



## A Night To Remember

On 7 July 2011, Alzheimer's Australia NT hosted a very special evening. A Night to Remember brought a diverse group of 170 Territorians together for an outdoor dinner at Skycity Darwin, to listen to Baroness Susan Greenfield speak about the future of the ageing brain. As our major fundraiser of the year, the night was an absolute success, with sell-out attendance, financial support from a number of local businesses, and a well-patronised raffle. Alzheimer's Australia raised over \$7,000 on the night.



Clare Martin, Baroness Greenfield, Ruth Leslie-Rose, Sue Bradley

We were thrilled to welcome Baroness Susan Greenfield to Darwin. A professor at Oxford University, the Baroness is one of Britain's foremost neuroscientists. As an award-winning science communicator she has spoken widely about the science of the brain and Alzheimer's disease. Baroness Greenfield has been Professor of Synaptic Pharmacology since 1996 at Oxford where she heads a multi-disciplinary research group exploring novel brain mechanisms linked to neurodegeneration.

Baroness Greenfield thoroughly engaged attendees with a clear, concise presentation about the future impact of dementia. She reminded us that by 2050, it is estimated that one million Australians will be diagnosed with dementia. It is expected that by 2060, expenditure on dementia care will be the highest of all health conditions. Baroness Greenfield pointed out that by delaying onset of dementia by 5 years, health care savings of \$67.5 billion could be achieved by 2040.

Baroness Greenfield posed the question of whether a dementia free world is a fantasy or reality. She described current approaches to dementia treatment and diagnosis, including the acetylcholine and amyloid hypotheses, arguing that these theories could not fully explain dementia. Invasive approaches such as neurosurgery and gene therapy were also covered. Despite incredible advances in neurosurgery, Baroness Greenfield argued that the widespread and often unpredictable "location" of dementia in the brain, rendered this a high risk option. Baroness Greenfield explained that whilst substantial work has been done in identifying genes implicated in dementia that gene therapy may be ineffective as evidence suggests that firstly, there is not a one-to-one relationship between a gene and a complex mental trait, and secondly, the environment appears to influence gene behaviour. To this end, there is some support for non-invasive approaches such as physical and mental exercise.

Baroness Greenfield proposed an exciting

"anticipatory" approach. She cited evidence that degeneration of the brain is believed to commence 20 to 30 years before the onset of visible symptoms of dementia. By researching markers of degeneration in the blood, in particular, elevated levels of AChE-Peptide, development of medication to block these markers at an early stage, could significantly limit the onset of dementia.

Fantasy or reality? Baroness Greenfield presented sobering statistics which showed drug development takes approximately 10-12 years and up to \$900 million to achieve. At present, the ratio of funding for research into dementia compared to incidence is very small relative to that spent on research into conditions such as cancer, stroke and heart disease. Thus, the "take home" message from Baroness Greenfield's presentation is that we all need to fight to raise awareness of the financial and social costs of dementia to make a cure for dementia a reality.



## You're invited!

### Tea Dance

**Tuesday 20 September**  
**Time: 1.30 – 4.30pm**  
**Greek Orthodox School Hall**  
**Chapman Road, Nightcliff**

Don't miss the Alzheimer's Australia NT annual tea dance, to be held during Dementia Awareness Week.

Once again, the Greek Orthodox School has kindly offered their hall – which is a fantastic venue for dancing and socialising.

This year's theme is "Dancing Around the World", to celebrate the cultural diversity of our Northern Territory population. We would love to see all of you in your national or cultural dress – or just something fancy!

Live entertainment from around the world will be on offer and afternoon tea will be served.

This event is free but bookings are essential for catering purposes. Please contact the Alzheimer's Australia NT Darwin office for further information or to RSVP, on 08 8948 5228 or [nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au](mailto:nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au)

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**Consumer Advisory Group**

Seeking new members! Consumer Advisory Group meets three times a year. If you are interested, please call Anne Pike at Darwin Office.

