

Productive ageing

**PRODUCTIVE AGEING:
LIVING AND WORKING LONGER – PROSPERITY NOT AUSTERITY**

**THE SENATE ALCOVE
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA**

17 JUNE 2014

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GOOD MORNING. I AM PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DELIVER THIS KEYNOTE ADDRESS ABOUT PRODUCTIVE AGEING.

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT AGEING, WE OFTEN REFER TO PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER. AS A SOCIETY WE NEVER SEEM TO TIRE OF LECTURING AND ALMOST INTIMIDATING OLDER PEOPLE TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE AND POSITIVE, BUT WE RARELY TALK ABOUT PRODUCTIVE MIDDLE AGEING.

SO FOR A MOMENT LET'S TURN THE SPOTLIGHT ON PEOPLE IN MIDDLE AGE.

THIS IS A TIME WHEN MOST PEOPLE ARE FOCUSED ON THE AGEING OF THEIR FAMILY AND THEIR CHILDREN, BUT REALLY THIS IS THE TIME WHEN PEOPLE SHOULD BE PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR A HEALTHY OLD AGE...

...BECAUSE THE HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES MADE THROUGHOUT OUR LIFE, ESPECIALLY DURING MIDDLE AGE, HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON HOW WE AGE LATER IN LIFE. GOOD PHYSICAL AND BRAIN HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL TO BEING ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE IN LATER YEARS.

PRODUCTIVE AGEING RELIES ON MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH AND MOBILITY AND THIS IN TURNS RELIES ON A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, INCLUDING MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT AND REMAINING ACTIVE.

IT'S A MAJOR CONCERN THAT MANY AUSTRALIANS ARE UNAWARE THAT SIMPLE LIFESTYLE FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRONIC DISEASES AND THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CHRONIC DISEASES – SUCH AS DIABETES, HEART DISEASE, STROKE AND DEMENTIA.

IF I CAN PUT ON ANOTHER HEALTH HAT FOR A MOMENT AS EMERITUS DIRECTOR OF ARTHRITIS AUSTRALIA – I SERVED AS PRESIDENT IN 2003-2006 – THIS ADVICE ALSO APPLIES TO PEOPLE WITH ARTHRITIS, A LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY IN AUSTRALIA AND ONE OF THE MOST COMMON REASONS FOR PEOPLE TO RETIRE EARLY.

THE COST TO GDP OF EARLY RETIREMENT DUE TO ARTHRITIS HAS BEEN ESTIMATED TO BE \$9.4 BILLION. EVERY KILO OF EXCESS WEIGHT A PERSON CARRIES PUTS AN EXTRA FOUR KILOS OF PRESSURE ON THEIR KNEES AND HIPS.

RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE CASES OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE WORLDWIDE ARE POTENTIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO RISK FACTORS SUCH AS HYPERTENSION, OBESITY, SMOKING, DEPRESSION, COGNITIVE INACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL INACTIVITY.

RESEARCH HAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT UP TO 30 PER CENT OF CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING DEMENTIA, COULD BE PREVENTED THROUGH LIFESTYLE CHANGES SUCH AS INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND CONTROLLING BLOOD PRESSURE AND CHOLESTEROL.

BUT ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO ADOPT HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES IS NO EASY FEAT. THERE ARE MANY CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME IN SEEKING TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT PREVENTIVE HEALTH AND EVEN MORE SO, WHEN IT COMES TO CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS.

THE REACTION OF MANY MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE IS OFTEN THAT IT CAN BE PUT OFF FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. THEY NEED TO REMEMBER THAT DEMENTIA DEVELOPS SOME 20 YEARS BEFORE SYMPTOMS FIRST APPEAR.

I KNOW FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE HARD-HITTING HEALTH CAMPAIGNS CAN CHANGE PEOPLES' BEHAVIOUR.

AS CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AIDS (NACAIDS), THE COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH IMPLEMENTING AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL HIV/AIDS EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE 1980s, I KNOW THAT OUR GRIM REAPER CAMPAIGN CHANGED PEOPLES' BEHAVIOUR OF ALL AGES AND SEXUAL PERSUASION. (THE EVIDENCE TO BACK THIS UP IS IN THE FILES OF THE FEDERAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.)

IT'S NOT EASY BUT IT CAN BE DONE...

