THE YEAR THAT WAS 2014

ALZHEIMER’S AND DEMENTIA
AUSTRALIA AND HOPE
CEO REPORT

CONTENTS

From the CE 2
Dementia Friendly Communities 3
Dementia Awareness Month 4
Upcoming Training 6
Research & Development 7
Holiday Tips 8
Puzzles 9
News 10
Our Services 11
Thank You 12

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Medical Adviser: Dr Sadhana Mahajani
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R A Y

N O R M A N A M

Chief Executive

To you all, warmest wishes for Christmas, and may you enjoy happiness throughout the New Year.

The year past has been filled with many achievements by the staff of Alzheimer’s Australia NT, most of which has immediately enhanced the lives of many Territorians living with dementia and their carers.

I am sure this good work will be continued in the New Year 2015, and that the many challenges we will face in the year ahead will be successfully negotiated.

I would like to thank our supporters who make it possible for the good work to continue. In particular I would like to thank the Commonwealth and Territory governments, and our private sponsors - Colliers International, Brian Measey from Territory Rent A Cars, John and Trish Robinson, Palmerston City Council and many others too numerous to name.

I would also like to thank the Management Board of Alzheimer’s Australia NT for giving their time from busy schedules to ensure good governance of the organisation.

In closing, my warmest Christmas greetings to our very special people, our clients and their carers.

SAFE RETURN PROGRAM

The Safe Return Program (SRP) gives carers and families of people living with dementia peace of mind. The program allows a person to be identified as being at risk of wandering away from a familiar and supportive environment, before it happens. The Safe Return Program is a joint project of Alzheimer’s Australia NT and the NT Police.

For more information on this program call Alzheimer’s Australia NT on 1800 100 500

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DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

CREATING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY NATION

Funding has been received through the National Quality Dementia Care Initiative (NQDCI) to support the development of five dementia-friendly communities across Australia.

Alzheimer’s Australia NT was successful in obtaining one of the grants to develop Dementia Friendly Communities.

The grant will enable a part time project officer to be appointed to establish a local dementia alliance and a local action plan.

The Dementia Friendly Communities project has engaged three local organisations, Royal Darwin Hospital, Palmerston City Council and the Hibiscus Shopping Centre.

Alzheimer’s Australia NT has been part of a Cognitive Care Project within the hospital. This involvement has ensured that the Dementia Care in the Acute Hospital Setting; Issues and Strategies Paper 40 and the Dementia Friendly Communities principles and tool kit has been taken into consideration.

The RDH Cognitive Care Project working group is eager to incorporate Alzheimer’s Australia recommendations in improved outcomes for people at risk, the person with dementia and their carer and the general public who access the service.

The vision for this project is for cognitive impairment to be recognized on admission, to raise awareness and increase knowledge for staff and other stakeholders, to improve involvement of the person with dementia and their carer in their care and to provide an appropriate and safe environment for all users of this major hospital in the Northern Territory.

The project officer will work with Hibiscus Shopping Centre to establish the first Dementia Friendly Shopping Centre in the Northern Territory. Please refer to the article on page 12 of the ‘First Steps To A Dementia Friendly Australia’ paper. Alzheimer’s Australia NT has developed a great relationship with the centre manager and business owners. With collaboration and partnerships supported by the project officer, Hibiscus will develop into a safe and socially engaging Dementia Friendly Shopping and Social Hub for the Northern Suburbs of Darwin.

Thirdly the project will develop and grow the commitment of the Palmerston City Council to develop their understanding of Dementia Friendly Communities. Alzheimer’s Australia NT will learn from the Port Macquarie experience and adapt their principles of council engagement and change.

