

CREATING DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES: A TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT



About Alzheimer's Australia Vic

Alzheimer's Australia Vic is committed to the prevention of dementia, while valuing and supporting people living with dementia.

As the charity and peak body for people with dementia, their families and carers in Victoria, we engage in a wide range of activities, including education, support, advocacy and information.

We support people living with dementia, their families and carers to manage the daily challenges that dementia brings. We work with care staff to deliver best practice in dementia care. We work in partnership with others to increase awareness about dementia, reduce stigma and support with dementia, their families and carers to live well and continue doing what they love.

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments under the Home and Community Care (HACC) program.

Development of the toolkit involved a collaborative process, including trialling of content and tools by councils and other key stakeholders, including people living with dementia.

Alzheimer's Australia Vic gratefully acknowledges all who contributed to the development of this resource. We particularly wish to thank our expert consumers, Glenda Sargent, Jane Sandow, Rob Trinca and Brian Ridden, in addition to the consumer representatives who sat on our project advisory committee: Gavin Brasier, Tony Walsh and Primrose White.

We are also appreciative of the input provided by many representatives of local government, including the 41 councils whose personnel provided valuable feedback through their involvement in discussion forums and interviews, content reviews and the provision of case studies that bring the toolkit to life.

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A CONSUMER'S STORY - MAXINE



Although it might feel like it initially, a diagnosis of dementia is not the end. Speaking from personal experience, life goes on. There are no magic pills to cure dementia, but I've found ways to continue living a good life – an active, meaningful life. I've accepted that I have dementia but I don't let that define me. I feel it's important to maintain my roles as much as possible, as a partner, a friend, a volunteer and a member of my local community. Being actively involved makes me feel better about myself and what I can do. There are some things I can't do anymore on my own, but I can usually participate in some way with the right support.

In my working life I was a physiotherapist. I loved helping people with their rehabilitation after an injury or illness. It was very difficult when I had to retire earlier than expected. A couple of years ago my partner Graeme and I found a place where I can volunteer and use my skills and knowledge as a physiotherapist. I help to run a gentle exercise group for older people with dementia in my local area. I get a lot of satisfaction from helping others in my community to maintain their health.

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to introduce *Creating Dementia-friendly Communities: A Toolkit for Local Government*. The publication provides councils with the information they need to lead dementia-friendly communities – places where people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.

As a consumer of dementia-related community services, I'd like to advocate for services that do things with us rather than for us. I want to be engaged, enabled and empowered to maintain my valued roles and activities in daily life. I encourage councils to continue reading this toolkit to consider how services may be adapted and improved to better meet the needs of people living with dementia.

Maxine Thompson

Maxine is a consumer advocate living with Posterior Cortical Atrophy, which is a form of younger-onset Alzheimer's disease. Maxine is a member of the national Alzheimer's Australia Dementia Advisory Committee and Younger Onset Dementia Reference Group at Alzheimer's Australia Vic.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

People living with dementia often report that a diagnosis is life-changing, not only because of the day to day symptoms they experience but because of changes in the way that people perceive or treat them. This has implications for the way that they, their families and carers participate and interact with their own local communities.

Activities that we take for granted, such as going for a coffee in our favourite local café, doing grocery shopping or banking, paying our council rates or using local community facilities can become complex and challenging for people with dementia. Indeed, a recent survey highlighted that nervousness about becoming lost, difficulty in speaking to shop staff and social isolation are common. As one person put it, “it’s like (people) think I no longer count and I am not a person anymore”.

And yet, in the words of another individual, “a person living with dementia ... has as much to contribute to society as the next person”. This is why the idea of dementia-friendly communities is so important.

Councils play a key role in ensuring that local communities are vibrant, inclusive and supportive of all citizens. Indeed, many councils are already instrumental in improving disability access and making local communities age-friendly, and the concepts outlined here are a logical extension of this work. This toolkit is designed for all those in local government who make our communities easier places in which to live well. If you set policies, plan and build infrastructure, or deliver services that have a tangible impact on how the

community operates, you can make small (or big) changes that can make a real difference to the lives of people living with dementia, their families and carers.

There is no one way to create a dementia-friendly community and this toolkit is not intended to be prescriptive. Most important is the desire to explore and implement change, whether this is in the short term or longer-term, in a number of small ways or in a more systematic, council-wide way. In order to do so there are three core change management approaches that should be considered by councils who want to explore what dementia-friendly might mean in their community:

1. Identify a champion/number of champions.
2. Consult with people who have dementia and their families/carers about what is important to them.
3. Identify tangible, achievable actions that can be implemented in the short term as well as considering longer-term initiatives.

To support these steps, the toolkit provides information, resources and guidance for building on existing infrastructure, systems and services in order to make communities more inclusive. The content reflects the lessons learned from dementia-friendly initiatives across Australia and draws on international experience.

The toolkit has also been informed by wide-ranging collaborations with council staff representing more than half of all Victorian councils, as well as other representatives of local councils and consumers.



Why a toolkit for local government?

Councils need to know how they can build on what they already have to ensure they can support dementia-friendly initiatives across their communities.

Guy Walter
Macedon Ranges Shire Council



INTRODUCTION

The policy context

The National Framework for Action on Dementia 2015–2019 identified the need to develop dementia-friendly communities in Australia in order to build awareness, acceptance and understanding of dementia in the community. These principles of inclusion are grounded in the international work undertaken by the World Health Organisation on age-friendly cities and are echoed in this state's Age Friendly Victoria Declaration as well as many other policy frameworks that draw on universal design principles.

With 96,789 Victorians living with dementia in 2016, and with governments and community members agreeing that living in the community for as long as possible is desirable, there is a pressing need to equip our communities to understand and support everyone, no matter how diverse their needs.

What is dementia?

