Welcome to the first issue of *Across the Borders*.

The aim of this newsletter is to provide information to service providers and carers of people with dementia across the Northern Territory, the Kimberley and the Pilbara.

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services (DBMAS) of WA and NT recognise the unique circumstances that service providers and carers experience while working in an isolated area.

Our goal is to provide information that may be of interest to you to assist you in your caring role.

If you have any interesting experiences or articles to share, we would also love to hear from you. Submissions can be sent to us by emailing us at dbmaswa@alzheimers.asn.au

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to provide support to carers of people with dementia whose behaviours may impact on their care.

To be eligible to access the program the person needs to be living with dementia and either seeking or receiving an Australian Government funded aged care service.

Our teams of health professionals provide a range of services including clinical support, care planning and education.

This service is available to family carers, staff and volunteers of these service providers and other clinicians such as GPs, mental health services or ACATs.

The Alzheimer’s Australia WA DBMAS team

Meet your DBMAS team

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To access this service, contact the DBMAS on 1800 699 799.

**DBMAS teams**

The Northern Territory DBMAS, which is provided by Frontier Services, has offices in Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine.

The Western Australia DBMAS is one of the many services of Alzheimer’s Australia WA and is based in Perth. A Bunbury office is set to open in early 2010.

**Regional visits**

One of the aims of both teams is to visit regional areas of both states.

In August 2009, NT DBMAS on behalf of WA DBMAS, travelled across the Kimberley and provided clinical support and training in Kununurra, Wyndham, Warmun, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Broome, Derby and Looma.

In September 2009, the WA DBMAS team visited the Goldfields, South West, Great Southern, Hedland, Roebourne and Karratha to assist service providers and family carers.

To find out when the DBMAS team will be in your area, contact us on 1800 699 799.

Lynne Hedley
Manager
Alzheimer’s Australia WA DBMAS

Across the Borders will be sent out electronically every two months. If you know of someone who may be interested in receiving the newsletter, contact us on 1800 699 799.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue of *Across the Borders*.
Frontier Service NT DBMAS

• Program Manager Judy Ratajec
• Psychogeriatrician
• Behaviour Advisors
  • Stephanie Charlesworth
  • Mary Ingrames
  • Terri Zappelli
• Brokered staff
  • David Crawford: Pastoral care
  • Kate Ganley: Holistic therapist
  • Vidula Garde: Neuropsychologist
  • Rael Cartledge: Pastoral care

Indigenous dementia specific training package

Frontier Service NT DBMAS has worked in partnership with Alzheimer’s Australia, the NT Government and the Australian Government to produce an Indigenous dementia specific training package for those carers with low literacy levels.

The resource, entitled Looking out for Dementia can be accessed through the Alzheimer’s Australia NT website: www.alzheimers.org.au

The resource is currently being evaluated through the Centre for Remote Health.
New poster to help carers of people with dementia

Frontier Service NT DBMAS has produced a new poster to assist carers and health professionals working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) people with dementia.

The poster was developed after it became evident that there were no suitable resources available for use in remote areas associated with helping to manage behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD).

Resources previously created to assist in managing BPSD were found to be inappropriate for people of low English literacy and of different cultural backgrounds to mainstream Western health concepts.

It was suggested that it would be helpful for the basic cultural considerations discovered to be collated into a simple poster format for use outside DBMAS providers.

It will also assist DBMAS providers when working in this area to increase carer capacity to care for people living with BPSD.

During the DBMAS promotional trip across the Kimberley ACT region in August 2009, the draft BPSD poster was trailed as a training tool. The final product was a result of the feedback provided by service providers and carers.

The BPSD poster is also available as a brochure containing additional information.

DBMAS teams plan to use the BPSD poster for training and will distribute the poster and brochure on our next trip to the Kimberley region.

You can also access these resources by contacting your local DBMAS office on 1800 699 799.

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**People with dementia acting differently**

**How to help someone with Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to check</th>
<th>Things to do</th>
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<td>Physical</td>
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<td>Are they sick?</td>
<td>Go to clinic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tell them what is happening</td>
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<td>Emotional</td>
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<td>Are they angry or upset more?</td>
<td>Don't argue</td>
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<td>Reassure - treat with respect</td>
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<td>Activity</td>
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<td>Are they not doing what they used to do?</td>
<td>Help them do what they used to do</td>
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<td>Distract</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Are they talking wrong way?</td>
<td>Take time to listen</td>
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<td>Take time to yarn</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
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<td>Are they getting lost?</td>
<td>Keep things their way</td>
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<td>Keep them safe</td>
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Helping Australians with dementia, and their carers 1800 699 799
A new “men’s shed” has become an activity hub for a group of clients living at Frontier Services Rocky Ridge Aged Care in Katherine.

The new shed was part of a project, involving Frontier Services NT DBMAS, that sought to enhance the quality of life for residents and reduce the impact of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSDs).

The clients at the facility shared a common background of having worked on remote cattle stations, remote road works or living in remote outstations.

This initiated the concept of providing an appropriate visual and sensory cues to these past life experiences that would fit into the local residential aged care facilities environment catered for people in the Katherine region.

**Meaningful activities for men**

Guided by existing background material from Alzheimer’s Australia focusing on meaningful activities for men with dementia, the concept of a “men’s shed” was birthed and adapted for the residential facility.

Mary Ingrames, Behaviour Advisor for NT DBMAS, began working with staff from Rocky Ridge Aged Care and sought out a local cabinet maker to build a unique portable, lockable, shed to fit the atmosphere and décor of the residential facility. This catered for the majority of Indigenous clients from remote areas of the Northern Territory.

Mary also engaged a local tradesperson ‘Chris the Cabinet Maker’ who viewed and measured the proposed verandah area where the men living there routinely congregated through the day to fellowship with other ‘country men’ and enjoy the outdoor lifestyle they were so used to.

**Unique design**

Chris went on to design a portable shed which could be locked and sturdy enough to withstand torrential rain and strong winds, elements of a top-end wet season.

He also designed the shed with sensory stimulation in mind choosing timber that had a distinct smell that would bring back pleasant memories of previous work for other wood workers.

**Community support**

During construction, other members of the public in Katherine joined in the spirit of the project and donated unused tools to be displayed within the cabinet that could be used as conversation points when reminiscing with men familiar with these tools.

When the final product was delivered to Rocky Ridge, staff took on the project and donated tools and ideas. The “activity shed”, as it was called, was used by Mary to demonstrate psychosocial behavioural management techniques during day-to-day discussion and conversation around the ‘shed’.

**Shed unveiled**

An official opening and naming of the ‘shed’ was planned and a competition was run within Rocky Ridge staff to come up with a name for the ‘shed’.

The winning entry was ‘De-men’s-shed’ suggested by long term carer of Rocky Ridge, Greg. He was presented with a prize for the winning entry of a CD voucher which he generously donated back to the resident’s activities program at Rocky Ridge.

**Media attention**

This unique project attracted the attention of the local radio station and the local Katherine Times paper who attended the opening along with the Mayor of Katherine and visitors from other aged care facilities.

NT DBMAS took the opportunity to increase awareness in BPSD management and build capacity in carers of people with dementia by modeling how to engage with residents through activities and allowing them to ‘have a go’ at something new or rekindle a past craft skill.

Mary has been able to build on the interest by staff in the project and has created a display showing the opening of the shed. She continues to give ideas on how to engage with clients in meaningful ways through activities, improving the residents’ quality of life and the carers’ capacity in their roles.