**How will People with Dementia be involved in the project?**

- A crucial part of the project will be the establishment of a local dementia alliance (consumer advisory group) and development of a local Dementia Friendly Communities action plan.
- People with dementia will be involved in the project through the implementation of a communication strategy that includes advertising and promotion; invitation to be involved; and information and awareness through pop up information booths.
- Alzheimer’s Australia NT will seek participation from stakeholders and the general public to tell their stories and experiences through the project as a way of informing others and encouraging change.
- Alzheimer’s Australia NT will utilize established consumer advisory groups to comment on the project.
- The project will utilize the research that has been developed through Alzheimer’s Australia NT to guide the project eg Living With Dementia in The Community: Challenges and Opportunities.
- The project will reach people at risk and living with dementia who access these services.
- The Royal Darwin Hospital has approximately 363 beds and more than 1700 staff and provides a broad range of services in all specialty areas to the Darwin urban population as well as serving as a referral centre to the Top End of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South-East Asia. The Top End population serviced by the hospital is approximately 150,000. It is expected that up to 50% of this group will come from A&TSI backgrounds.

- Over 30,000 people live in Palmerston. It is a young diverse community, with a number of sporting and social clubs and home to one of the largest residential aged care facilities in Darwin. Palmerston Council currently supports Alzheimer’s Australia NT to deliver a community based respite program.

- Hibiscus Shopping Centre regularly host Alzheimer’s Australia NT ‘Stepping Out Group’ morning teas which brings together those living with dementia in a safe and socially engaging environment. The Stepping Out Group will be involved in the development of the Dementia Friendly Community by enabling the project to experience first-hand what it is like to walk in their shoes.

At the end of the day the development of Dementia Friendly Communities will be “nothing about us without us”.

Help us make this real. Contact 1800 100 500 for further information.
DEMENTIA AWARENESS MONTH

ALZHEIMER’S AUSTRALIA NT 8TH ANNUAL TEA DANCE

Dementia Awareness Month 2014 saw Alzheimer’s Australia’s staff and volunteers out and about at a myriad of community gatherings. Our annual Tea Dance was a highlight, bringing together over 150 Territory seniors to dance and sing, eat and drink, and socialise with each other. The 8th Annual Tea Dance was held on Tuesday 23rd September at the Greek Community School Hall in Nightcliff.

Our Carnivale theme inspired guests to dress vibrantly and dare we say, flamboyantly!

These costumes complemented our bold decorations and table placements. As the photos indicate, it was a riot of colour!

This year we trialled a time change, moving the event forward to lunch time, as well as paring back the entertainment and speeches to allow guests to ‘make their own fun’… and they didn’t let us down. Thanks to Bill Roy’s excellent selection of songs, the dance floor was rarely empty - except when the food arrived! Thanks to Bill Roy for his wonderful music and the Groovy Grans for their sublime dance steps.

Guests supported our raffle and Tea Dance stall - Thank you! We would like to acknowledge Val Cowan for her superb efforts in obtaining donations and prizes - and Helen Gabel and our Art Social Group, for creating handmade gifts to sell.

The Tea Dance could not have taken place without the support of our sponsors who are acknowledged on the adjacent page. In particular, we thank our major sponsors, Colliers International, Bendigo Bank Nightcliff and the Country Women’s Association. The generosity of the Greek Community School provides a wonderful venue for this event. We were thrilled by the generous prizes provided by donors and the beautiful take-home cupcake gifts created by Cakes NT.

As always, our staff and volunteers worked hard to make this unfunded event a special day-planning, decorating, preparing and serving food and drinks and cleaning up.

However, it was all made worth while by the positive feedback received from so many attendees - especially upon hearing of a man who hadn’t danced for many years who told his wife, with joyous tears in his eye, “I danced - I danced!”.
DEMENTIA AWARENESS MONTH

MAJOR SPONSORS:

CATERING SPONSORS:

WITH THANKS TO:

Groovy Grans, Val Cowan, Pearl Galleria, Shine, Alfred’s, Greek Community School Association, Jean and Roy Foxon, Down to Earth, Infidelity, Cameo Gifts and Homewares, Jenny’s Orchid Garden, Tracy Amore, Paraphenalia, RightAir Australasia, Just Cuts, Allora Gardens, House of Fulton Jewellery, Steph Charlesworth (NTDBMAS), Bill Roy and Chor Sung Neill

And all volunteers who contributed to a wonderful day
UPCOMING TRAINING

UPCOMING ALZHEIMER’S AUSTRALIA NT EDUCATION & TRAINING

Nationally Accredited CHCAC319A Dementia Care Essentials - Certificate III - 3 Day Module

This unit is ideal for all Health Care Workers in the area of dementia care in community and residential aged care settings.