**Claire Bell**

Vice President  
 Alzheimers Australia NT



Our President, Sue Bradley is presently away overseas, so on behalf of the Board and staff of Alzheimer's Australia NT I would like to thank our Ambassador, Clare Martin, for the fabulous job she did as master of ceremonies on our Night to Remember with Baroness Susan Greenfield at Sky City Darwin in July. The event attracted an audience of 170 and was a big step forward in raising Alzheimer's Australia's profile and creating awareness of the issues facing people as they age in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



The Productivity Commission Report released earlier this month is very disappointing in that although dementia has been discussed, no specific recommendations about dementia have been made. Further, the Australian Government terminated the dementia initiative in the last budget removing guaranteed funding. This is difficult to understand, given that Australia made dementia a national health priority in 2004.

Dementia is a fundamental part of aged care and any reform of aged care is incomplete without a sharp focus on dementia research, prevention and care.

Alzheimer's Australia's "Fight Dementia" campaign is timely and relevant but will need community wide support for maximum effectiveness. Please consider signing up to be a dementia champion and join Senator Trish Crossin who is our inaugural champion for the NT.

Dementia cannot be ignored any longer. We are seeking champions to represent Australians who have dementia, to give them a voice and highlight to the government that it is time for action.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank Marie Gray for her extremely generous donation of \$10,000 to the Alzheimer's Australia Darwin Library. Ms Gray felt that it is important for carers of people with dementia to have access to good quality reading material and her kind donation will ensure that we can update our collection. In recognition of Ms Gray's support the library will be renamed the Marie Gray Library.

**Ruth Leslie-Rose**

Chief Executive Officer  
 Alzheimers Australia NT



Our Night to Remember on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July at Sky City in Darwin was special indeed. I would like to give a big thanks to board members, staff, volunteers

and Claire Bell and her team at AA&P for their considerable support and assistance. I would also like to thank all our sponsors and supporters once again for their generosity, in particular:

- Darwin Airport Operations,
- Carla Furnishers,
- Paspaley Pearls,
- Xtreme Garden Care,
- Debra Mason at Mason Gallery
- Darwin Blues and Roots Club; and
- Parap Fine Foods.

The evening raised over \$7,000 which will be used to support important unfunded programs such as our Life Memory Albums and the Safe Return Program.

The rest of the year will continue to be busy as we move towards Dementia Awareness Week in September and our Fight Dementia Campaign in October.

Unfortunately, the current Australian Government has terminated the dementia initiative, removing guaranteed funding. While we support aged care reform wholeheartedly, dementia must be given the level of importance that we believe is needed. Action is needed in the 2012 budget to ensure that dementia is not forgotten.

Alzheimer's Australia really needs the support you can provide to convince the Government that the dementia initiative must not be terminated and that dementia is appropriately funded at a level that recognises that it is **the** chronic disease of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**www.fightdementia.org.au**

The Fight Dementia website is where you can sign up to become a dementia champion, tell your story, and help to change the Government's mind. If you don't have access to the internet, please contact either the Darwin or Alice Springs office for a printed copy of the Fight Dementia toolkit.

## Welcome to Marsha Murray



Hello to all, I arrived in Qld in 1989 from New Zealand. I lived in Townsville for 20 years, and then spent a few months in Cairns before arriving in Darwin in April 2010. I love the weather and the mix of cultures here. My background

is in social work, along with a few other areas of expertise. However working with people in a caring and learning situation has always been my intended goal. Alzheimer's Australia NT has employed me as their Education Officer. This role is a very worthwhile position, ensuring the true meaning of "Alzheimer's" and "Dementia" is known widely in the community of Darwin and the rural/remote areas. I look forward to meeting you whenever you are in the office or at one of our events - please come and say hello.

## Farewell from Erin Wood



It has come time to say goodbye to the close-knit team of Alzheimer's Australia NT!

I have enjoyed travelling far and wide within the Territory in my role as Education Officer. The organisation has given me the opportunity to learn a great deal over the past 15 months. I hope to continue to learn and enjoy my adventures on the West coast of Australia.

## Farewell from Susan Williams

It's time to say farewell temporarily to my second family at Alzheimer's Australia NT, so that I can focus on a new addition to my own family. By the time this goes to print, my partner, Geoff & I will have commenced



a new role as parents. No doubt I will keep in touch with all the happenings at AlzANT for the six months that I am absent - thanks for your interest and support during the pregnancy and I look forward to seeing you all soon. I promise I will bring the young person along for some "show-and-tell" as soon as we are settled!