BUT REGARDLESS OF THE DIFFICULTY OF CHANGING ATTITUDES, AUSTRALIANS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS MAXIMISING THEIR HEALTH IN LATER LIFE, INCLUDING THEIR BRAIN HEALTH.

WITH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER THE WORLD'S FIRST PUBLICLY-FUNDED DEMENTIA RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM – *YOUR BRAIN MATTERS*. THE PROGRAM IS CENTRED ON THE CONCEPT THAT IT JUST TAKES FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO MAXIMISE BRAIN HEALTH.

- 1. LOOK AFTER YOUR HEART**
- 2. BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE**
- 3. MENTALLY CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN**
- 4. FOLLOW A HEALTHY DIET**
- 5. ENJOY SOCIAL ACTIVITY**

THESE CHANGES GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS LOWERING A PERSON'S RISK OF DEVELOPING DEMENTIA LATER IN LIFE.

WHAT'S MORE, A RECENT STUDY ESTIMATED THAT A 25 PER CENT REDUCTION IN PHYSICAL INACTIVITY RATES COULD POTENTIALLY PREVENT NEARLY ONE MILLION CASES OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE WORLDWIDE.

LET'S JUST THINK ABOUT THAT STATISTIC FOR A MOMENT – ONE MILLION CASES AVOIDED SIMPLY BY TAKING UP REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY!

OF COURSE NO ONE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN THAT IF WE DO ALL THE RIGHT THINGS WE WILL NOT GET DEMENTIA, OR ANOTHER CHRONIC DISEASE, BUT A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE CERTAINLY WON'T DO ANYONE ANY HARM.

THE GOAL OF PRODUCTIVE AND POSITIVE AGEING HAS TO BE LIFELONG, NOT SOMETHING THAT'S ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT AFTER A PERSON TURNS 65.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO BE POSITIVE ABOUT AGEING HOWEVER, WHEN THE DEBATE IS CHARACTERISED AS BEING ABOUT AN "AGEING TSUNAMI" – AS IF THE FACT THAT AUSTRALIANS ARE LIVING LONGER THAN EVER BEFORE IS A TRAGEDY OF SOME KIND.

I'M VERY HAPPY TO LIVE IN A COUNTRY THAT HAS ONE OF THE LONGEST LIFE EXPECTANCIES IN THE WORLD.

THE LATEST DATA RELEASED BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS SHOWED THAT THE NATION'S AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY HAS REACHED 82 YEARS OF AGE. THIS IS HIGHER THAN CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, THE UK AND THE US.

AUSTRALIANS OVER THE AGE OF 90 ARE NOW THE FASTEST-GROWING GROUP IN THE POPULATION. THERE ARE AROUND 3,000 CENTENARIANS IN AUSTRALIA; BY MID CENTURY IT'S EXPECTED THIS FIGURE WILL GROW TO 50,000.

WE SHOULD BE PROUD OF THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS. BUT WITH IT COMES THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE AS THEY AGE.

AUSTRALIA NEEDS A POSITIVE AGENDA FOR PRODUCTIVE AND POSITIVE AGEING.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE NEED A CULTURAL SHIFT IN THE WAY WE VIEW THE OLDER PERSON. AS MANY OF YOU WOULD BE AWARE, AGE DISCRIMINATION AND STEREOTYPING IS COMMON IN OUR COUNTRY.

IN JUNE LAST YEAR, I HELPED LAUNCH THE AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT ABOUT THE STEREOTYPES OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS.

IT FOUND THAT DISCRIMINATION OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS IS RIFE WITH NEARLY HALF OF AUSTRALIANS AGED 65 AND OLDER EXPERIENCING IT IN SOME FORM.

THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION REPORTED WERE: BEING TREATED WITH DISRESPECT, BEING IGNORED AND BEING TURNED DOWN FROM JOBS.

ONE IN TEN BUSINESSES ADMITTED TO HAVING AN AGE ABOVE WHICH THEY WOULDN'T RECRUIT – AND THAT AGE IS 50 – WITH 22 PER CENT OF THEM PRESUMING IT'S MORE DIFFICULT TO TEACH OLDER WORKERS NEW THINGS AND THAT THEY HAVE DIFFICULTY ADAPTING TO CHANGE.

FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA IT IS THE SILENT TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION THAT IS ALL TOO COMMON. FAMILY AND FRIENDS SEEM TO DISAPPEAR AFTER A DIAGNOSIS HAS BEEN MADE. FOR OTHERS IT IS A SENSE OF SHAME AND HUMILIATION, ALMOST AN ANTICIPATION OF DISCRIMINATION, WHICH BRINGS THE MOST HARDSHIP.