Topics:
- What is dementia?
- Effective Communication
- Managing Behavioural & Psychological Symptoms of dementia
- Activities for someone with dementia

Darwin:
• 27th - 29th January 2015
• 9th - 11th March 2015

Katherine:
• 3rd - 5th February 2015

Tennant Creek:
• 16th - 18th February 2015

Alice Springs:
• 10th - 12th February 2015

Nhulunbuy:
• 16th -18th March 2015

Nationally Accredited CHCAC416A Dementia Care Essentials - Certificate IV - 3 Day Module

This unit is ideal for all Health Care Workers in the area of dementia care in community care and residential care settings, particularly those in leadership roles. This unit is a core module of the Certificate IV in Aged Care.

Topics:
- The profile of a person with dementia including BPSD’s
- Support programs for a person with dementia
- Identifying effective leadership & teamwork elements
- Implementation & evaluation of a support program
- Identifying education needs of family and co-workers

Darwin:
• 27th - 29th April 2015

Katherine:
• 24th - 26th March 2015

Alice Springs:
• 28th - 30th April 2015

For more information or to register for the Dementia Care Essentials Certificate III please call Alzheimer’s Australia NT on 08 8948 5228 or email nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au

30TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE INTERNATIONAL

Date: Wednesday, 15 April 2015 - to Saturday, 18 April 2015

Where: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, 21 Mounts Bay Road, 6000, Perth

In 2015, the ADI Conference is visiting the beautiful city of Perth. This unique conference has something to offer everyone, with a program that is bound to please.

More than 1,500 delegates from over 60 countries are expected to travel to Perth for the conference being run in conjunction with Alzheimer’s Australia.

The schedule will tackle:
- The latest developments in science
- Dementia prevention
- The past, present and future of dementia
- International and Political environment
- Supporting and enabling people living with dementia

For more information on the program, or to register to attend the conference, please visit www.alzint.org/2015
**NEW AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH**

**Progresses the development of an Alzheimer’s Disease Blood Test**

Progress towards a simple blood test that could diagnose Alzheimer’s disease 10-20 years before symptoms occur has been made, with the results of a new study by Australian researchers from the University of Melbourne.

This research, published in the Journal of Molecular Psychiatry, was partially supported by a 2013 Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Research Foundation project grant awarded to Dr Lesley Cheng (pictured above).

Dr Cheng, who is based at Department of Biochemistry, Molecular and Cell Biology at the Bio21 Institute, believes this test could prove to be an accessible way of predicting susceptibility to Alzheimer's disease.

“This test provides the possibility of early detection of Alzheimer’s disease by using a simple blood test which has been designed to also be cost-effective. Furthermore, it is highly accessible for patients and physicians compared to organising a brain scan or undergoing a neuropsychological test.

“People with a family history of Alzheimer’s disease or those with memory concerns could be tested during a standard health check at a medical clinic. This test could ease concerns for people experiencing normal memory problems due to natural ageing. Those identified as high risk could then be monitored by their doctor,” said Dr Cheng.

Dr Cheng and a team of researchers analysed blood samples from 109 Australian participants, some with known Alzheimer’s disease and others considered to be cognitively healthy. The researchers were able to identify 16 microRNA signatures in the blood which were mostly unique to people with early and moderate stages of Alzheimer’s disease. They were able to confirm the results from the blood test in relation to data already collected during clinical, medical and cognitive assessments prior to blood being collected.

Lead researcher Professor Andrew Hill from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Bio21 Institute said the blood test would significantly advance efforts to find new treatments and could lead to better preventative measures prior to diagnoses, going on to say:

“The high accuracy of this blood test [87 percent sensitivity and 77 percent specificity] for Alzheimer’s disease comes from the ability to harvest protected bubbles of genetic material, called microRNA, found circulating in the bloodstream. Those with Alzheimer’s disease contain a certain set of microRNA which distinguishes them from people without the disease.”