## Welcome to Norma & Rod

Norma Sutcliffe and Rod Scarr recently joined the Alzheimer's Australia NT team as our Stepping Out Activities officer and assistant.



Norma reports, "Rod and I have recently joined the AlzANT team and have enjoyed settling into our new Stepping out

roles. We have had great pleasure in meeting and getting to know our group members, their carers, and in many cases, their furry canine companions! We are always on the lookout for new activity ideas so don't hesitate to contact us with your ideas or suggestions. Thank you for making us feel welcome and we look forward to many exciting and happy outings together."

## Volunteers

It is a fact of life that the assistance offered to our organisation by volunteers is essential - as not-for-profit organisations fight for limited funding and donations.

If you are interested in volunteering, even a small bit of your precious time, for Alzheimer's Australia NT, please come along to one of our Volunteer information sessions or morning teas. You will meet with current and prospective volunteers and learn of the rewards volunteering can bring.

At a recent meeting on Friday 26 August, we acknowledged the following volunteers who have assisted with our groups, garden project and office duties: Jimmy Harte; Kerone Byrne; Nektarios Alexi; Norma Sutcliffe; John Flynn; Lorraine Martin; Jean Foxon; Shelly Holland; Chor Sung Neill; Eve White; Helen Gabel; Margaret Wie; Pat Rasmussen; & Robin Koch.

We would also like to acknowledge Yoanna Williams, a high school student, who undertook work experience at Alzheimer's Australia, assisting with group outings, office work and community education.

**Contact our office on 8948 5228 for further information.**

**Become a volunteer today!**

### Alzheimer's Australia National Conference

In May this year, a group of eager Alzheimer's Australia NT delegates attended the biennial Alzheimer's Australia national conference held at the Brisbane Convention Centre. The Alzheimer's Australia Alice Springs team attendance was assisted through funding from the NT Government Community Benefit Fund. A number of our local colleagues from DBMAS, ACAT, and Team Health also attended.

The theme of the conference was "Take a different view" with the aim of the speakers being to encourage us to think differently about: how we view caring for people with dementia, the gamut of symptoms that individuals with dementia experience, and how we can assert dementia's place as a chronic illness in our society to achieve greater recognition for our cause (that is – more funding for research and care).

Our national President, Ms Ita Buttrose AO, OBE (newly appointed this year), opened the conference, challenging us all to stay committed to improving the quality of life of all people living with dementia (whether they be the person with dementia, their family and friends, or carers).

Over three days, we listened to a variety of international and local speakers – academics, scientists, carers, people with dementia, and health professionals (including a well-received presentation by our CEO, Ruth Leslie-Rose, Anne Pike and Annette Koch about our recent theatre project). We viewed poster presentations, chatted to colleagues and exhibitors, and danced till we dropped at the wonderful conference dinner (see picture – and yes, to clarify, we are in 70s-80s fancy dress!).



Helen and Ita Buttrose

We were fortunate to receive some last minute funding from the Alzheimer's Australia national office to invite some of our NT consumers along. These attendees found the conference stimulating and rewarding.

We congratulate the organisers of the conference, Alzheimer's Australia Queensland, and look forward to the next conference which will be held in Tasmania in May 2013. Clearly the NT contingent will be even easier to spot at the Tasmanian conference – we'll be the ones huddled by the heater wearing beanies 24/7!

If you are interested in viewing any of the conference presentations, you will find them on the Alzheimer's Australia website:

<http://www.alzheimers.org.au/research-publications/alzheimers-australia-2011-conference.aspx>



### Dementia Awareness Week

This year, Dementia Awareness Week will run from 16-26 September and is themed "Worried About Your Memory?"

The major aim of Dementia Awareness Week is to encourage people who believe they may have memory problems to seek information and help.

For those who are worried about their own, or someone else's memory, the Alzheimer's Australia publication, "Worried about your memory?" provides information about memory problems and what you can do if you think you are experiencing memory problems.

