect of Alzheimer’s Australia said the number of Australians with dementia will grow to almost 1 million by mid-century.

“The undersupply of residential and community aged care places can be attributed in large part to the increasing numbers of those over 85 years and the growth in the number of people with dementia,” Ms Buttrose said.

“These numbers show that dementia care is core business for aged care.

“The Productivity Commission’s report, made a great start in recommending entitlement to aged care, increased consumer choice and flexibility of services,” said Buttrose.

“However we were discouraged to see that not one of the 42 recommendations dealt specifically with dementia and we urge the Commission to make dementia care the highest priority as they finalise their deliberations.”

The Access Economics report has been released on the same day as a fundraising lunch being held by Alzheimer’s Australia NSW, featuring Sir Michael Parkinson CBE, at NSW Parliament House.

Sir Michael is an Honorary Ambassador for Alzheimer’s Australia NSW. His mother had dementia and he has been a passionate advocate for better care for people in hospital and in aged care facilities, most recently, as the National Dignity Ambassador for the British Government’s Dignity in Care Campaign.

Today’s lunch with Sir Michael has been generously sponsored by Bupa Care Services Australia.

The lunch has also been generously supported by Guardian Funerals and NRMA Motoring & Services.

Volume 2 of the *Caring Places* report shows the numbers of additional aged care services that will be required across the States and Territories, as well as Commonwealth Electoral Divisions and Aged Care Planning Regions. It is available at [www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au)

*Alzheimer’s Australia NSW* is the peak body for people with dementia and their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information.

Currently 269,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to double by 2030, taking more lives than cancer or heart disease.

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500
An interpreter service is available
(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)
Dementia is a National Health Priority www.alzheimers.org.au

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