Dementia is the name given to the set of symptoms that are caused by brain disease. Dementia affects the way the brain is able to work and it can affect thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday tasks.

Most people with dementia are older, but it is important to remember that not all older people get dementia. It is not a normal part of ageing. Although dementia is more common after the age of 65 years, it can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, culture, income or education.

Dementia is a progressive disease with mild symptoms in the early stages that generally worsen over time. Dementia affects everyone differently and symptoms are not always obvious.

There are many different types and forms of dementia but the most common causes are Alzheimer's disease, Vascular dementia, Lewy body disease and Fronto Temporal Lobar Degeneration.

At present there is no definitive prevention or cure for most forms of dementia, though support from families, friends, services and the broader community has been shown to make a positive difference to the quality of life of someone with the condition.



How does dementia affect people?

Because dementia can affect the way that someone thinks, feels and behaves, the symptoms of the disease can significantly impact the way they operate within and relate to their local community.

Some common symptoms include:

- progressive and frequent memory loss
- confusion, such as disorientation with time and place
- personality changes
- apathy and withdrawal
- problems with communication
- loss of self confidence.

Although the above are common symptoms, each individual's experience of dementia is unique, which is why taking a person-centred approach is so important.

A recent survey of people with dementia highlighted that:

59% thought that others avoided spending time with them because of their diagnosis

41% wished they had more social contact with people in the community

57% were afraid of becoming lost in their local community

48% had difficulty in communicating with staff in stores

Alzheimer's Australia 2014. Living with dementia in the community: challenges and opportunities.

How does dementia impact local communities?

There are more than 353,800 Australians living with dementia and an estimated 1.2 million people involved in the care of a person with dementia. Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia and there is no cure. Without a medical breakthrough, the number of people with dementia in this country is expected to be more than 400,000 in less than five years.

The majority of people with dementia live in the community. This means that every council in Australia will come into contact with people who have dementia, their families or carers, whether these individuals are paying rates, having their rubbish collected, working in local business or using council services.

And with dementia set to become the third greatest source of health spending within two decades, there are many benefits for councils that take the lead on effective, targeted strategies to support all elements of the community in a sustainable way.

Councils that review and build on existing policies and services, maximise strategic partnerships and work in collaboration with members of their community can help mitigate pressure on their services, stimulate new or better service systems and embed universal design principles into longer-term planning.

Changing Minds Beechworth: A municipality taking action



From the outset, Indigo Shire council saw the benefits of a dementia-friendly Beechworth. Not only is Indigo Shire a key member of the Health Consortium that has driven the initiative (along with the three health services in the region), but the council has made a commitment to becoming a dementia-friendly organisation in its own right.

The Changing Minds Beechworth alliance and project of the same name ('Changing our minds about people whose minds are changing') has garnered support across all elements of the community, and Indigo Shire council is in the thick of the action. The work of the alliance has enjoyed the support of senior council staff and initiatives continue to be referenced in the current council plan, supported by councillors and reported on at executive management level.

The council has overseen the rollout of education and awareness initiatives to its teams, with a particular focus on front line customer services staff. The Home and Community Care team formed its own working group to identify training needs and their training schedule includes a range

of free or low-cost education sessions, including the Virtual Dementia Experience™ offered by Alzheimer's Australia Vic and a problem solving approach to challenging behaviours.

A wide range of initiatives has been implemented, with more planned. Indigo Shire council staff were photographed as part of a photo journal exhibition which was hosted in the main street of Beechworth. Children's books that explored memory loss and inter-generational relationships were read during 'reading time' at municipal libraries across the shire. And council-owned movie equipment was made available for public screenings of contemporary films about dementia.

In addition, staff at the Beechworth Library teamed up with the Changing Minds Beechworth alliance to incorporate dementia-friendly design principles into the refurbishment of the library. This focus on the physical environment extended to the upgrade of public toilet facilities and there are plans to review the accessibility of other public amenities as part of longer-term planning.

How will this toolkit help local government?

The toolkit is divided into three key sections, which are intended to explore the different ways that councils can lead dementia-friendly principles in a gradual, progressive way.

The initial steps may be small and require minimal investment or they may involve a more broad-scale review of council functions. The impetus for driving change might come from anyone: a senior executive, a customer relations officer, an Active and Healthy Ageing Adviser, a planner, or a person delivering Home and Community Care services.

The important thing is that any change, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in the life of someone living with dementia, their family and carers. And even small changes have a way of building momentum.

The first section of the toolkit explores some of the ways in which councils can build on existing frameworks to explore what it means to be dementia-friendly.

The second section relates to the change management process and the ways in which any level of council can drive change. The examples provided span a range of initiatives with varying levels of complexity, cost and resourcing.

The third section provides practical tools and templates for councils to use in planning and implementing their own dementia-friendly initiatives.

The practical suggestions and checklists are compiled from evidence-based practices and approaches in communities around the world. The information, examples and resources included are intended to complement community strengths and adapt to local contexts and needs.





We belong to a walking group and play indoor bowls at the local community centre. After bowls we enjoy a cup of tea and a biscuit which the council generously organises for the group each week. It keeps us active and it is great for our minds."

Bundoora residents



DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



What is a dementia-friendly community?

An inclusive community

In its broadest sense, a dementia-friendly community is a place in which a person with dementia is supported to live a high quality life with meaning, purpose and value. This broad principle of inclusion is not unique to dementia-friendly communities and at its heart it is about a local community (and a council) being able to support people with diverse capabilities. Ultimately, a dementia-friendly community will be friendly for everyone.

