

**INAUGURAL BRING IT TO THE TABLE FUNDRAISER
ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA QLD**

MODA EVENTS, PORTSIDE, HAMILTON, QLD

6 JUNE 2014

**ITA BUTTROSE AO, OBE
ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA**

GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME EVERYONE.

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE TONIGHT. I AM DELIGHTED TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA QLD'S BRING IT TO THE TABLE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN, AND TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR AMBITIOUS VISION TO MAKE AUSTRALIA DEMENTIA FRIENDLY.

FIRSTLY I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MAJOR SPONSOR, E.S.P SOLUTIONS GROUP, FOR MAKING TONIGHT'S EVENT POSSIBLE. IT'S BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS LIKE YOURS THAT WE CAN TRULY MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA.

IT'S SOBERING TO LEARN THAT THERE ARE MORE THAN 52,000 PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA IN QUEENSLAND. THIS NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO RISE TO MORE THAN 150,000 BY 2050.

WE OFTEN TALK ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS INCREASE ON THE HEALTH SYSTEM, AND IT WILL BE SIGNIFICANT, BUT I THINK IT'S EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS THE SOCIAL IMPACT A DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA; THE IMPACT IS HAS ON THE RELATIONSHIPS QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA.

IT WAS WONDERFUL TO SEE AMERICAN ACTOR, SETH ROGEN, TESTIFY RECENTLY BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE ABOUT HIS DEMENTIA JOURNEY AFTER HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW WAS DIAGNOSED.

SOMETHING HE SAID CAUGHT MY ATTENTION. “AMERICANS WHISPER THE WORD ALZHEIMER’S BECAUSE THEIR GOVERNMENT WHISPERS THE WORD ALZHEIMER’S. AND ALTHOUGH A WHISPER IS BETTER THAN THE SILENCE THAT THE ALZHEIMER’S COMMUNITY HAS BEEN FACING FOR DECADES, IT IS STILL NOT ENOUGH. IT NEEDS TO BE YELLED AND SCREAMED TO THE POINT THAT IT FINALLY GETS THE ATTENTION AND THE FUNDING THAT IT DESERVES AND NEEDS.”

UNLIKE THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ALZHEIMER’S AUSTRALIA HAS DEFINITELY BEEN SHOUTING, AND SHOUTING LOUDLY.

OUR SHOUTS ARE IN PART WHAT LED TO THE COMMITMENT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO A \$200 MILLION INVESTMENT IN DEMENTIA RESEARCH OVER FIVE YEARS. THIS INVESTMENT HAS SHOWN THAT THEY ARE COMMITTED TO PROGRESS AND ACTION ON DEMENTIA.

BUT WHAT I THINK SETH’S WORDS CAPTURE WELL IS THE STIGMA AND SOCIAL ISOLATION THAT MORE THAN 332,000 AUSTRALIANS WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS COPE WITH ALMOST EVERY DAY.

THE WHISPERS IN THE COMMUNITY GIVE RISE TO A SENSE OF FEAR AND SECLUSION, AND ULTIMATELY A SILENT TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION.

A RESEARCH STUDY THAT ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA COMMISSIONED IN 2012 FOUND THAT ONE IN 10 PEOPLE WOULD AVOID SPENDING TIME WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA.

IT'S RARE OF COURSE THAT THIS IS DONE DELIBERATELY. MOST PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AVOID SOCIAL CONTACT WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA AS A RESULT OF IGNORANCE. OFTEN THEY'RE UNCERTAIN OF HOW TO RESPOND AND COMMUNICATE WITH A PERSON WHO HAS DEMENTIA.

THE SAME RESEARCH SHOWED THAT MORE THAN A THIRD OF THOSE SURVEYED THOUGHT PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA COULD BE IRRITATING. MORE THAN HALF SAID THAT PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION.

WHEN ASKED HOW THEY WOULD FEEL IF THEY RECEIVED A DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA, 60 PER CENT SAID THEY WOULD FEEL A SENSE OF SHAME. NEARLY HALF SAID THEY WOULD BE HUMILIATED BY A DIAGNOSIS.

