

Connections

Alzheimer's Tasmania's Newsletter

SPECIAL EDITION February 2017

Dramatic new dementia figures reveal multi-billion dollar cost

The number of people with dementia in Australia has soared to more than 400,000 with an estimated cost to the community of more than \$14 billion this year alone, a new report has found. The research predicts that this number will rise by another \$4 billion in just eight years as the number of people living with the condition continues to increase.

The report, *The Economic Cost of Dementia in Australia 2016-2056*, commissioned by Alzheimer's Australia, has found that if nothing is done to reduce the incidence of dementia, the cost will blow out to more than \$18 billion by 2025, and more than double to \$36 billion in less than 40 years as the number of people with dementia rapidly increases from an estimated 413,000 people in 2017, to 536,000 people by 2025 and a staggering 1.1 million Australians by 2056.

Nationally, that translates to an estimated 237 new cases of dementia each day this year alone, which will grow to an estimated 318 people per day by 2025 and more than 650 per day people by 2056.

However, the report also found that just a five percent reduction in the number of people developing dementia over the age of 65 could lead to savings of \$5.7 billion from 2016-25, with savings estimated to be \$120.4 billion by 2056.

Alzheimer's Australia National President Professor Graeme Samuel said the figures contained in the report, by the University of Canberra's National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), were alarming and a timely wake-up call.

All state and territory Alzheimer's Australia organisations have renewed their call for a funded National Dementia Strategy to deal with the issue, along with a greater focus on risk reduction measures.

**It is estimated that in the next 40 years 6,564,428
Australians will be diagnosed with dementia**

Dementia is already an accepted National Health Priority Area, and is one of the major chronic diseases of this century. It is already the second leading cause of death in Australia and its far-reaching impact is well understood.

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Despite the known social and economic impact we still do not have a fully-funded national strategy to provide better care and outcomes for people who are living with dementia now, nor are we taking risk reduction seriously in order to try to reduce the numbers of people living with dementia in the future.

Alzheimer's Australia has emphasised that the time for action is now, as inaction will see the costs continue to grow to unsustainable levels. For more information see the full report at: <https://reports.fightdementia.org.au/costofdementia>

Nation-wide Alzheimer's Australia organisations to unify

In an exciting development for the wellbeing of Australians living with dementia, and the family and carers who support them, the state and territory Alzheimer's Australia bodies have committed to the formation of a unified national organisation.

Alzheimer's Australia is currently structured as a state and territory based federation with each member jurisdiction independently governed and operated. After discussion over a number of years, there is now agreement by the state and territory boards to move to a single, unified entity.

The new organisation, planned to be in place by 1 July 2017, aims to significantly build our nation-wide capacity at every level; strengthening and diversifying our service delivery, gaining better service reach for regional and marginalised communities, achieving wholesale efficiencies in operating costs, and much better positioning the national entity as an expert voice and fearless advocate for achieving improved funding to support people living with dementia throughout Australia.

Alzheimer's Tasmania Chief Executive, Tony Reidy, is a member of the national unification steering committee, and the Tasmanian Board Chair, Amanda Quealy, is a member of the National Board and CEO selection panel, so our state is well represented in this vital governance and operational project.

The formal ratification of Tasmania joining the national unification will be put to members in a Special General Meeting, very likely in March/ April 2017- more information on this will be sent to members and stakeholders soon.

The recent updated statistical information highlighted above on the prevalence of dementia serves to strengthen the case for a national advocacy, education, information and service delivery model that channels every possible resource available into the support of people living with dementia in Tasmania, and the national unification project is squarely aimed at achieving just that.

STOP PRESS - after a comprehensive professional recruitment process, the CEO of Alzheimer's Victoria, who has been Acting National CEO of Alzheimer's Australia - **Maree McCabe** - has just been announced as the Chief Executive of the new organisation. She brings a remarkable and diverse range of high-order skills and experience to this challenging role - congratulations Maree!

New Director appointed to lead National Institute for Dementia Research

The National Health and Medical Research Council's National Institute for Dementia Research and Alzheimer's Australia have announced the appointment of Janice Besch as the new Director of the National Institute.

Read more at:

<https://www.fightdementia.org.au/media-releases/janice-besch-new-director-of-the-nnidr>

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