People living with dementia have described their priority areas as:

1. Increasing community awareness and understanding about dementia
2. Improving access to social activities and opportunities for engagement including volunteering
3. Employment opportunities or support to remain employed
4. Access to appropriate health and care services to support them to continue to live at home for as long as possible
5. Access to affordable and convenient transportation options
6. Improved physical environments including appropriate signage, lighting and colours¹

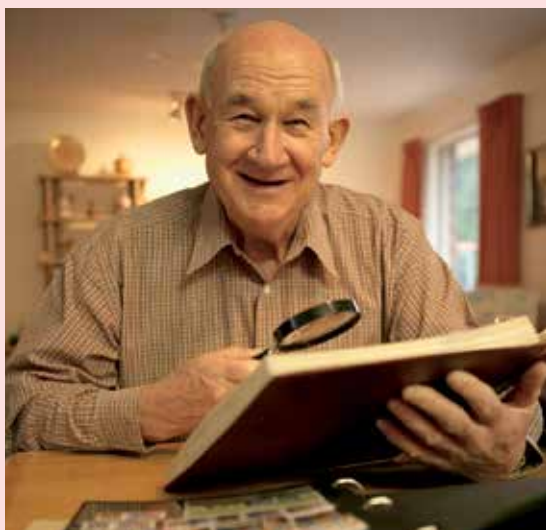
The dementia-friendly model

There is no single, ideal model of a dementia-friendly community. No two suburbs or towns are alike. Councils will have strategic priorities and plans specific to their region that will shape how they respond to local needs. The sorts of initiatives that take priority will inevitably reflect:

- The needs or preferences identified by people living with dementia in a given community.
- The characteristics of the community itself (for instance, metropolitan; regional; range of cultures reflected; age demographic).
- The availability and nature of existing supports and services and the ways in which these could be improved or expanded.

National and international experience shows us that successful dementia-friendly communities typically include some of the following key elements:

- Consultation with people with dementia as well as with the broader population of the local community, service providers, businesses and council staff.
- Targeted awareness training or education about dementia for council staff and/or the local community.
- Establishment of a local alliance of individuals willing to champion change. Alliance members



Jack's story

In 2013 Jack was diagnosed with vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease at the age of 69. Jack and his wife left their 30 acre farm where they had lived most of their lives and moved into the local town. Jack has joined the local Lions club where they hold meetings and events at the municipal library. The library staff understand Jack's condition and keep his diary up to date as well as ensuring he has written information on upcoming meetings and events. In addition, the staff watch out for Jack after the meeting until his wife picks him up. They ensure there is a quiet space for him to sit if he is feeling overwhelmed. It is this key support from municipal library staff that is contributing to the ability of Jack and his wife to stay engaged and active.

¹ Alzheimer's Australia 2014. Living with dementia in the community: challenges and opportunities. Available at www.fightdementia.org.au/files/DementiaFriendlySurvey_Final_web.pdf, accessed November 2015.

would ideally include council staff and possibly specific service providers, businesses or passionate individuals in the community.

- Creation and implementation of an action plan (or series of organisational action plans), with achievable, measurable goals for change, regardless of whether that change is small and specific or big and systemic.

The nature of these action plans will very much depend on the people that create them and the parts of council that support or facilitate them. There may be a focus on the physical environment; there may be momentum to change or increase local services; education or awareness training may be a priority; or there may be interest in embedding dementia into policy and planning frameworks.

The role of councils

Councils that look at dementia strategically and positively are not only able to mitigate pressure on their services but facilitate other innovative ways for people living with dementia to contribute to their community and in turn feel more valued and included.

But how does a council begin to explore dementia-friendly communities in an effective, sustainable way?

Councils already have a range of frameworks, organisational structures and resources through which they support the physical, social, cognitive and sensory needs of their populations. Councils also have links to important stakeholder groups that can provide support and advice on dementia and access to people living with dementia.



Consider, for example:

- the role that Victorian Active and Healthy Ageing Advisers might play in supporting dementia-friendly principles in the community.
- the way in which councils are responding to the report on loneliness and social isolation produced by the Commissioner for Senior Victorians.² If ageing is everyone's business, how are councils making sure that dementia is everyone's business?
- signing up to the Victorian Age-Friendly Declaration initiative and considering the needs of people living with dementia as you encourage positive ageing and boost good health, security and community participation for Victorian seniors.
- how existing local government action plans and initiatives might be adapted or expanded to include a focus on dementia.
- the mechanisms for community engagement that councils already utilise and whether these provide appropriate access to the views of people living with dementia.
- the role that specialist services and peak body organisations, like Alzheimer's Australia Vic, can play in providing support and advice for dementia-friendly initiatives.
- how a focus on universal design can be embedded into existing strategic and implementation plans, regardless of department or function.
- how the power of volunteers could be harnessed to support councils in facilitating and implementing change.
- what tools and resources councils have access to and how these might be disseminated across council.

2. Commissioner for Senior Victorians 2016. Ageing is everyone's business: a report on isolation and loneliness among senior Victorians. Available at www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/commissioner-for-senior-victorians, accessed May 2016.



People living with dementia, their families and carers often say to us, 'nothing about us without us'. This sentiment is at the very heart of dementia-friendly communities and it is exciting to see the multiple ways that councils are supporting this kind of inclusiveness.

