BACKGROUND
Dementia is a progressive, degenerative condition that affects more than 332,000 Australians. Although dementia is more common in older people, there are more than 24,700 Australians under the age of 65 who have dementia. Dementia causes a gradual change in cognitive function and affects people in different ways. Most people with dementia continue to live in the community. With support, many people with dementia are able to remain active and participate in many of the same activities they did before they received a diagnosis. Often after a diagnosis of dementia, people experience social isolation, stigma and discrimination. Friends and even family members may stop visiting or calling because they feel unsure of how to interact with a person who has a cognitive impairment. Lack of awareness in the community can lead to unintentionally mistreating the person with dementia.

Retail staff, transport workers and community groups are often unaware of the additional needs of a person with dementia or how to communicate with them. Some people can experience significant delays in getting a diagnosis of dementia, so service staff need to be aware of the needs of people with cognitive impairment whether or not they have an official diagnosis.

Organisations can support people with cognitive impairment by providing services that are accessible to them.

WHAT IS A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY ORGANISATION?
Successful businesses are good communicators and are customer focused. Dementia-friendly organisations are no different. They are businesses or other organisations (including local government and community services) that travel the extra mile to make changes and improvements to their services, procedures and environment to better meet the needs of people living with dementia. Dementia-friendly organisations take the simple steps necessary to improve their services such as providing education and training for staff on how to communicate with a person who has dementia.

WHY BECOME DEMENTIA FRIENDLY?
People with dementia deserve the same service and human rights as all other Australians, with full inclusion in their community. Your organisation probably already has many customers who are living with dementia, and you are likely to have many more in the future. Becoming dementia friendly means you can provide better services to your existing customers as well as better meet the needs of people with dementia.

EXAMPLES OF DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY ORGANISATIONS
Dementia-friendly organisations will look different depending on the type of business and services provided. The requirements to become dementia friendly are different depending on whether you are a small organisation or a larger business.

• A dementia-friendly bank could identify staff who have had dementia training and who can provide a better service to people with cognitive impairment. They could also examine their physical environment and signage to ensure that it is meeting the needs of people with dementia.

• A dementia-friendly retail store could examine their signage and layout to ensure it is meeting the needs of people with dementia. They could also decide to have a staff member undertake dementia training.

• A dementia-friendly community group could support a volunteer program for people with dementia to promote social engagement while also raising community awareness of dementia.
• A dementia-friendly bowls club could make allowances for members who have difficulty remembering the rules of the game by having a buddy program to support members with dementia.

• While there are differences in what constitutes dementia friendly for different organisations, there are a number of common principles that need to be considered.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY ORGANISATION?

From talking to people with dementia, we know that the following principles are fundamental for an organisation to be considered dementia friendly.

• Keep the needs of people with dementia at the centre of becoming a dementia-friendly organisation;

• Commit to being more inclusive and aware of the needs of people living with dementia;

• Staff have awareness and understanding of dementia and strategies for good communication with people who have dementia. This can be achieved through education and training activities for staff, including information on good communication principles for people who have dementia;

• Review the physical environment to ensure it is accessible and appropriate for people with dementia. A continuous improvement plan may be made to address any concerns (e.g. changes to signage, lighting);

• Review business documentation including forms and publications to ensure they use clear, straightforward language and appropriate design; and

• Plan a review and continuous improvement cycle for dementia friendly and build it into organisational planning.

The requirements to be recognised as working towards becoming dementia friendly are based on the organisation’s size. Each organisation may take a different approach to implementing these principles, tailored to the individual requirements and circumstances of that business or organisation.

Involvement of people with dementia

Organisations that commit to becoming dementia friendly need to recognise the needs of people with dementia. Through consultations with people living with dementia, businesses can identify the aspects of their organisation that support or are barriers for people living with dementia. If you would like assistance getting in touch with a person living with dementia to help with your planning, please contact Alzheimer’s Australia at dementiafriendly@alzheimers.org.au.

Commitment

Becoming a dementia-friendly organisation requires an organisation-wide commitment, including from senior management. The importance and benefits of being a dementia-friendly organisation should be communicated to all staff. Dementia friendly changes could be the responsibility of one enthusiastic team member who wants to make a difference, or could be broadened to involve an internal working group. Organisations would be asked to agree to a commitment statement developed by Alzheimer’s Australia as an initial step.