Alzheimer’s Australia National General Manager Research, Dr Chris Hatherly was also excited to hear of these new results, which build on the findings of several other studies in Australia and internationally, saying:

“While these new results still need to be validated in much larger trials, it does show that we are getting closer to having an approved blood test for Alzheimer’s disease – possibly within the next 3-5 years.”

He finishing by saying:

“In the future, when we have treatments that can slow, delay or even reverse the damage caused by Alzheimer’s disease, we will likely see these kinds of tests used in the same way as cancer screening tests are used now – precautionary screening among higher risk populations to allow early detection and intervention. For now, however, these tests would have limited value to the general population, and would not be used widely in clinical settings.”

Source:
Molecular Psychiatry - http://www.nature.com/mp/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/p2014127a.html

This project was done in collaboration with The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, the CSIRO and Australian Imaging Biomarker and Lifestyle (AIBL) study of Ageing and Austin Health. It was funded by the Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Research Foundation, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), The ANZ Judith Jane Mason and Harold Stannett Williams Memorial Foundation and the Science Industry Endowment Fund.

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**HAVE YOU CONSIDERED JOINING THE NT AAG**

(AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY)

- Are you a Health Professional working in Aged Care?
- Are you a student interested in Aged Care?
- Do you know someone with an interest in the ageing?

Let’s get the word out there. We are an ageing territory and this is our time.

The NT is now “Coming of Age”
New members are welcome!!

If you would like more information log onto www.aag.asn.au
HOLIDAY TIPS

TIPS FOR HOLIDAY CHEER

Christmas is traditionally a time for family gatherings, the exchanging of presents, lashings of food and drink, and general Christmas cheer. However, it can be both a happy and a stressful time, especially for carers, because it also represents a break from routine. Changes to routine can result in unexpected situations; however by remaining calm, adopting a flexible approach and using some simple communication and validation techniques, potentially difficult situations may be averted.

While many of the following tips are common sense and you are probably already using them, you may find others helpful in the care of your relative or friend who has dementia.

Creating opportunities for others to share the caring through an activity such as Carols by Candlelight can be a very positive way of enhancing relations between the person with dementia’s family members and friends.

Take the person to a small local event rather than one which involves more travel and which is likely to attract a larger crowd.

Short-term memory loss can present difficulties at times.

If the family stops a person who may have forgotten how many drinks have been consumed, he or she may feel confused and left out. However, by diluting a drink, the person can continue drinking happily. Adapting the environment, rather than attempting to change the person’s behaviour, is likely to achieve a more positive result.

Reminiscence is one key to good communication with a person who has dementia.

If the person with dementia is becoming overly sad, acknowledge the feeling and then use a happy event to distract. However, all families will have both happy and sad memories and it is quite acceptable to share them.

When the unexpected happens, take a deep breath before reacting.

There is sometimes an inherent logic to the person with dementia’s behaviour, if the family can manage to find it. If not, a sense of humour can also go a long way toward remedying a situation.

People with dementia may, at times, become disorientated and sometimes the past will merge with the present.

There is no point trying to reason with the person if this happens. Try validating the underlying feeling instead. By addressing a person with dementia’s need, we can reduce underlying anxiety.

We cannot stress enough the importance of building some low-key activities into your holiday festivities.

Pace yourself so that the holiday is more likely to be manageable and enjoyable for everyone.

WINE CORK WREATHS

STEPS:

1. Add pop to a dining room with wine corks wired to tiny red jingle bells.
2. Take about 22 corks of the same size and 22 small (3/8 of an inch) red bells bought from a crafts store.
3. Drill a small hole (just big enough to fit your wire through) 1/4 of an inch from the top of each cork and another 1/4 of an inch from the bottom.
4. Using long, green floral wire, push the wire through all the bottom holes of the corks.
5. Leave enough wire at both ends when finished for tying closed later.
6. Cut another long piece of floral wire to string the tops of the corks together, alternating with the bells.
7. Tie ends of wire at the top and bottom, twisting to close and make a wreath shape.
8. Hang with length of ribbon.
Word Search

Can you find the words below hidden in the puzzle.