Dr Kaele Stokes,
Strategic Projects Manager,
Alzheimer's Australia Vic



STEPS TO CREATING A DEMENTIA- FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



Three steps to creating a dementia-friendly community

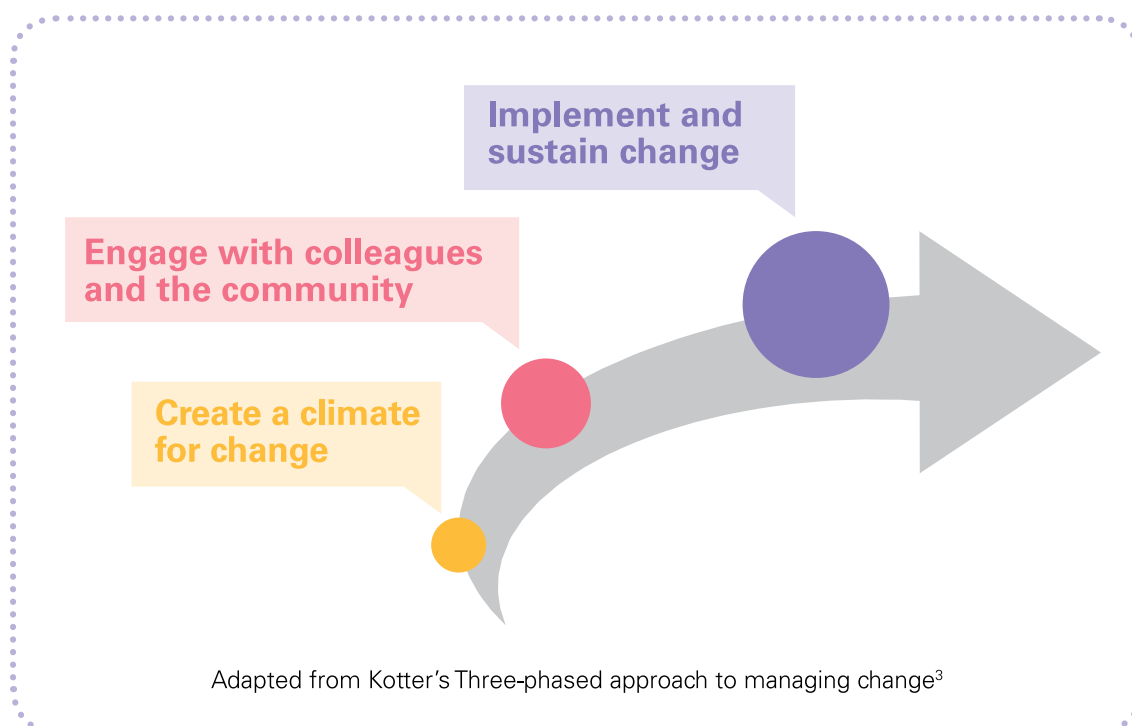
As the level of government closest to communities, local councils play a critical role in making environments healthy, safe and inclusive. Councils understand the needs of their communities and are influencers and catalysts for change.

The change management framework outlined in this section of the toolkit provides councils with a simple process for considering how to scope and implement dementia-friendly principles, both at a council level and in the broader community.

The most important thing is to remember that any step, no matter how small, is incredibly significant. Dementia-friendly communities do not happen overnight, but all it takes is one council representative to take a first step in order to generate momentum.

The three stages outlined below are intended to help councils determine what their first actions might look like and how they can be sustained. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they a comprehensive list of what councils can or should do. Instead, they are designed to provide a series of options, or conversation-starters.

Initiatives may originate as short-term, cost-neutral (or low-cost) ideas that leverage off existing structures. They may focus on medium-term projects or initiatives that require some resourcing. Or they may have a focus on longer-term, 'future-proofing' of council functions and community services.



3. www.kotterinternational.com/the-8-step-process-for-leading-change, accessed May 2016.

1. CREATE A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

The first step is to find a champion in council, regardless of department or level of seniority.

The foundation of a dementia-friendly council may be as simple as reviewing existing policies and frameworks for references to dementia or asking for dementia to be added as a standing item to departmental meetings.

The important thing is to start the conversation, take stock of where council is at in regards to supporting people living with dementia, their families and carers, and people with diverse needs more broadly.

Consider the benefits to council of being proactive in the short-term and how measures can be embedded into longer-term planning.

2. ENGAGE WITH COLLEAGUES AND THE COMMUNITY

The next step is engagement with others at council and with the broader community.

Talk to colleagues at council to build momentum or interest in dementia-friendly principles.

Talk to people living with dementia, their families and carers about what is important to them and how they can connect meaningfully with their council and community.

Seek support from consumer organisations such as Council on the Ageing, Alzheimer's Australia Vic and Carers Victoria, who can facilitate access to people living with dementia, their families and carers.

3. IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN CHANGE

The third step is to take action, whether that action is small or big, cost-neutral or requiring some investment. Recognise that even relatively small changes can make a significant difference to a person living with dementia.

The first step may be the creation of a local dementia alliance within or across council, or you may consider facilitating the establishment of a community alliance which can be supported by council. Alternatively, look at how an awareness of dementia-specific initiatives can be embedded into existing departmental working groups.

Come up with some tangible, achievable action items that sit in a separate dementia action plan or within existing council agendas.

1. CREATE A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

SHORTER-TERM

Find a champion or champions within council

- Look to your existing council committees or working groups as a possible starting point
- Consider a nomination process for interested candidates
- Allocate a champion within every department or council function

Understand the local context

- Obtain the dementia prevalence data for your local area from the Alzheimer's Australia Vic website
- Review existing council reports, plans or strategies for dementia data (for example, number of direct clients with dementia)
- Map existing groups and services across the municipality that have a direct role in supporting people living with dementia, their families and carers
- Assess which existing areas of council programs might integrate a focus on dementia into current activities or frameworks (for example, active and healthy ageing, social inclusion, health and wellbeing, accessibility functions)
- Identify key community stakeholders and organisations that can help you plan your next steps (and support your activities)

LONGER-TERM

Embed the role of dementia-friendly champion into core aspects of council functions

- Include references to supporting inclusiveness in position descriptions
- Add dementia or community inclusion more broadly as a standing item on working group agendas/terms of reference (for example, Municipal Health and Wellbeing plans; active and healthy ageing plans)
- Make reference to dementia in council plans and report on initiatives to executives on a regular basis

Generate awareness of the local context

- Refer to the principles of dementia-friendly communities in cross-council newsletters, community newsletters and online forums
- Look at ways of featuring or showcasing dementia-friendly initiatives in public forums
- Build on council collections of resources and information on dementia (for example, books and journals on dementia in the municipal library; risk reduction information at local sports clubs and community centres).