Awareness and understanding

A key part of becoming a dementia-friendly organisation is to increase staff awareness and understanding about dementia so they are better able to assist people who have a cognitive impairment. Organisations can achieve this in a number of ways including through education and training activities on communicating with a person who has dementia, and including information about dementia in induction and orientation packs.
Alzheimer’s Australia has a range of resources and education and training activities that can be provided to support staff. Organisations can access an online training resource called “Is It Dementia?” which is a collection of short videos highlighting some of the major factors for people living with dementia. The resource is available at: www.isitdementia.com.au.

Organisations can also read the ‘Talk to me’ brochure, which provides insights on the best way to communicate with people with dementia. The brochure is available at: http://www.fightdementia.org.au/common/files/NAT/TalkToMe_Brochure_FoldedDL_HR.pdf

**Physical environment**

The physical environment, including signage and layout can have an impact on the experiences of a person with dementia. All organisations working towards becoming dementia friendly should review their environment. Simple changes may be all that is required to ensure the physical design of the office is appropriate for a person with dementia. Clear signage, and being conscious of background noise and use of contrasting colours are simple strategies that organisations could adopt. The Dementia Enabling Environments Program (DEEP) website provides resources and information on dementia-friendly design: http://www.enablingenvironments.com.au/. Alzheimer’s Australia is developing an audit tool for dementia-design in public spaces that will be available by October 2014.

**Business documentation**

Business documentation and forms can be confusing for people with cognitive impairment. As part of a dementia-friendly approach, documents that might be relevant to your customers with dementia should be reviewed and if possible simplified to use straightforward and clear language.

**Review and continuous improvement**

A regular review of actions towards becoming dementia friendly is necessary to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the dementia friendly concept for the organisation. Organisations will be required to revisit their action plan every 12 months to continue to be recognised as a dementia-friendly organisation.

**HOW TO BECOME A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY ORGANISATION**

There are three stages for being recognised as a dementia-friendly organisation. The requirements in each stage vary depending on the size of the organisation.

These three stages are defined below.

**Stages and requirements for dementia-friendly organisations**

The requirements under each stage of working towards becoming a dementia-friendly organisation are dependent on the size of the organisation. Organisations can elect as to whether they see themselves as a small or large organisation and which set of guidelines suit their circumstances.
Making a commitment

Small organisations
- Discuss becoming dementia friendly with staff
- Ensure that you have staff support and involvement in the concept, including from the owner and management
- Register the organisation by contacting Alzheimer’s Australia at dementiafriendly@alzheimers.org.au
- Once registered Alzheimer’s Australia will provide a briefing pack of information about becoming dementia friendly. This will include a template version of the dementia-friendly statement, which details the commitments as well as lists some of the key activities your organisation needs to consider in the initial 12-month period

Large organisations
- Discuss becoming dementia friendly with staff
- Ensure that you have all levels of management within the organisation committed to this initiative, including at the CEO and Board level
- Register the organisation by contacting Alzheimer’s Australia at dementiafriendly@alzheimers.org.au
- Once registered Alzheimer’s Australia will provide a briefing pack of information about dementia friendly. This will include a copy of the commitment statement and an action plan template
- Organisations are encouraged to include people living with dementia in the preparation of the action plan to ensure relevant and meaningful action items are detailed
- The signed commitment should be completed and returned to Alzheimer’s Australia

Making it real

Small organisations
- Consider the suggested actions provided by Alzheimer’s Australia and how they could relate to your business
- Talk to your staff about what strategies they will work towards
- Consider how people living with dementia can support the organisation to become dementia friendly
- Complete and return the signed dementia-friendly statement, which includes some key areas of action, to Alzheimer’s Australia
- The dementia-friendly statement will be reviewed and endorsed by a state-based Alzheimer’s Australia consumer group made up of people living with dementia, or the National Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Committee
- Once the statement is endorsed, or the requested changes have been made, then the dementia-friendly symbol will be provided to your organisation to display and promote your dementia-friendly status

Large organisations
- The organisation should develop its action plan with input from people living with dementia.
- Along with firm actions addressing some of the essential principles of a dementia-friendly organisation, the action plan can also include innovative ideas to trial. Examples to consider could be investigating the possibility to provide people with dementia the opportunity to volunteer, or creating avenues of social engagement and inclusion for those living with dementia
- A plan for education and training activities for staff should be developed
• The action plan is submitted to Alzheimer’s Australia for feedback and endorsement of either a state-based Alzheimer’s Australia consumer group or the National Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Committee.
• Once the action plan is endorsed, the Dementia-friendly symbol will be provided to your organisation to display and promote your dementia-friendly status.