IMAGINE HOW ISOLATING IT MUST BE TO FEEL A SENSE OF SHAME BECAUSE OF A MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA.

IT'S ALSO NOT UNCOMMON FOR THE FAMILY OF SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA TO FEEL GRIEF AT THE LOSS OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PERSON THEY ONCE KNEW, AND SOMETIMES EVEN ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED AT PEOPLES' REACTIONS AS THEY TRY TO COPE WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIOURS OF THE PERSON WITH DEMENTIA.

ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA'S AIM IS TO CREATE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES TO CHALLENGE THIS STIGMA AND OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE BROADER AWARENESS ABOUT DEMENTIA AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY IS ONE THAT SUPPORTS PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA TO HAVE A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE WITH MEANING, PURPOSE AND VALUE.

THE CONCEPT GOES BEYOND CARE. IT'S ABOUT SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA TO BE INVOLVED, OR REMAIN INVOLVED, IN VOLUNTEERING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

IT'S ABOUT BUSINESSES PROVIDING BETTER SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA BY HAVING STAFF WHO UNDERSTAND WHAT DEMENTIA IS AND HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA.

IT'S ABOUT WORKING WITH ORGANISATIONS SO THAT THEY CAN BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA. THIS INCLUDES CAFES, LIBRARIES AND GALLERIES, SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITIES, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO NAME A FEW.

ALL OF THESE INITIATIVES ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY.

THERE ARE ALREADY EXCELLENT EXAMPLES OF AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES EMBRACING THE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY CONCEPT.

FOR INSTANCE, IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WE'VE DEVELOPED A SET OF TRAINING RESOURCES CALLED *IS IT DEMENTIA?* FOR FRONT-LINE STAFF IN EMERGENCY SERVICES, BANKS, THE RETAIL INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES.

THE RESOURCES HIGHLIGHT THAT DEMENTIA ISN'T ALWAYS OBVIOUS AND HELPS STAFF TO RECOGNISE THE SIGNS.

WE WERE DELIGHTED WHEN THE ANZ AND THE NSW TAXI COUNCIL INCORPORATED THESE RESOURCES INTO THEIR STAFF TRAINING PROGRAMS LAST YEAR. THE NSW MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT ALSO INTRODUCED *IS IT DEMENTIA?* RESOURCES FOR ALL TRANSPORT SERVICES ACROSS THE STATE.

IN QUEENSLAND, THERE HAS BEEN GRASSROOTS INTEREST IN THE CONCEPT OF DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE QUEENSLAND GALLERY OF MODERN ART, WE HAVE JUST LAUNCHED A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY TOUR FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARERS.

WHILE IT IS STILL BEING PILOTED, THE GROUPS THAT HAVE TAKEN THE TOUR SO FAR HAVE SAID THEY THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING THEY LIKE IN AN INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

OTHER PROGRAMS HAPPENING ACROSS AUSTRALIA APART FROM EVENTS AT ART GALLERIES INCLUDE DEMENTIA CHOIRS, WALKING GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES.

WHAT IS A DEMENTIA CHOIR? ONE WHERE MEMBERS HAVE DEMENTIA OF COURSE. MUSIC IS A FANTASTIC THERAPY FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA. THE DEMENTIA CHOIR THAT SANG AT OUR NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HOBART LAST YEAR RECEIVED A STANDING OVATION. THEY SANG WITH GUSTO AND HAVING REHEARSED FOR 12 MONTHS THOROUGHLY DESERVED THE APPLAUSE.

THESE EXAMPLES ARE THE KICKSTART AUSTRALIA NEEDS TO CREATE MORE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONS, AND ARE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO BUILDING AN AUSTRALIA THAT IS DEMENTIA FRIENDLY.

IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR I LAUNCHED ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA'S NEW FIGHT DEMENTIA CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT, "*CREATING A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY AUSTRALIA*". WHICH WAS DEVELOPED WITH INPUT FROM PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARERS.

