

Monday 17 May 2021

Recognising the commitment of Dementia Australia volunteers

This National Volunteer Week, which runs from 17-23 May, Dementia Australia celebrates and thanks the more than 1,000 Dementia Australia volunteers who contribute to the lives of people living with dementia, their families and carers.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said that this year's theme is 'Recognise. Reconnect. Reimagine.' and expressed deep appreciation to the Dementia Australia volunteers for their immeasurable impact on the broader community.

"Dementia Australia volunteers assist us to change the community's understanding and perspective of dementia," Ms McCabe said.

"Volunteers are integral to the work that we do at Dementia Australia and we are extremely grateful for the generosity and compassion our volunteers bring to their roles.

"Without volunteers we simply could not do all of the work we do. This week and every week we say thank you to them for the extraordinary difference they make."

The impacts of COVID-19 over the past year have meant that some volunteer programs have been reimaged to be offered online.

Chris Finley became a Dementia Australia Volunteer more than five years ago after caring for his late wife Wendy who lived with dementia.

He has enjoyed the opportunity to continue to volunteer at a time when many were not able to do so, taking part in reimaged online offerings of programs such as Blokes in a Caring Role.

"Face-to-face Blokes in a Caring Role sessions were at times quite confronting when digging up old memories, but this is a somewhat cathartic exercise," he said.

"The most common client reaction is that it is really great to talk to someone who has been there – I know I have made a tangible difference to many of the blokes and to be able to do this on Zoom with an interstate group has been most rewarding.

"There was no deliberate intention, but volunteering has certainly made my transition from carer to live-alone widower much easier and I suspect greatly eased the grieving process – they say volunteering prolongs life so perhaps in 20 years I will receive a congratulatory letter from King William!"

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe thanked volunteers for their ongoing commitment.

"Their generosity and commitment is a gift and this week we have the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate our wonderful volunteers for the profound difference they make to the lives of people of all ages living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers," Ms McCabe said.

For more information please visit: dementia.org.au/volunteering.

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

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

