

Tasmanian 20-year Preventive Health Strategy

Dementia Australia submission February 2026

Dementia Australia appreciates the opportunity to provide additional feedback on the exposure draft of the Tasmanian 20-year Preventive Health Strategy 2026-2046. We have been grateful for ongoing engagement opportunities throughout development of the Strategy. We support the focus on addressing social and environmental determinants of health and wellbeing, and on embedding prevention across all parts of the community.

There are an estimated 11,200 people living with all forms of dementia in Tasmania. This figure is projected to increase to an estimated 16,500 by 2054. Among these are an estimated 700 people living with young onset dementia.

Dementia is the leading cause of death nationally, and the second leading cause of death in Tasmania (1). With an estimated 43% of cases of dementia in Australia thought to be attributable to six modifiable risk factors, there is significant potential to reduce incidence (2). Tasmania has higher rates than the general population of a range of dementia risk factors meaning that preventative action is critical¹.

Following from our previous consultation advice related to dementia risk reduction, this submission makes recommendations related two areas under the Healthy People and Potential pillar - Preventable Conditions and Risk Factors, and Healthy Ageing and Later Life.

Recommendations:

- 1. Prioritise brain health and dementia risk reduction in the early years of the Strategy.**
- 2. Explicit inclusion of dementia as a chronic disease impacting on healthy ageing.**

Preventable conditions and risk factors

Recommendation 1. Prioritise brain health and dementia risk reduction in the early years of the Strategy.

As there is currently no cure for dementia, risk reduction is vital. With increasing dementia prevalence and already overwhelmed hospital, disability and aged care sectors, the time to act is now. A strong focus on reducing dementia risk across the population is urgent, and potential

¹ For more information, see our previous submission to the Tasmanian 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy [here](#).

benefits would include decreased dementia incidence and reduced strain on health and care systems in the future.

The Tasmanian acute care system faces ongoing issues with delayed discharge of older people, including those living with dementia, impacting on bed capacity across the system. This scenario is unlikely to change over the long term without concerted effort to reduce the incidence and impact of dementia.

Embedding dementia risk reduction and brain health into the early years of the Strategy will have the greatest impact on future dementia incidence. Dementia risk reduction can be built into current and new preventative health actions to reduce incidence of key chronic disease risk factors including those affecting cardiovascular and metabolic health. Early detection and strategies to delay onset of dementia can also reduce incidence over time.

The Tasmanian government has committed to implementing the National Dementia Action Plan 2024-2034 (NDAP), under which dementia risk reduction is a key priority. The NDAP recognises that not all modifiable risk factors can be changed by individuals, meaning that whole of population approaches are needed, combined with initiatives targeting high-risk groups.

Healthy ageing and later life

Recommendation 2. Explicit inclusion of dementia as a chronic disease impacting on healthy ageing.

Dementia Australia has reviewed the draft Actions for healthy ageing and later life. While we support efforts to promote positive ageing and reduce discrimination, we recommend that the Actions also include an explicit focus on addressing significant chronic diseases affecting healthy ageing.

Currently, there is no mention in the Strategy of the key chronic diseases that impact on healthy ageing, and older people's health and wellbeing, including dementia. Dementia is a leading cause of disease burden among older people (2). While many chronic disease pathways start in earlier life and risk factors should be addressed across the lifespan, the greatest impact is often felt in later life.

Dementia risk increases with age, and it impacts on all aspects of health and wellbeing including cognitive and physical function, mental health, social and family relationships, community participation and inclusion, living arrangements, finances and legal matters.

It is critical that dementia be recognised and included in the Strategy to create an overarching framework for actions to improve healthy ageing and outcomes for older Tasmanians living with dementia and older carers of people with dementia. Doing so will support community-wide actions to reduce dementia stigma and promote inclusion of older people living with dementia, as well as other key priorities such as advanced care planning.

Inclusion of dementia in the Healthy Ageing and Later Life Actions would also align with Tasmania's commitment to implement the NDAP. A key principle of the NDAP is addressing the needs of groups at higher risk of developing dementia, including older people. Successful implementation in Tasmania will require inclusion in policy and planning frameworks across sectors.

Conclusion

Dementia is significant public health issue for Tasmania, with significant impact on individuals, families, communities and health and care systems. Our recommendations to implement risk reduction early in the duration of the Strategy, and recognise the importance of dementia as a chronic condition affecting healthy ageing, have the potential to improve Tasmania's population health outcomes over the long term. This would also align with national policy directions and Tasmanian government commitments in the NDAP.

Tasmania has a critical opportunity through the 20-year Preventative Health Strategy to address modifiable risk factors for dementia, support healthier ageing, and increase sustainability of its health and care systems. Dementia Australia looks forward to continued collaboration with the Tasmanian Government to advance dementia awareness and risk reduction for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

We are available to continue discussion about reducing the impact of dementia in Tasmania. The Dementia Australia Policy and Advocacy team can be reached on [**policyteam@dementia.org.au**](mailto:policyteam@dementia.org.au).

References

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Causes of Death Australia, 2024. Australian Bureau of Statistics; 2025 2025/11/14.
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Dementia in Australia. Australian Government; 2025.