

Tuesday 13 October 2020

## **Dementia Australia takes top tech iAwards honours for Ted the AI Avatar**

Dementia Australia and Deakin University's Applied Artificial Intelligence Institute (A<sup>2</sup>I<sup>2</sup>) were yesterday jointly awarded the Victorian iAward in the Not-For-Profit and Community Solution of the Year category for, 'Ted the AI Avatar Living with Dementia'.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said it was an absolute honour to be recognised for 'Ted the AI Avatar' which was developed to enable professional carers to learn how best to communicate with people living with dementia.

"We are delighted to have received such recognition jointly with A<sup>2</sup>I<sup>2</sup>, from such a prestigious innovation program," Ms McCabe said.

"Traditionally, education for aged care workers consists of a classroom scenario with a facilitator, PowerPoint and group discussion.

"By using this technology, rather than educating care workers on good principles of communication for people living with dementia, they experience them through trial and error in conversation with 'Ted' in a safe and encouraging learning environment.

"This award demonstrates our commitment to utilising world-first applications of serious games and virtual reality technologies as a point of difference, globally and advocating for and influencing changes in dementia policy and practice."

The iAwards Program engages the most experienced and respected judges in the industry from a variety of backgrounds, such as C-level executives, entrepreneurs and capital raisers and commercialisation experts, academics, and technology subject matter experts. This helps to ensure the iAwards program identifies the best in Australian innovation each year.

A<sup>2</sup>I<sup>2</sup> Co-Director Professor Kon Mouzakis said 'Ted' was developed using the Unity game engine and to provide realism, all visual expressions and emotions were captured using a facial motion capture system on an actor.

"A preliminary evaluation of 'Ted' showed that it helped aged care workers develop increased confidence and a greater sense of just how impactful good communication skills can be on a person living with dementia," Professor Mouzakis said.

"Our evaluation showed 100 per cent of aged care workers recalled the five principles of positive communication eight weeks after their learning experience – in contrast, only 20 per cent recalled these principles using traditional learning models."

"It is this active learning approach that enables 'Ted' to make a truly positive difference in people's lives – improving the level of care and quality of life of those living with dementia," Ms McCabe said.

Dementia Australia will now compete in the National iAwards to be announced on 17 November 2020.

Ted the AI Avatar Living with Dementia will be launched to market early in 2021. For enquiries email [CDL@dementia.org.au](mailto:CDL@dementia.org.au).

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the estimated half a million Australians living with dementia, and the almost 1.6 million people involved in their care. We advocate for positive change and support vital research. We are here to support people impacted by dementia, and to enable them to live as well as possible. No matter how you are impacted by dementia or who you are, we are here for you.

For support, please contact the **National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500**. An interpreter service is available and the Helpline is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. The National Dementia Helpline is funded by the Australian Government. People looking for information can also visit [dementia.org.au](http://dementia.org.au)



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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines](#).