Making a start

If you are a council representative who is interested in how the role of council can support people living with dementia, their families and carers, consider putting yourself forward as a dementia champion. Change can start anywhere in council and on any scale. It may be as simple as starting a conversation with colleagues.



2. ENGAGE WITH COLLEAGUES AND THE COMMUNITY

SHORTER-TERM

Consult with colleagues and generate support

- Workshop what dementia-friendly might look like in your council and/or in your departments
- Host a discussion with key council staff, the mayor and/or councillors to garner support for a broader consideration of dementia-friendly principles
- Explore how volunteers and community stakeholders can support council in key initiatives or consultations
- Identify goals that are achievable in the short-term and within existing council structures

Consult with people living with dementia, their families and carers

- Seek guidance from peak bodies like Council on the Ageing or Alzheimer's Australia Vic on consultation mechanisms
- Look at the accessibility of your usual consultation and engagement processes, and ask whether the voices of people living with dementia are being heard
- Consider establishing new or separate engagement processes for people living with dementia if existing mechanisms are not suitable (for example, consider undertaking one-on-one consultations, community surveys, or phone interviews)
- Consider the language you use in relation to dementia and avoid terms that stigmatise (for example, avoid the term 'sufferer' or 'victim')
- Ask people living with dementia to audit specific areas of council or council facilities for accessibility and appropriateness

LONGER-TERM

Aim for council-wide buy-in

- Create terms of reference for a council-wide local dementia alliance
- Identify longer-term goals that can be embedded into practices
- Make information about dementia available to staff as part of induction processes
- Celebrate specific milestones or achievements through cross-council communications and seek new champions
- Appoint a community development worker with a specific focus on the inclusion of people with diverse needs

Make consultation with members of the community with diverse needs normal practice

- Always include people living with dementia and/or their carers on formal advisory groups, reference groups and steering committees
- Develop formal performance indicators around consumer engagement, including feedback and review mechanisms
- Put out regular calls for community volunteers or dementia-friendly champions
- Facilitate the establishment of a community-based local dementia alliance and support them to meet in council facilities
- Include people with diverse needs on interview panels for positions relating to community engagement
- Download language guidelines from Alzheimer's Australia and distribute a copy to every council department



Tips for communicating with people living with dementia

DON'T

- Try to hurry people
- Argue or take a condescending tone
- Ask questions that rely on a person's memory
- Use negative body language and facial expressions

DO

- Listen carefully and make eye contact
- Allow plenty of time for a response
- Keep sentences short and simple
- Avoid competing noises such as television or radio
- Use orienting names or concepts where possible, such as "Your partner X" or "Your local council, Y"

Inclusive Manningham: A dementia- friendly city



The Inclusive Manningham project grew out of council's commitment to support the wellbeing and social connectedness of people living in the community. The Council's Healthy City plan and Ageing Well strategy promote mental wellbeing, participation and engagement as priorities, with dementia representing a key focus area.

Manningham councillors and council staff recognised the increasing number of residents affected by dementia (Manningham has the third fastest growth rate of dementia in the eastern metropolitan region) and saw the opportunity to align a project on dementia-friendly communities with broader council priorities. Manningham identified a suite of existing programs through which it could make a difference, including social support programs, cultural seniors programs, carer support groups, and more.

The key goals of Manningham City Council were to:

- Establish a local dementia alliance, with council and community representatives
- Engage with key stakeholders to raise the profile of dementia in the community and improve community awareness
- Survey the community to explore their understanding of dementia and what an inclusive community might look like
- Develop specific, achievable actions in the short- and long-term (such as education and information provision)
- Seek funding to support the sustainability and expansion of the project

Although the project is still in progress, a formal launch in 2015 was attended by the Mayor of Manningham and members of the community; a local dementia alliance has been established; an action plan has been agreed and a number of initiatives are underway.

3. IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN CHANGE

SHORTER-TERM

Consider small, short-term, cost-neutral or low-cost initiatives to increase awareness

- Access free or low-cost existing tools and services to educate council staff about dementia (for example, the 'Understanding Dementia' Massive Open Online Course by the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, Alzheimer's Australia Vic's online learning or the Virtual Dementia Experience™)
- Circulate existing, available tools and resources to all council staff and encourage them to consider how they might put them into practice
- Tap into free community education delivered through Alzheimer's Australia Vic or consider making a small investment in tailored education for council staff
- Develop a dementia action plan and provide it to your Alzheimer's Australia representative in order to receive formal recognition of your dementia-friendly status

Take small steps to embed dementia-friendly principles into council functions

- Review council plans, strategies or frameworks for references to dementia and update policy frameworks and action items accordingly
- Ensure you have a formal review process for measuring progress
- Review HR policies and procedures to ensure there are flexible work arrangements for employees diagnosed with dementia or caring for someone living with dementia
- Review written and website information to make sure it is accessible (and consult with people living with dementia on its appropriateness)
- Consider an award or recognition process for council staff or community members who lead or contribute to dementia-friendly initiatives

LONGER-TERM

Consider longer-term initiatives that require resourcing to increase awareness

- Work in partnership with local businesses, community groups or sports clubs to support the social engagement of people living with dementia (for example, promote the use of Seniors Card discounts, explore volunteer roles or create buddy programs)
- Embed universal design principles into town planning and governance frameworks, or planned refurbishment or new buildings (for example, the height of curbs, the availability of seating, green spaces, wayfinding, signage and amenities that are dementia-friendly)
- Seek funding to undertake substantial dementia-friendly initiatives within council
- Allocate seeding grants to community groups or local businesses who want to work towards becoming dementia-friendly
- Roll out regular council-wide education about dementia, including information specific to particular departments or council functions