- ADVENT
- BAUBLES
- BLITZEN
- CAKE
- CAROLS
- CHIMNEY
- CHRISTMAS
- COLD
- COMET
- CUPID
- DANCER
- DASHER
- DECEMBER
- DONNER
- EGGNOG
- ELVES
- GIFTS
- HOLLY
- IVY
- JINGLE BELLS
- JOY
- LIGHTS
- MERRY
- MISTLETOE
- NORTH POLE
- PEACE
- PINE
- PRANCER
- PUDDING
- RED NOSE
- REINDEER
- RUDOLPH
- SANTA
- SING
- SLEIGH
- SNOW
- SNOWFLAKE
- SNOWMAN
- STAR
- STOCKING
- TINSEL
- TOYS
- TREE
- TURKEY
- VIXEN
- WREATHT
GET INVOLVED

DONATE, BEOQUEATH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL OR FUNDRAISE THROUGH ACTIVITIES. NO MATTER HOW YOU DO IT, SUPPORTING AlzANT FINANCIALLY WILL HELP THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE

BEQUESTS

Please consider making a gift in your will to help us extend our services to meet growing demands. This kind and generous gesture to AlzANT shall ensure people with dementia, their carers and families are provided access to vital support services; education of carers and health professionals; as well as investment in research. Your bequest will help continue to maintain and expand these programs with increased future demands.

We always recommend that you seek the services of a solicitor or trustee company to prepare your will, to ensure that it is correctly drafted and clearly states your wishes. If you would like to know more about how you can help Alzheimer’s Australia NT by making a gift in your will, please contact:

Alzheimer’s Australia NT
T: (08) 8948 5228
E: nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au

IN LIEU OF GIFTS

Planning a celebration to mark a birthday, wedding or anniversary? Instead of gifts, encourage your guests to make a donation to AlzANT.

Alzheimer’s Australia NT
T: (08) 8948 5228
E: nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Planning a fundraiser in your community or workplace? We are revitalising our fundraising program and looking for support from passionate fundraisers.

We can guide and support you in preparation for your event, from morning teas to gala balls. For more information please contact:

Alzheimer’s Australia NT
T: (08) 8948 5228
E: nt.admin.d@alzheimers.org.au

CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION

Nicole O’Connor was farewelld on the 16th September with an afternoon tea held in her honour celebrating the last three years with Alzheimer’s Australia NT.

Nicole has provided support to many people living with dementia, raising awareness and promoting risk reduction through the Your Brain Matters program in Alice Springs.

We wish Nicole well for the future.

SONIA NORRIS

To everyone at Alzheimer’s Australia NT, thank you for everything and the opportunity to meet some of the most wonderful people.

I pray and know that Alzheimer’s Australia NT has a very bright future to grow into one of the best organisations with all of you wonderful people on board.

ALICIA TROY

After being with Alzheimer’s Australia NT for almost a year, it is time to say good bye. I have accomplished a lot while being at Alzheimer’s with passing my Certificate III and graduating from high school.

A big thank you goes out to all the staff and everyone I have met during my time, and I hope to catch up with everyone soon.

I wish everyone at Alzheimer’s good luck with the year ahead and I know you will make it one to remember.

NICOLE O’CONNOR

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DEMENTIA & MEMORY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Social Group
This group is for people with memory loss & their family carers. This group meets every 4th Friday of the month 10am to 12 midday. Minimal costs may be involved with the Social Group.

Brain Gym Palmerston
Sessions are held on the 3rd Friday of each month 10am to 12 midday. Participants engage in brain gym, puzzles & cognitive exercises. Members of the public are welcome to join us for these free sessions.