IN A NATIONAL SURVEY IN 2011 BY UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, 60 PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED THAT IF THEY RECEIVED A DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA THEY WOULD FEEL A SENSE OF SHAME, AND NEARLY HALF SAID THEY WOULD BE HUMILIATED BY THE DIAGNOSIS.

ONE IN TEN PEOPLE SAID THEY WOULD ACTIVELY AVOID SPENDING TIME WITH A PERSON WHO HAD DEMENTIA. A THIRD SAID THAT PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA ARE IRRITATING, AND OVER HALF SAID THAT THEY CANNOT HAVE A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA.

THERE IS A SENSE OF SOCIAL AVOIDANCE AND IMPATIENCE WHEN IT COMES TO COMMUNICATING AND RELATING TO OLDER PEOPLE, AND THIS BECOMES EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE DEMENTIA.

SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK THAT THE BEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH OLDER PEOPLE IS BY SHOUTING AT THEM...AS IF SHOUTING WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING

IT ISN'T AND IT DOESN'T.

IT IS CONCERNING THAT ALL TOO OFTEN, INSTEAD OF EMPOWERING OLDER PEOPLE, THE INSTINCT OF MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY IS TO TURN THEIR BACKS.

IT'S TIME WE STOPPED THINKING THAT LIFE STOPS AT 65 AND RECOGNISE THAT OLDER PEOPLE MAKE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR SOCIETY.

IT MAKES NO SENSE TO CATEGORISE PEOPLE BY AGE. I KNOW SOME 70 YEAR OLDS WHO ARE MORE FIT AND ACTIVE THAN SOME 30 YEAR OLDS.

OLDER PEOPLE MAKE A HUGE IMPACT ON BOTH OUR COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY WHETHER THROUGH WORK, VOLUNTEERING, OR HELPING WITH AND OFTEN CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN. IF AUSTRALIA IS TO ACHIEVE PRODUCTIVE AGEING WE MUST RECOGNISE AND ASSIST THESE CONTRIBUTIONS.

IMAGINE WHAT WE COULD ACHIEVE IF WE TAPPED INTO THE WISDOM, EXPERIENCE AND CREATIVITY OF OLDER PEOPLE MORE THAN WE DO NOW.

I BELIEVE THE MEDIA, ADVERTISERS, BUSINESS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE THE NEGATIVE WAY OLDER PEOPLE ARE VIEWED IN AUSTRALIA.

WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INJECT SOME POSITIVITY INTO AGEING – AND I DO LIKE TO BE POSITIVE! SO LET ME GIVE YOU THREE AREAS THAT I BELIEVE WE NEED TO TACKLE... WORK, ATTITUDES TO RISK TAKING AND THE CREATION OF A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY AUSTRALIA.

RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY WE TEND TO JUDGE OTHERS BY WHETHER THEY HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE OR SOMETHING WE CAN RELATE TO, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE IS WORK.

ACCORDING TO A NATIONAL SENIORS REPORT, THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY LOSES \$10.8 BILLION A YEAR AS A RESULT OF FAILING TO USE THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS WHO WANT TO WORK.

THE AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S REPORT DEBUNKED SOME OF THE MYTHS ABOUT OLDER WORKERS AND SHOWED THAT OLDER PEOPLE ARE AN ASSET IN THE WORKFORCE:

- 1. OLDER WORKERS AGED OVER 55 ARE FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO STAY AT A JOB FOR LONGER COMPARED TO WORKERS AGED 20-24, REDUCING ONGOING RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COSTS**

- 2. MATURE AGE WORKERS ARE LESS LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE WORK-RELATED INJURIES AND TAKE SICK LEAVE. IN FACT A RECENT ABS SURVEY FOUND THAT MATURE AGE WORKERS TOOK HALF THE NUMBER OF DAYS OFF COMPARED TO WORKERS AGED 25-34**

- 3. AUSTRALIANS AGED 55-64 ARE THE FASTEST GROWING USERS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.**

DISCRIMINATION BASED ON AGE IS UNACCEPTABLE AND THERE NEEDS TO BE AN UNDERSTANDING THAT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WHO ARE OLDER IS JUST AS SERIOUS AS RACIAL OR GENDER DISCRIMINATION.