Take more systemic steps to embed dementia-friendly principles into your council and the community

- Develop exit strategies for an employee diagnosed with dementia, including consideration of volunteering roles
- Plan new services and supports as part of strategic and budgeting functions (for example, hosting a dementia-specific café, or buddying, peer support or mentoring programs)
- Consider the capacity of councils to provide services that directly engage people living with dementia (for example, active and healthy ageing groups; library programs; activity groups)
- Pursue formal partnerships or Memorandums of Understanding with community groups and organisations that wish to consider dementia-friendly initiatives (for example sports clubs, Probus, Lion's Club or RSL clubs)
- Host community sessions about dementia-friendly communities

Dementia-friendly environments in the City of Melbourne

Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre Activity Room



The City of Melbourne, in partnership with Alzheimer's Australia Vic, has been working to make the Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre more dementia-friendly.

Utilising dementia-friendly design principles in the planned activity rooms, access areas and toilets has improved access and participation for people with dementia.

The changes have included:

- Flooring that is a contrasting colour to the furniture and walls
- Well-lit transition from entrance to the activity room
- Room signage that includes colour contrast text and symbols
- Acoustic ceiling tiles to absorb sound within the interior
- A non-patterned floor covering
- Colour contrast between placemats, table and crockery
- High quality lighting to limit dark shadows
- A coloured toilet seat that contrasts with the toilet
- A sensory garden with scented plants with tactile foliage and flowers



Tips for the physical environment

- Use unambiguous seating design (for example, chairs should look like chairs)
- Use high-contrast design features (for example, in a public restroom consider different-coloured toilet seats, distinctive buttons for flushing and signage on the inside of the exit door to differentiate it from a toilet cubicle door)
- Avoid sudden changes in light level since shadows can be confusing
- Use clear signage that allows for line of sight orientation, and which uses words and pictures
- Consider inclusion of 'quiet spaces' in refurbishments and new buildings

Dementia is all of council's business

The most successful dementia-friendly initiatives are achieved when all levels of council take a shared approach to supporting people with diverse needs. But this does not mean that a cross-council approach is the only way to start exploring dementia-friendly communities.

The impetus for change can come from any individual and from any council department or function. The below table demonstrates some of the ways in which different parts of a council can begin the journey towards dementia-friendliness.

Department	Why?	How?
<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service • Public relations and communication • Human resources 	<p>You have regular contact with people with dementia and are able to be responsive to their needs.</p> <p>You are in a position to facilitate change within council, both in terms of how councils operate and how you meet the needs of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Become the change champion for your council. Bring key internal and external stakeholders together – Suggest that customer service staff undertake training on how to communicate well with people with dementia – Review your council reception areas for dementia-friendly design principles and make recommendations for small but significant changes or upgrades – Ensure that human resources policies support employees with dementia or families and carers of people living with dementia
<p>Facilities and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and recreation • Community facilities • Emergency management services • Libraries • Local laws • Roads, footpaths, traffic management • Public spaces • Community transport 	<p>Public spaces, parks and gardens are fundamental components of how people in the community interact, socialise and maintain wellbeing.</p> <p>Embedding simple strategies and awareness of universal principles in design, review and maintenance can significantly impact the lives of people with dementia.</p> <p>Planners can ensure universal design principles are embedded in new and revised guidelines and that they inform planned and future activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ask urban designers to consult with people with dementia and their carers on the design of public outdoor and indoor spaces – Ensure that Municipal Emergency Management Plans and Community Safety Plans take into account the needs of people with dementia – Talk to libraries about building up their collections on dementia and how to live a positive life following a diagnosis – Ensure that planning frameworks address universal design principles and that a plan for implementation is clear – Review public facilities to ensure they are accessible and easy to navigate – Source information on dementia-friendly design principles from organisations like Alzheimer's Australia Vic and embed into planning frameworks, including Road Management and Road Safety Plans

Department	Why?	How?
<p>Facilities and Infrastructure (continued)</p>	<p>Road infrastructure and community transport are fundamental aspects of social engagement and independence for people with dementia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure that all new and upgrade public works embed universal design principles. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats in public spaces have a plain design and are easily recognised as chairs • Signs that use bright primary contrasting colours with easily recognisable pictures to reinforce the location • Public amenities which are dementia-friendly in design and signposting – Support community bus drivers to undertake training to understand the needs of people with dementia – Apply for state or federal funding to undertake larger-scale initiatives
<p>Health and Community Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged and disability • Cultural • Youth and family • Health 	<p>You may already have contact with people living with dementia and are informed about their needs.</p> <p>Simple changes to current services or identification of service gaps could lead to opportunities to streamline or economise current services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support service staff and volunteers to undertake free or targeted training to better understand the needs of people with dementia – Consider the development of council programs that address the specific needs of people with younger onset dementia (aged under 65 years), given this form of dementia appears at an earlier stage of life when people are likely to be more physically and socially active and programs for older people may not be appropriate – Make communities aware of dementia resources for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – Consider whether health and wellbeing frameworks are inclusive of people living with dementia – Review current services and supports, and consider how service improvements can be achieved in a cost effective way (for example, using volunteers)



The toolkit and tools make it easier for councils to embrace change and the tools will help guide and commit us to dementia-friendly activities

Council Worker



TEMPLATES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



TEMPLATES

Dementia-friendly community survey

Use or adapt this survey to find out what people with dementia do in your area, what facilities they use, and what helps or hinders them.