IT OUTLINES OUR VISION FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS ON WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY NATION.

WHILE WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT WE HAVE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, AS WE ALL KNOW, WE ARE FACING DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES. THERE IS AN EVER INCREASING DEMAND FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION AND LIMITED BUDGET DOLLARS.

WITH THIS IN MIND WE DEVELOPED FIVE AREAS FOR ACTION THAT WE BELIEVE COULD HELP AUSTRALIA BECOME A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COUNTRY.

FIRSTLY, WE WANT TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE THAT WOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE APPROACH IN SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO BECOME MORE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY.

WE ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH GOODWILL THERE IS IN THE COMMUNITY, MORE RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO DEVELOP DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AND TO TACKLE THE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND STIGMA THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMENTIA.

SECONDLY, ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA IS CALLING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF DEMENTIA ADVISORS.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY SUPPORTING A KEY WORKER PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH YOUNGER ONSET DEMENTIA. DANIELLE MAYBERY SPOKE EARLIER TONIGHT ABOUT THE WONDERFUL DIFFERENCE THE KEY WORKERS ARE MAKING IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH YOUNGER ONSET DEMENTIA.

BUT ALL PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA WHATEVER THEIR AGE NEED SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE AFTER A DIAGNOSIS. WE KNOW THAT EARLY ACCESS TO SERVICES CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR DEMENTIA JOURNEY.

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS SERVICE INITIALLY EXTENDED TO PEOPLE FROM VULNERABLE GROUPS SUCH AS THOSE FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, THE HOMELESS AND PEOPLE LIVING ALONE. OUR LONG-TERM VISION IS A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF KEY WORKERS TO SUPPORT ANYONE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA.

THIRDLY, WE ARE ASKING THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPAND DEMENTIA-SPECIFIC RESPITE, WHICH IS CRITICAL FOR THE ESTIMATED 1.2 MILLION AUSTRALIANS INVOLVED IN THE CARE OF SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA.

RESPITE PROVIDES THE CARER WITH A MUCH-NEEDED BREAK AND GIVES THE PERSON WITH DEMENTIA THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION. YET IN SPITE OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE, ACCESS TO RESPITE SERVICES IS OFTEN DIFFICULT.

MANY SERVICES ARE NOT RESOURCED TO CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH THE BEHAVIOURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF DEMENTIA, AND THEY ARE OFTEN NOT AVAILABLE WHERE AND WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED.

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE DEMENTIA-SPECIFIC RESPITE SERVICES THAT CAN PROVIDE APPROPRIATE CARE, SUPPORT AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARERS.

OUR FOURTH AREA FOR ACTION IS IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL CARE.

THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES WHERE VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN LET DOWN BY THE QUALITY OF AGED CARE. IT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE THAT SOME PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA ARE BEING EXPOSED TO THE USE OF PHYSICAL AND MEDICAL RESTRAINTS, OFTEN WITHOUT CONSENT.

OF COURSE THERE ARE MANY AGED CARE SERVICES PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY CARE AND STAFF WHO ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO WHAT THEY DO, BUT SOME DO NOT AND FAMILIES AND CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA SHOULD HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THEIR LOVED ONES WILL ALWAYS BE GIVEN THE HIGH QUALITY CARE THAT WE WOULD EXPECT FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS.

LASTLY, WE ARE ADVOCATING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW NATIONAL ACTION FRAMEWORK ON DEMENTIA.

THE LAST FRAMEWORK ENDED IN 2010 AND A NEW AGREEMENT IS NOW NEEDED. THIS WILL ENSURE A COHERENT APPROACH TO TACKLING DEMENTIA ACROSS AUSTRALIA IN THE AREAS OF PRIMARY AND ACUTE CARE, COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTIAL CARE, AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTH.