Brain Gym Darwin
Sessions are held on the 2nd Friday of each month 10am to 12 midday. Participants engage in brain gym, puzzles & cognitive exercises. Members of the public are welcome to join us for these free sessions.

Nightcliff Health & Well Being
Sessions are held on the 1st Friday of each month 10am to 12 midday, incorporating whole body health & guest speakers covering a range of topics relevant to Senior Territorians. Members of the public are welcome to join us for these free sessions.

Internet Café
Feel free to arrange a time with our friendly staff to use our free internet café where we have dedicated computers to browse memory & dementia resources on the internet. We even have some brain teaser games to exercise your brain! Members of the public are welcome to join us at the café.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The following courses are held in Darwin, Alice Springs & Katherine.

Community Education
These information sessions are tailored to meet the needs of the community, including - culturally and linguistically diverse groups and health professionals. Please contact us if you would like a free information session.

Your Brain Matters Program
This program highlights the seven lifestyle changes we should adopt that may reduce our risk of dementia. Suitable for the general public and health professionals.

Dementia Care Essentials
Nationally accredited Certificate III and IV units, designed for health professionals working in the area of dementia care.

Carer Education
This is designed specifically for family carers and friends to assist in their caring roles. By learning about dementia, carers and friends develop a better understanding of the effects of the disease.

CLIENT SERVICES

Living With Memory Loss
An information & support program for people living with early stage dementia, their carers and family. If you are interested in participating please contact Susan Williams, Dementia Advisor for further details.

Younger Onset Dementia Carer Support Group
Held fortnightly on Tuesday evenings. Please contact Dianne Maley, Client Services Coordinator for details.

Nightcliff Carer Support Group
Held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 10am. Groups alternate between guest speakers and social functions. If you are interested in participating please contact Dorothy Chiteme, Dementia Advisor for details.

Exercise Group
Held every Wednesday for clients with memory loss who are physically fit and enjoy outdoor activities. Fees apply.

Stepping Out — Day Respite
Stepping Out groups promote socialisation and meaningful activity for people living with the early stages of memory loss. They are suitable for people who still enjoy company, who are mobile and need little assistance with every day tasks. This program also provides regular respite for carers. Fees apply. Also available in the rural area.

Social Activity & Support
A new fee-for-service program. A qualified staff member will visit a person with dementia who is in hospital or a residential care facility. The focus of these visits is to encourage socialisation, physical and cognitive activities and can include excursions to community venues.

Life Memories Albums
Life Memories Albums encourage individuals to construct an album representing their life history through recollecting and retelling memories. For further information, or to volunteer your services with this program, please call the Client Services Manager.

Territory FM (104.1)
Listen to Territory FM (104.1) on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 10.20 am to hear Alzheimer’s Australia NT staff and guest speakers discuss issues faced by those with dementia or those caring for someone with dementia.

Most of these events are free of charge - bookings are essential.
For further information please contact the Darwin Office on 8948 5228.
THANK YOU

Alzheimer’s Australia NT gratefully acknowledges the donations made by the following people and organisations since September 2014:

- Alzheimer’s Australia Payroll Partners
- Government Payroll Giving
- Nayda donations
- Nightcliff Community Enterprises Ltd
- Helen Gabel
- Val Cowan
- Gwen Phillips
- Roy and Jean Foxon
- Les and Clare Fern
- Kathleen Elliott
- Kenneth Wu
- Donations in Memory of Nicholas Alexi

A big thank you to all of those who have made anonymous donations and supported Alzheimer’s Australia NT.

WITH BEST WISHES...

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

All of us at Alzheimer’s Australia NT wish you a happy festive season

Staff will take a well-deserved break over the festive period. Our office will be closed on Thursday 25th December 2014 and reopening on Monday 5th January 2015.

Groups will resume in the week commencing 19th January. Health and Wellbeing will resume on 6th February 2014.

If you need behaviour management assistance please call NT DBMAS 24 hour Helpline on 1800 699 799.

The Aged Care Assessment Team is available all days except public holidays on 89 227 392 to assist with less urgent concerns.