*Worried about your memory?* is available free of charge by contacting the Alzheimer's Australia NT Darwin office on 1800 100 500.

Alternatively, if you have access to the internet, the booklet can be downloaded from the Alzheimer's Australia website (<http://www.alzheimers.org.au/common/files/NAT/20101215-Nat-Worried-about-your-memory-booklet.pdf>)



## Seniors Month 2011

### **Health & Wellbeing – Jingili Water Gardens**

Once again, the Alzheimer's Australia NT team were invited by Darwin City Council to conduct two Health & Wellbeing sessions during Seniors Month in Darwin. The Jingili Water Gardens played host to the event, allowing the large number of seniors attending to spread out for a mixture of mind games, information sessions and gentle physical exercise. The program included Alzheimer's Australia's Mind Your Mind information session (which informs people about risk reduction strategies for memory loss), ball and balance exercises, Tai Chi, gentle walking groups, and live musical entertainment by Jim Harte. A healthy lunch was shared by all when the activities ended. Special thanks to Nancy McCann from Darwin City Council for another successful collaboration, Helen Gabel who donated a tambourine which was used at the events, Jim Harte for volunteering his time to entertain the crowd, and the Alzheimer's Australia group members who assisted in packing showbags for the event.

For further information about our regular monthly Health & Wellbeing sessions, or to organise a Mind Your Mind session for your community group, please contact our Darwin office on 08 8948 2558 or [nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au](mailto:nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au).

### **CALD Morning Tea**

The CALD morning tea has become a regular social event on the Seniors Month calendar in Darwin. Alzheimer's Australia NT hosted this morning tea to celebrate our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) population in the beautiful grounds of Burnett House at Myilly Point. Seniors from the Darwin community, travellers, our clients and residents of local aged care facilities socialised and reminisced whilst enjoying tea, coffee and scones (graciously donated by Bakers Delight, Darwin). Brooke Barnett added to the ambience, with live music. This event would not be possible without funding from Health Services Aged and Disability Program and the efforts of volunteers from Alzheimer's Australia NT and Burnett House – a special thanks to all of you!

### **Seniors Month – Alice Springs**

The seniors population of Alice Springs is steadily increasing as more people are choosing to remain in Alice Springs when they retire, according to a recent report by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Alice Springs. Alzheimer's Australia NT was pleased to have the opportunity to spread the message about memory loss and risk reduction for dementia at a seniors expo held in Alice Springs

on 16-17 August 2011. Organised by the Central Australia branch of National Seniors Australia as part of Seniors month, the '50 Something expo took place in the Alice Springs Council Andy McNeill Room in conjunction with the ASIC Know Your Rights expo. Community members were encouraged to find out what the future holds in retirement by speaking to a variety of health, financial, legal and other service providers.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Planning for end of life is something we should all be doing ...

Making a will is only a part of the preparation needed. Consideration should also be given to who will look after our financial affairs and who we trust and would like to appoint, to ensure that our care wishes are made clear and respected, should we lose the ability to communicate them ourselves. This process ensures our families and care providers know what we would like to have happen.

In April 2011, Professor Colleen Cartwright addressed the Darwin and Alice Springs communities, on planning for the end of life for people with dementia. A process by which a person can communicate, in advance, decisions about their health care for a future time when they have lost capacity to make their own decisions is called **advanced care planning**. This process is not just a signature on paper; it is the discussion itself with family and important others which is significant. Completion of an advance care plan is completed voluntarily, however research has found that very few people want to leave such decisions to their family and carers as it can help avoid disputes among family and friends about treatment a person should or should not receive.

The law in each State and Territory of Australia relating to advance care planning is different. The Northern Territory, for example, is the only jurisdiction in Australia where it is not possible to appoint an enduring guardian or medical power of attorney. This can cause problems where people have made legal provision in other states or territories only to come to NT and find the arrangements are invalid. If the person has lost capacity to make decisions, since organising their wishes in legal documents in another State or Territory, this can result in legal and emotional difficulties for the family.