Survey for businesses

Use or adapt this survey to help identify businesses that want to be more dementia-friendly and those wanting to be involved in a local dementia alliance.

Expression of Interest – local dementia alliance

Use or adapt this expression of interest to help you to identify and invite interested and suitable parties.

Local Dementia Alliance – terms of reference

Use or adapt these terms of reference to set out the working arrangements for your local dementia alliance group, outline the committee purpose, decision making role, chair and secretariat membership, and meeting schedule.

Action Plan template

Use or adapt this action plan template to define the actions of your council's department, whole-of-council and/or the local dementia alliance, clarify what resources are required, outline the timelines for activities to be completed and record progress of the group.

Briefing note for service providers and businesses

Use or adapt this briefing note to help local businesses understand why it is important to be more dementia-friendly and provide simple steps to help them achieve it.

Engagement strategies for people living with dementia

Use this guide as a starting point for considering the different ways to engage with people living with dementia and to find out what a dementia-friendly community means to them.

Physical environments checklist

Use this checklist as basic guidance on things to consider in making physical environments easier for people living with dementia.

Social engagement checklist

Use this checklist to help identify ways in which people with dementia can meaningfully contribute to and participate in everyday activities.

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SURVEY

«Town/Municipality» Dementia-friendly survey – Community members

A dementia-friendly community is a place in which people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value. We want to find out how dementia-friendly «town/municipality» and the surrounding area is and what could be done to make it more dementia-friendly. With the support of the community people with dementia can continue to do many of the things they love.

The information from this survey will be used to make «town/municipality» more dementia-friendly.

1. In a typical week do you live?

- On your own
- With your family carer
- With someone who is not your carer
- In a care home
- Other, please specify:

2. How often do you get out of the house?

- Most days
- Every couple of days
- A few times per month
- Less than once a month
- Don't know

3. What do you do in your local area (please mark all that apply to you)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping or errands | <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating out | <input type="checkbox"/> Hobby group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing sports such as lawn bowls, tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't do anything in my local area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting parks | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support or planned activity group | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing or music groups | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Card or board games | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attending a place of worship | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting the library | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movie, concert, theatre or other performance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum or art gallery | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community groups such as Probus or Lions | |

4. What helps you to do these things?

- Good transport
- Good physical accessibility
- Support from family and friends
- Support from businesses or services
- Plenty of signs to help me find my way around town
- Feeling welcome
- Other, please specify:

5. What makes it more difficult for you to do these things?

- Decreasing physical health
- Difficulties with physical mobility
- Lack of transport
- Lack of support from family, carers and friends
- Lack of support from businesses or services
- Lack of confidence
- Worry about getting lost
- Worry about becoming confused
- The things I enjoy are not available
- Feeling unwelcome
- Not wanting to be a burden to others
- Other, please specify:

6. Are there things that keep you from going out and doing things like shopping, errands and eating out that you previously did? (Please mark all that apply)

	Yes	No
Difficulty communicating with staff at stores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough support from family, friends or carers to assist me to do those things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concern about getting lost or confused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No appropriate services available nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People seem to feel awkward or tense around me when I go out because of my diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer to stay at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other health problems keep me from going out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other: please describe:

7. Do you wish you had more social contact with people in the community?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

8. What do you think could be done to make the «town/municipality» community more dementia-friendly?

9. As part of the dementia-friendly «town/municipality» project there will be a local dementia alliance made up of people in the community and organisations who are interested in helping to make «town/municipality» more dementia-friendly.

Would you be interested in joining a local dementia alliance?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Name _____

Email _____

SURVEY FOR BUSINESSES

«Town/Municipality» Dementia-friendly survey – Businesses

A dementia-friendly community is a place in which people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value. We want to find out how dementia-friendly «town/ municipality» and the surrounding area is and what could be done to make it more dementia-friendly. With the support of the community, and of businesses and organisations like yours, people with dementia can continue to do many of the things they love.

The information from this survey will be used to make «town/municipality» more dementia-friendly.

1. Please indicate the type of your organisation

- Retail
- Pharmacy
- School
- Transport
- Food and beverage
- Finance
- Emergency services
- Community service
- Travel agency
- Other (please specify):

2. Please tick the box which best describes how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Our business has customers with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our business will benefit if we support people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff know how to support people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff know how to communicate with people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know where to go for resources to train our staff in supporting people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please indicate whether you have done or would consider doing the following to move towards this business being dementia-friendly:

	Have done	Would consider doing	Would not consider doing
Learning to better assist people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committing to supporting people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting staff in dementia awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviewing our physical environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviewing information we provide to the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involving people with dementia in these changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning to review our level of dementia-friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. As part of the dementia-friendly «town/municipality» project there will be a Local dementia alliance made up of people in the community and organisations who are interested in helping to make «town/municipality» more dementia-friendly.

Would you be interested in joining a local Dementia Alliance?

- Yes
 No
 Unsure

5. If you would like to receive information on how your business could support people in the community living with dementia or join a «town/municipality» dementia alliance, please provide your details:

Name _____

Email _____

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - LOCAL DEMENTIA ALLIANCE

<Insert title of your Initiative>:

Local Dementia Alliance nomination form

«town/municipality» is delivering a new initiative aiming to improve the quality of life of people living with dementia, their families and carers by facilitating a community that is dementia-friendly.

One of the early initiatives of this project is the formation of a «town/municipality» local dementia alliance to inform and guide the development of a local work plan and play an advisory role in the future implementation of the project.

We are seeking nominations from interested parties to be involved in «town/municipality» local dementia alliance. Nominations will be accepted from residents with dementia, carers, community organisations, sporting clubs, local businesses, service clubs, places of worship and other bodies interested in creating a more inclusive municipality.