Making it last

Small organisations

• Organisations must review their dementia-friendly status on an annual basis including providing a brief summary of how it has achieved the actions outlined in the dementia-friendly statement.
• This reflection provides an opportunity for the organisation to set new strategies and priorities for the next 12-month period.
• The summary will be reviewed by either a state-based Alzheimer’s Australia consumer group or the National Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Committee.

Large organisations

• Organisations should review their dementia-friendly activities as an active part of regular business operations. For example, it could be added as a standing item at staff meetings.
• Alzheimer’s Australia will review the organisation’s dementia-friendly status on an annual basis. The review process involves providing advice to Alzheimer’s Australia on the progress and achievements in the action plan and setting new priorities and areas for action.
• The reporting on the action plan must be provided to Alzheimer’s Australia by email at dementiafriendly@alzheimers.org.au

FEEDBACK

Organisations working towards becoming dementia friendly make a commitment to be more aware of the needs of people living with dementia, and deliver a better service to help them remain active and engaged within the community. The views and experiences of people living with dementia are important to Alzheimer’s Australia and we encourage people with dementia to tell us about their experiences interacting with organisations that are recognised as being dementia friendly. All feedback should be provided by email or post to: dementiafriendly@alzheimers.org.au

Dementia-Friendly Organisations Manager/Policy Team
1 Frewin Place
Sculin ACT 2614

Alzheimer’s Australia reserves the right to revoke permission to use the dementia-friendly symbol at any time.

This dementia-friendly action plan will be reviewed by either a State based consumer committee or the National Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Group (AADAC). These committees may seek clarification or provide feedback on this action plan to ensure it is realistic and targeted at achieving meaningful outcomes for people with dementia.
DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY ORGANISATION
ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

This dementia-friendly action plan will be reviewed by either a State based consumer committee or the National Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Group (AADAC). These committees may seek clarification or provide feedback on this action plan to ensure it is realistic and targeted at achieving meaningful outcomes for people with dementia.

Please list one to two action items for each essential principle
Please forward the completed Action Plan to dementiafriendly@alzheimers.org.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who we are</th>
<th>Description of the organisation or business, including key stakeholders, numbers of employed staff and location of business operations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our commitment to being dementia friendly</td>
<td>What is the organisation’s vision for being dementia friendly. Provide details how being dementia friendly relates to your business or organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our dementia-friendly action plan</td>
<td>Explain who has been involved in the development of this plan</td>
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</table>

**Essential Principle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the possible actions that could be taken to achieve this aim</td>
<td>Who will be responsible</td>
<td>When will this action be completed by</td>
<td>Progress to date</td>
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**ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment</th>
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<td>Possible action: Becoming a dementia-friendly organisation is discussed by Board of Directors</td>
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<th>Action</th>
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<th>Timeline</th>
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**ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Up-skilling staff</th>
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<td>Possible action: provide dementia awareness education and training to staff</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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**ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE**

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<th>Review of the Physical Environment</th>
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<td>Possible action: Use the dementia-friendly audit tool to review the physical environment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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### ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE

**Business documentation**
Possible action: Establish a small working group to review business forms and documentation to incorporate dementia-friendly concepts

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<th>ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE</th>
<th>Review and Continuous Improvement</th>
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<td>Timeline</td>
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<td>Progress</td>
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### OPTIONAL

**Other Dementia-friendly action items that your organisation would like to include**

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<th>Action</th>
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### ORGANISATIONAL CONTACT FOR DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Please provide contact details for the primary contact for dementia friendly

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This plan has been reviewed by the Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Committee, with the following outcome:

- [ ] Dementia-friendly status approved
- [ ] Revision to the action plan required

Signature of Committee member

Date