Planning ahead for financial and property matters does not present as many challenges to most people as planning for their health care towards their end of life particularly if they are planning for care after they have lost their capacity. The same may be said for planning their funeral arrangements. While some people make their own funeral arrangements, others prefer to leave it to their family or carer; however it would be easier if they expressed their preference to their carer or family member as this would give the person some control in knowing that their wishes are known and respected.

At present the main task is to make the end stage of the lives of people with dementia enjoyable and the best that they can be. It is also important that the family and carers have a good support system after the person they have been caring for has passed away. Hence, it is important that those providing services to people with dementia strive to make the present system work better and encourage health care providers to understand and implement the options that currently exist within the Australian legal system.

Changes to legislation are afoot in the Northern Territory and we will report on these as soon as they are made public. Professor Colleen Cartwright's April 2011 presentation is available on the Alzheimer's Australia website (<http://www.alzheimers.org.au/northern-territory/presentations>). Professor Cartwright's Alzheimer's Australia position paper, No. 23 can also be downloaded (<http://www.alzheimers.org.au/research-publications/alzheimers-australia-numbered-publications.aspx>).

## Veteran's Benefits and Alzheimer's Dementia

### ***Changes to how Veterans' benefits may be determined for people with Alzheimer's dementia.***

Australian military service Veterans and their families can be eligible for various government benefits. In 2010, the Repatriation Medical Authority updated their Statement of Principles (SOP) for Alzheimer's disease. SOPs are used by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to establish a connection between a medical condition and military service, to determine a person's eligibility for benefits.

The SOP for Alzheimer's disease provides a list of factors, at least one of which must exist to

suggest a link between Alzheimer's disease and the relevant service rendered by the person. One of these factors is a history of smoking, and other established risk factors for Alzheimer's are also included. The SOP is available on the Repatriation Medical Authority website, [www.rma.gov.au/SOP/alpha\\_ind/a.htm#Alzheimer](http://www.rma.gov.au/SOP/alpha_ind/a.htm#Alzheimer)

If you or your spouse are a Veteran, and have Alzheimer's disease or died from Alzheimer's disease, you may be eligible for additional benefits. Contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au) or your local Ex-Service Organisation for advice.

## REGIONAL NEWS

### Katherine Community Expo

Alzheimer's Australia NT hosted a community expo in Katherine on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011. The expo provided an opportunity to showcase aged care, disability and community services provided by Northern Territory community and government organisations and commercial providers of affiliated goods and services.

We were thrilled to receive registrations from 37 organisations, including a large variety of health information services, community health providers, residential facilities, and financial/legal services.

Community members who visited the expo remarked on the great opportunity to meet with a variety of organisations at a "one-stop-shop". What's more, stall holders also reported that they benefited from the opportunity to meet with other service providers in this setting. They were able to network in person and discuss ways in which they could collaborate to extend their services.

At the Alzheimer's Australia stall, we spoke to community members seeking information about memory loss for either themselves or family and friends. A number of visitors also engaged in our Mind Your Mind activity sessions and Tai Chi.

Alzheimer's Australia NT sincerely wishes to thank the co-sponsors of the event, HACC, and YMCA Katherine. We would also like to thank St Pauls Church for their delicious catering on the day. We appreciate that so many organisations made an effort to have a presence at the Expo, including many from Darwin – there is hope amongst many organisations that this event will become a regular part of the Katherine community calendar.



The Alice Springs office has seen some changes in the last couple of months with Taria Dick departing to join Paramedics and Wendy de Souza leaving to join the School of the Air. Both Taria and Wendy recognised the challenges faced by people with dementia, their families and carers in Alice Springs and supported their clients passionately. Their contribution to the Alice Springs service was notable and their absence will be felt.

Gail Marsh has returned to Alice Springs on a temporary basis and has been providing support to our clients while we are recruiting a new permanent member of staff. Gail was manager of Alzheimer's Australia Alice Springs prior to relocating to Darwin in 2009 with her family. We expect to have a new permanent Alice Springs staff member in early September.

A morning tea is being planned for Dementia Awareness Week on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September in Alice Springs and further information will be available soon!