THIS IS OUR VISION FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS IN TERMS OF GOVERNMENT ACTION BUT AS A COMMUNITY, WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF FUNDRAISERS SUCH AS BRING IT TO THE TABLE IS VITAL IN HELPING ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT THAT MATTER MOST TO PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR OFTEN FORGOTTEN FAMILY CARERS.

I'M SURE MOST OF YOU HERE ARE AWARE THAT ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA IS ALSO A CARERS ORGANISATION THAT ADVOCATES FOR THE CARER AS WELL AS THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA.

AS I TOLD PATRICK, OUR MC FOR TONIGHT, ON 4BC EARLIER TODAY, MANY CARERS ARE ON 24/7 CALL. CARERS ARE UNSUNG HEROES. WE COULDN'T MANAGE THE CARE PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA NEED WITHOUT THEM.

THE DONATIONS WE GET FROM THESE FUNDRAISERS, SUCH AS THIS ONE TONIGHT ARE AN ENCOURAGING RECOGNITION OF THE WORK THAT WE ARE DOING. FOR EXAMPLE \$100 HELPS US TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO FAMILIES IN NEED; \$250 HELPS US TO PROVIDE VITAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO ENSURE HIGH QUALITY CARE.

ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE A GENEROUS COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS LIKE ALL OF YOU IN THIS ROOM AND WE VALUE AND APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT.

BUT TONIGHT, I WANT TO CHALLENGE EACH OF YOU TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN TAKE WHAT YOU'VE HEARD THIS EVENING AND START MAKING SMALL CHANGES TO YOUR COMMUNITY; TO START MAKING IT A PLACE WHERE YOU WOULD WANT TO LIVE IF YOU HAD DEMENTIA.

I WANT TO INVITE EACH OF YOU SIGN UP AS A CHAMPION FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND COMMIT TO MAKING AUSTRALIA ONE OF THE WORLD'S FIRST DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY NATIONS.

SPEAKING OF DEMENTIA CHAMPIONS, ALZHEIMER'S QUEENSLAND HAS ASKED ME TO ANNOUNCE SOMETHING VERY *SPECIAL*.

I'D LIKE TO INVITE TWO VERY *SPECIAL* PEOPLE TO COME AND JOIN ME. NADINE HEDGER AND CHRISTINE BRYDEN.

NADINE AND CHRISTINE, YOU BOTH REPRESENT THE PEOPLE WE EXIST TO SUPPORT AND YOU'VE BOTH BEEN WILLING TO SHARE YOUR INSPIRING STORIES WHEN ASKED.

NADINE, IN TRIBUTE FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE TO SUPPORT AND CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH YOUNGER ONSET DEMENTIA, WE WANT TO THANK YOU AND OFFICIALLY RECOGNISE YOU AS OUR ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA QUEENSLAND AMBASSADOR FOR OUR YOUNGER ONSET DEMENTIA KEY WORKER PROGRAM.

CHRISTINE, AS A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA WHO IS CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE IN EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO AND SAY, WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOU AS OUR ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA QLD AMBASSADOR FOR DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES.

THANK YOU NADINE AND CHRISTINE FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS YOU HAVE MADE TO OUR ORGANISATION AND THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

NOW I WANT TO INTRODUCE SOMEONE WHO HAS GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND TO HELP US RAISE AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA.

STEWART SOMMERLAD, WHO IS HERE TONIGHT TO HELP US LAUNCH BRING IT TO THE TABLE 2014, HAS WRITTEN A SONG REFLECTING HIS PARENTS' EXPERIENCE WITH DEMENTIA. AS A FORMER BBC / ABC JOURNALIST, STEWART IS GOING TO GO WELL OUTSIDE OF HIS COMFORT ZONE TO PERFORM THIS SONG LIVE FOR US TONIGHT – SOMETHING THAT I AS A JOURNALIST WOULD NOT BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO DO! THIS EVENING AND PROCEEDS WILL HELP FUND ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA QUEENSLAND'S VITAL WORK.

THANK YOU ALL AGAIN FOR BEING HERE TONIGHT AND FOR YOUR SUPPORT. OVER TO YOU STEWART!