MOST PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE THAT THERE IS LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THEM FROM AGE DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE. WE NEED TO RAISE AWARENESS OF BOTH BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES ABOUT LEGAL RIGHTS WITH REGARDS TO AGE DISCRIMINATION.

WE MUST ALSO TACKLE THE MYTH THAT PEOPLE SHOULD RETIRE BECAUSE THEY NEED A BREAK FROM THE STRESS OF WORK TO FOCUS ON STAYING HEALTHY AND BEING HAPPY IN THEIR LAST YEARS OF LIFE. THE REALITY IS THAT BEING AT WORK PROMOTES BOTH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.

RESEARCH FROM THE U.S. HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY FOUND THAT RETIREMENT LEADS TO AN INCREASE IN DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH MOBILITY AND DAILY ACTIVITIES, HEALTH CONDITIONS AND ILLNESS, AND A DECLINE IN MENTAL HEALTH.

I'M DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE TO TELL YOU SOME ENCOURAGING NEWS ABOUT DELAYING RETIREMENT AND THE IMPACT THIS MAY HAVE ON RATES OF DEMENTIA.

A RECENT FRENCH STUDY FOUND THAT DELAYING RETIREMENT CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF DEMENTIA. RESEARCHERS SURVEYED THE HEALTH AND INSURANCE RECORDS OF MORE THAN 429,000 SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS IN FRANCE AND FOUND THAT THE RISK OF BEING DIAGNOSED WITH DEMENTIA WAS LOWER FOR EACH ADDITIONAL YEAR OF WORK.

IT'S REASSURING TO GET AFFIRMATION THAT BEING ACTIVE IN THE WORKFORCE CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF DEMENTIA, NOT THAT I HAVE ANY PLANS TO RETIRE SOON!

BEYOND THE WORKPLACE WE MUST ALSO GIVE OLDER PEOPLE GREATER CHOICE IN THE SUPPORT AND CARE THEY NEED TO AGE WELL. WE NEED TO ADOPT NEW CARE PRINCIPLES THAT FOCUS ON PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS AND ABILITIES RATHER THAN THEIR DISEASE OR DISABILITY.

WE NEED TO BE MORE WILLING TO LET OLDER PEOPLE TAKE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES AND RETAIN CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIVES.

THERE'S AN ASSUMPTION THAT ONCE YOU PASS A CERTAIN AGE YOU SHOULD BE RISK AVERSE AND LET OTHERS MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR LIFE.

WHY IS IT THAT WE ASSUME THAT OLDER PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO OR AREN'T CAPABLE OF MAKING DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES? IN REALITY, MOST OLDER PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE THEIR LIVES AS THEY HAVE DONE FOR MANY YEARS, WHICH SEEMS REASONABLE TO ME.

CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT AND CHOICE HAVE BEEN A CENTRAL THEME OF ADVOCACY FOR ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS. WE'RE PLEASED IT IS A CENTRAL PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S AGED CARE REFORMS.

THE ESSENCE OF CONSUMER DIRECTED CARE IS TO ENABLE OLDER PEOPLE TO DETERMINE FOR THEMSELVES THE SUPPORT AND CARE THEY NEED, AND TO DESIGN SERVICES SO THAT THEY CAN RETAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE TO DO WHAT THEY CAN FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

IT OPENS UP THE POSSIBILITY OF CARE BEING ABOUT MORE THAN JUST MEETING BASIC NEEDS SO THAT CONSUMERS CAN KNOW WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM FOR THEIR CARE NEEDS, AND THERE IS TRANSPARENCY AROUND HOW THESE RESOURCES ARE USED.

AUSTRALIA HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A WORLD LEADER IN SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE BY CAPITALISING ON THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH AND CARE SHOULD OFFER THEM.

WE NEED TO DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH OLDER PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION HAS DEVELOPED THE CONCEPT OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND PROVIDED INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES TO WORK TOWARDS ENSURING BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS ARE INCLUSIVE OF ALL AGES.

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS IS CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO GIVE BACK TO SOCIETY THROUGH VOLUNTEERING OR MENTORING YOUNGER PEOPLE.

37% OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY WORK IN SOME CAPACITY. IN 2009, NATIONAL SENIORS ESTIMATED THAT OLDER AUSTRALIANS MADE AN ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION EQUIVALENT TO \$2 BILLION A YEAR THROUGH THEIR WORK AS VOLUNTEERS.

WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE OLDER PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER. STAYING BOTH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN OLDER AGE, WHETHER IN THE WORKFORCE OR THROUGH VOLUNTEERING, HAS POSITIVE IMPACTS ON A PERSON'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITY.

WE MUST ALSO ENSURE THAT THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA IN OUR COMMUNITIES ARE MET. AN IMPORTANT FACT, OFTEN OVERLOOKED, IS THAT 70 PER CENT OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE CONCEPT OF DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES HAS TAKEN OFF OVERSEAS ESPECIALLY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND BELGIUM.

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

IN PORT MACQUARIE, THERE HAS BEEN GRASSROOTS INTEREST IN THE CONCEPT OF DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES WITH LEADERSHIP FROM THEIR LOCAL MP, LESLIE WILLIAMS.

THE COMMUNITY HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER A DEMENTIA ACTION GROUP MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT, POLICE, CHURCHES, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS TO TALK ABOUT HOW THEY CAN MAKE PORT MACQUARIE A BETTER PLACE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA TO LIVE.

ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA WESTERN AUSTRALIA HAS DEVELOPED A VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH YOUNGER ONSET DEMENTIA TO VOLUNTEER WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.

OTHER PROGRAMS HAPPENING ACROSS AUSTRALIA INCLUDE DEMENTIA-CHOIRS, EVENTS AT ART GALLERIES AND WALKING GROUPS.

BUT WE CAN'T LET IT STOP THERE. THERE ARE MANY OTHER APPROACHES TO BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY INCLUDING THROUGH WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND IMPROVED STREET SCAPES.

WE NEED MORE INITIATIVES LIKE THESE TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM ENABLING US TO CREATE MORE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONS, AND EVENTUALLY A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY AUSTRALIA.

ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA HAS PRODUCED TWO IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS THAT OUTLINE AN APPROACH TO ENCOURAGING UNDERSTANDING AND INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA THROUGH DEVELOPING DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONS.

ONE OF THE SUGGESTED APPROACHES IS AROUND DESIGNATING BUSINESSES AS 'DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY'. SUCH ORGANISATIONS WOULD DISPLAY A SYMBOL TO INDICATE THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY SERVICE. WE HAVE TRAINING VIDEOS TO ASSIST BUSINESSES IN TRAINING THEIR STAFF TO ENABLE THEM TO DO THIS.

THE USE OF A SYMBOL TO DENOTE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY SERVICES HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY USED BY BALLARAT HEALTH SERVICES. OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS. THEY HAVE USED A COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT IDENTIFIER... WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE PATIENT AND THEIR FAMILY...TO DENOTE A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA IN HOSPITAL.

WE ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE HOWEVER THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH GOODWILL THERE IS IN THE COMMUNITY, MORE RESOURCES ARE NEEDED ON THE GROUND TO DEVELOP DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES.

IF WE ARE GOING TO BE PRODUCTIVE AND POSITIVE ABOUT AGEING WE MUST START WITH LIFELONG EDUCATION ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFESTYLE TO GOOD PHYSICAL AND BRAIN HEALTH.

IF WE ARE TO TALK ABOUT WORKING LONGER WE SHOULD BE FAIR AND RECOGNISE THE BARRIERS THAT EXIST, BOTH ATTITUDINAL AND LEGAL.

OUR INCREASING LONGEVITY IS THE DEMOGRAPHIC CLIMATE CHANGE OF OUR TIME. THIS BRINGS WITH IT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ECONOMY, HEALTH AND WELFARE.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IS SOMETHING WE SHOULD BE EXCITED ABOUT,
RATHER THAN FEARFUL.**

GROWING OLDER IS A GIFT – NOT EVERYONE GETS TO BE OLD.

**WE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING THE FACT THAT PEOPLE ARE LIVING
LONGER THAN EVER BEFORE**

**IN ORDER TO ENJOY OUR LONGEVITY AUSTRALIANS MUST BE
ENCOURAGED TO ADOPT HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES TO REDUCE THE
INCIDENCE OF CHRONIC DISEASE.**

**AND SURELY, OUR GOAL MUST BE FOR AUSTRALIA TO BECOME AN
INCLUSIVE SOCIETY THAT SUPPORTS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND
DISABILITIES, SO THEY CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH
THEY RESIDE AND LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST.**

THANK YOU.