### Community Seeds

An initiative by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) which commenced in May this year, raised \$23,775 for Alzheimer's Australia Research (AAR). Alzheimer's Australia came second to Heart Kids, indicating widespread community support for further research into dementia. When community members voted on Facebook, CBA donated \$5 for that vote. A big thank you to all of those who voted, encouraged others to vote and helped spread the word via any means.

*Are you caring for a person with dementia?*

*Do their behaviours make it difficult?*

There is no need to do it alone.

NT DBMAS are available to provide practical advice and support.

**Freecall 1800 699 799**



NT Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service



An Australian Government Initiative

# SUPPORT SERVICES

## Exercise Group

This long running group has certainly lived up to its name of late. Group members have actively participated in boxing, cricket, dancing, drumming, gardening, and mind games led by their energetic leader Annette Koch and assistants, Rod Scarr and Manisha De Zilwa – and numerous volunteers, including Eve White and Jim Harte.

The group was privileged to participate in a session of Caribbean steel drumming in June. Alvin Rostant and Jane Dear, founders of The Caribbean Arts & Entertainment Company, who were temporarily visiting Darwin to perform at Mindel Beach Markets and conduct drumming workshops, showed our group members how to use the steel drums and some were even game enough to have a go! On one occasion, we attended one of Alvin's Long Grasser workshops at St Vincent de Paul in Stuart Park. All group members were still talking about the event weeks later!

Group members have also been spoilt by Bill and Cindy Roy, who have conducted two sing-alongs so far this Dry season. The first event occurred at the beginning of the Dry season in May and was held at the Railway Club (special thanks to the Railway Club owners for their support!). When Bill's friend, Alan Campbell, visited from Brisbane in July, Bill and Alan entertained the group under the moniker, The Mobstars, whilst Cindy coached members to dance an array of new steps. We truly appreciate the enthusiasm with which Bill and Cindy Roy provide entertainment for us!

## Stepping Out

Stepping Out group members have patiently waited for this spectacular Dry season to commence. Since it began in May, they have wasted no time in getting out and about around greater Darwin. As mentioned in our Staff Movements, we have a brand new team in Norma Sutcliffe and Rod Scarr. They have spent time getting to know our group members at a variety of locations (and celebrating birthdays at an almost daily rate for a while there!) including: Dr's Gully (fish feeding); Jenny's Orchid Garden, the Botanic Gardens, Darwin harbour, Fannie Bay Gaol, and more. Norma was pleased to report that partaking in the Senior's Month harbour cruise was a fantastic day out due to calm conditions, a beautiful morning tea and a close up view of The Endeavour.



## Thank you!

The Support Services team would like to make special mention of two temporary assistants of our respite and support groups. Firstly, we would like to thank Jane Dear, who (during a temporary stay in Darwin) stepped into the breach like an old hand when we needed some assistance recently. We would also like to acknowledge the current contribution of Manisha De Zilwa, who is completing a formal study placement with us. This is Manisha's final component required to complete her studies in a Bachelor of Humanitarian and Community Studies at Charles Darwin University. We feel very fortunate that Manisha chose to undertake her university placement at Alzheimer's Australia NT and hope that, in turn, she gains some valuable experience (& not just in gardening! – see our Garden Project story).



## Alzheimer's Australia NT Gardening Project

Many people would attest to the fact that gardening is a therapeutic activity. Our glorious climate in Darwin, whilst subjecting plants to some challenges, can make it quite easy to grow plants successfully. It's amazing what you can achieve with regular sunlight and water!

Alzheimer's Australia NT has been keen to establish a community garden for some time now. Following negotiations with Darwin City Council (the owners of the building we reside in), the go ahead was given, and with an essential kickstart of funding from DBMAS (Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service, Frontier Services), the garden was born! Both Anne Pike, our Support Services Manager and Annette Koch, our Family Support Activities Officer deserve special mention for the effort they have put into this project.

The aim of this project is to provide a therapeutic activity for our clients, which is meaningful, sociable and fulfilling. Many of our clients have enjoyed gardening at home for many years but find themselves unable to continue or initiate such a project at home now. Our Therapy group, which runs on the third Friday of each month, has been a primary "owner" of this project from May 2011. Clients and their carers have prepared seedlings in trays, whilst waiting for the garden beds to be constructed at the Nightcliff Community Centre. It was with great excitement that they were finally able to plant these seedlings in their new home! Other Alzheimer's Australia NT groups have contributed to the project, and this involvement is set to continue on a regular basis when the theme of Therapy group changes in January 2012.

