

Embargoed 8 p.m. AEST 30 June 2014

Media release

Christine Bryden, a pioneer for people with dementia

Glenn Rees CEO of Alzheimer's Australia said he was delighted that ABC's *Australian Story* had chosen to celebrate the advocacy of Christine Bryden in reducing the stigma and social isolation that is all too often the result of a diagnosis of dementia.

"In the fifteen years I have known Christine she has been unwavering in her determination to be a living example that life goes on after a diagnosis of dementia," Mr Rees said.

"Alzheimer's Australia and people living with dementia owe Christine and her husband Paul a huge debt in getting the issue of dementia out into the open and helping the wider community understand better that people with dementia take decisions about their lives.

"Christine was instrumental in setting up one of the first support groups for people with dementia and driving the agenda of that group. She was adamant that people with dementia be given a voice and the opportunity to discuss the things that mattered to them the most.

"Issues such as end-of-life planning and current life challenges were on the agenda for discussion and Christine was the driving force behind this."

In 2001, Christine presented at the Alzheimer's Australia National Conference. She was the first person with dementia to present at a conference in Australia and followed this up with a key note address at the Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International at Christchurch, New Zealand in 2002.

"What Christine has done first and foremost is to give people with dementia a voice, both in Australia and around the world," Mr Rees said.

"Her advocacy has led to organisations being more inclusive of people with dementia.

"But there is a long way to go. Alzheimer's Australia is one of only three organisations worldwide to have an advisory committee that is made up entirely of people living with dementia.

"People with dementia have learnt from people with disabilities that they have to fight long and hard for their rights. This is why social action through creating dementia-friendly societies – in which people with dementia have the possibility of social engagement and access to services we all have the right to expect – is necessary.

"This is part of the legacy of Christine Bryden and at the heart of Alzheimer's Australia next Fight Dementia Campaign goal, [Creating a dementia- friendly Australia.](#)"

More information can be found at fightdementia.org.au or by calling the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

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Alzheimer's Australia is the charity for people with dementia and their families and carers. As the peak body, it provides advocacy, support services, education and information. More than 332,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach more than half a million by 2030.

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500

An interpreter service is available

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

[Dementia is a National Health Priority Area](#)

www.fightdementia.org.au

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