Many friends of Alzheimer's Australia NT have gotten their hands dirty for us in recent months including: Robin Koch, Ken Watson, Jim Harte, Manisha De Zilwa, Lorraine Martin and Pat Rasmussen (whose former role owning a nursery has also meant that she has been able to offer valuable advice for successful growing!). Others have donated plants, including: Val and Brian Cowan (a pineapple); Betty Fagan and Margaret Glowacki (a chilli plant & tomato seedlings). We have also received offerings such as paw paw, passionfruit and sweet potato. All are welcome to participate – and we are pleased to report that our fellow Nightcliff Community Centre tenants are also excited about our project! Please don't hesitate to contact Anne Pike at our Nightcliff office, if you feel that you have something to contribute!



## Professor Cameron Camp

### ***Using Spaced Retrieval as an Intervention for Persons with Dementia and Other Cognitively Impaired Populations***

In June 2011, a group of health professionals in Darwin, with an interest in supporting those with dementia, attended a very special seminar series by Professor Cameron Camp, to learn about spaced retrieval. Professor Cameron Camp is a licensed psychologist in Ohio, specialising in applied cognitive ageing. He has co-authored three textbooks and published over 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals. His prolific research has been funded by grants from the national Alzheimer's Association, the National Institute of Aging, the National Institute of Mental Health and the Retirement Research Foundation.

The series was held across four sessions to accommodate the time difference between Professor Camp's location (Ohio, USA) and Darwin. The seminar was relayed by videoconference link, using facilities at Charles Darwin University, Casuarina campus. Professor Camp propped himself up with caffeine drinks to present 4 hours of material from 8.30pm til 12.30am Ohio time, whilst we had the luxury of attending to his lecture between the very civilised hours of 10.30am – 2.30pm!

The aim of spaced retrieval is the retention of and ability to recall information over very long intervals of time. For the person with dementia, traditional approaches to therapy have typically been ineffective as they have relied on the person's impaired short-term memory to learn and recall information. Spaced retrieval is a memory training technique that uses long-term memory. Individuals practice successfully recalling information over progressively longer periods of time (e.g. from 1 minute initially, gradually increasing the time between practice trials).

Professor Camp illustrated his techniques to the group by showing us footage of individuals embedding new memories over time. We also role-played and workshopped possible interventions based on our own experiences of people with dementia. We were made aware of how spaced retrieval can assist with the challenging behaviours associated with dementia, including wandering, repetitive questioning, medication adherence, inappropriate behaviours, and aggression or frustration.

Amongst the take home messages from this seminar series was that spaced retrieval can be used to assist people with dementia to successfully recall meaningful information and to remember and perform daily activities such as swallowing, attending to meal times, calling people by name, etc. Most importantly however, we learned to acknowledge that behind challenging behaviours there is often a serious frustration that the person with dementia cannot communicate and that by employing spaced retrieval techniques, individuals can feel a greater sense of confidence and independence.



## DCE Courses

Our Education Team has continued to travel throughout the Territory to spread the word about dementia. Our latest visits include delivering nationally accredited courses both in Alice Springs and Katherine, as well as continued training in the Darwin area. These units are attended by professionals working within the aged care industry.

They provide an opportunity to deliver information to workers caring for people with dementia, as well as an occasion to share experiences and to have a good time- as you can see by our smiling faces in the photos!



## **Dementia & Memory Community Centre**

### **Social Group**

This group is for people with memory loss & their family carers. This group meets every 4th Friday of the month 10am to 12 midday. Minimal costs may be involved with the Social Group.

### **Therapeutic Activities Group**

This program is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month and is facilitated by our Family Support Officer, Annette Koch. It provides an opportunity for people with dementia & their carers to engage in a variety of cognitive activities and gentle physical exercise, whilst promoting independence. The theme of the program changes every six months.

### **Memory Matters**

These sessions are held on the 2nd Friday of each month 10am to 12 midday & involves the participants in brain gym, puzzles & cognitive exercise. Members of the public are welcome to join us for these free sessions.

### **Nightcliff Health & Well Being**

These sessions are held on the 1st Friday of each month 10am to 12 midday, incorporating whole body health & education about dementia related topics. Members of the public are welcome to join us for these free sessions.

### **Internet Café**

Feel free to arrange a time with our friendly staff to use our free internet café where we have dedicated computers to browse memory & dementia resources on the internet. We even have some brain teaser games to exercise your brain! Members of the public are welcome to join us at the café.

### **Education & Training**

The following courses are held in Darwin, Alice Springs & Katherine.

### **Community Education**

These information sessions are tailored to meet the needs of individual groups - the general public, including culturally and linguistically diverse groups and health professionals. Please contact us if you would like a free information session.

### **Mind Your Mind Program**

This program highlights the seven lifestyle changes we should adopt that may reduce our risk of dementia. Suitable for the general public and health professionals.

### **Dementia Care Essentials**

Two nationally accredited courses are delivered, designed for health professionals working in the area of dementia care.

### **Carer Education**

This is designed specifically for family carers and friends to assist them in their caring roles. By learning about dementia, carers and friends will have a better understanding of the effects of the disease.

### **Support Services**

#### **Living With Memory Loss**

An information & support program for people living with early stage dementia and their carers & family. If you are interested in participating please contact Anne Pike for further details.

#### **Nightcliff Carer Support Group**

Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 10am. Groups alternate between guest speakers and social functions. If you are interested in participating please contact Teresa for details.

#### **Younger Carers Group**

Meet every 2nd month on the 4th Wednesday from 5.30pm to 7.00pm. Contact Teresa for details.

#### **Exercise Group**

Held every Wednesday for clients with memory loss who are physically fit and enjoy outdoor activities. Fees apply.

#### **Stepping Out – Day Respite**

Stepping Out groups promote socialisation and meaningful activity for people living with the early stages of memory loss. They are suitable for people who still enjoy company, who are mobile & need little assistance with every day tasks. This program also provides regular respite for carers. Fees apply.

#### **Social Activity & Support**

A new fee-for service program. We can provide an individual visit by a qualified staff member, to a person with dementia who is living in hospital or a residential care facility. Our visiting staff will encourage socialisation, physical and cognitive activities and can include a drive or visit to community venues.

#### **Life Memories Albums**

Life Memories Albums encourage individuals to construct an album representing their life history through recollecting and retelling memories. For further information, or to volunteer your services with this program, please call Anne Pike.

#### **Territory FM (104.1)**

Listen to Territory FM (104.1) on the first Wednesday of each month at 10.20 am to hear Alzheimer's Australia NT staff and guest speakers discuss issues faced by those with dementia or those caring for someone with dementia. Topics discussed include Living with Memory Loss – Early Diagnosis, Assistive Technology, Risk Reduction and Indigenous Issues.

***Most of these events are free of charge - bookings are essential.  
For further information please contact the Darwin Office on 8948 5228.***

**TO:**



Alzheimer's Australia can help

Call the National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500

Dementia Awareness Week 16 - 26 September

## Thank You

Alzheimer's Australia gratefully acknowledges the donations made by the following people and organisations since April 2011:

- Nicola Vanderaa
- Marie Gray & family
- Rhonda Dunne
- Bakers Delight, Darwin
- National Seniors Association
- Judy Dent
- Carla Furnishers Pty Ltd
- Darwin Airport Resort Operations Pty Ltd
- Acacia Hills Farm Pty Ltd
- Russel & Ruth Beazley
- Ronald Quall
- Gwen Phillips
- Olga Dos Santos
- Hazel Glencross
- Clare Fern
- Eric Smitt
- Finnis River Charity Picnic Day Races
- Extreme Garden Care
- Pat Rasmussen
- Margaret & Bas Wie
- Kathleen Elliott
- Brooke Barnett
- Territory Care & Support Services
- Neville O'Toole
- Paspaley Pearls
- Mason Gallery
- Helen Gabel

A big thank you to all of those who have made anonymous donations and supported "A Night to Remember"