The alliance is anticipated to meet on a <add frequency> basis for the planning and early implementation phases of the project between <insert timeline>. A review by the committee will determine the ongoing schedule.

The first meeting has been scheduled for <Insert Time and Date>.

If you have any queries please contact <Contact Name, telephone number and email>

Name _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

I am interested in being involved as a:

community representative

organisational representative

Name: _____

Organisation (if organisation representative): _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Occupation: _____

Nominated by:

Self

Organisation

Other _____

Experience

List any experience or expertise with dementia.

List any previous experience on a local government network or committee.

Reasons for applying:

What do you hope to achieve by being a member of the «town/municipality» local dementia alliance?

Availability:

Meetings will be held <add frequency> from <insert timeline>. Are you able to commit to this requirement?

Yes

No

Authority:

If appointed to the local dementia alliance, I authorise disclosure of my name and, if appropriate, the name of my organisation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return completed forms by <insert date> to

<insert return address>

LOCAL DEMENTIA ALLIANCE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

<Initiative Name> Local Dementia Alliance terms of reference

Introduction

Through a collaboration with key stakeholders, «town/municipality» is making a genuine commitment to improve the quality of life of its diverse community and to be more inclusive.

The local dementia alliance is a coalition of local businesses, groups, organisations, and individuals, including people with dementia.

The local dementia alliance will inform and guide the <initiative name> through the development, implementation and monitoring of a local action plan. It will also support the ongoing sustainability of this initiative into the future for «town/municipality».

The local dementia alliance will operate to support the development of a dementia-friendly community by raising awareness of issues faced by local people with dementia and taking actions to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers.

The alliance will focus on the inclusion of people living with dementia and their carers who live, work, or have a connection to «town/municipality».

Responsibilities

The local dementia alliance is responsible for taking actions to enhance the lives of people living with dementia by:

- Providing advice on and developing the «town/municipality» dementia-friendly action plan.
- Sharing information and exploring opportunities to champion this issue as a collective.
- Identifying opportunities for improving the lives of people living with dementia and their carers.
- Partnering with and/or leading potential initiatives that result from the action plan.
- Advocating for the needs of people living with dementia and their carers to the broader community.

Decision making

The decision making role of the alliance is limited to advising and making recommendations for actions and activities that support the <initiative name>.

Membership

The alliance will consist of up to <number> members. Membership is voluntary and may include residents and representatives of organisations that provide services to «town/municipality».

The appointment of members that will form an alliance will occur through an expression of interest process and appointments will be for a period of <number> years. Nominees may be interviewed by council.

Meetings

- The chair will be selected from the group and will chair for one year.
- The chair will be responsible for the preparation, distribution and storage of the local dementia alliance agenda and meeting minutes.
- Distribution of minutes will be by post or email as chosen by participants.
- Apologies should be sent to the chair.
- Meeting frequency will be <monthly/bi-monthly>. Meetings will be held at <insert, meeting location>.
- Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible. If there is difference of opinion, the majority vote will determine the decision.

Code of behaviour

The local dementia alliance is a voluntary community group. Members commit to ensuring respectful behaviour between members and/or their respective organisations at any meetings or events associated with the «town/municipality».

This includes:

- Representing the alliance in a positive and respectful way within the community
- Making use of members contact details for business purposes only, or related matters relevant to the work of the alliance
- Being committed to the principles of dementia-friendly communities

Contact

For more information regarding the local dementia alliance or the wider «town/municipality» dementia-friendly community initiative please contact: <insert contact name and details>.

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

This dementia-friendly action plan will be planned and reviewed by the local dementia alliance. Please list one to two action items for each essential principle.

Who we are	Description of the council department, organisation or business, including key stakeholders, numbers of employed staff and location of business operations.		
Our commitment to being dementia-friendly	What is the vision of the council, organisation or business for being dementia-friendly? Provide details of how being dementia-friendly relates to your council, organisation or business.		
Our dementia-friendly action plan	Explain who has been involved in the development of this plan.		
Essential principle	People with dementia are involved in the process of becoming dementia-friendly Possible action: People with dementia are represented on the local dementia alliance.		
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Progress
List the possible actions that could be taken to achieve this aim	Who will be responsible	When will this action be completed by	Progress to date
1.			
2.			

Essential principle	Commitment Possible action: Becoming a dementia-friendly organisation is discussed by senior executives and elected representatives.		
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Progress
Essential principle	Up-skilling staff Possible action: Dementia awareness education and training is provided to staff.		
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Progress

Essential principle	Review of the physical environment Possible action: The dementia-friendly audit tool is utilised to review the physical environment.		
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Progress
Essential principle	Business documentation Possible action: A small working group is established to review business forms and documentation to incorporate dementia-friendly concepts.		
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Progress
Essential principle	Review and continuous improvement Possible strategy: Dementia-friendly status is incorporated into yearly review processes.		
Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Progress

BRIEFING NOTE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS AND BUSINESSES

Why does my service/business need to be dementia-friendly? – a briefing note for local service providers and businesses

There are currently almost 97,000 people living with dementia in Victoria. As the population ages, this number will increase.

Dementia causes a progressive decline in a person's mental functioning, affecting everything they do. It is a social and health condition, not just an aged care issue.

Dementia can happen to anyone and affects the whole family of the person with the disease.

The majority of people with dementia live in their own homes in the community. This means that

many of the people using your service will have dementia. You can become more dementia-friendly by making it easier for people with dementia to use your service and by supporting staff to serve them more effectively.

There is no easy way for you to tell if a person has dementia. Some people with dementia will ask for help while others may prefer to keep their diagnosis private and some may not have received a diagnosis.

What can you do?

Approach	Strategy
Ask people with dementia what it is like to use your business.	Find out what is working well and where improvements can be made; people with dementia and their carers are the experts.
Equip staff to understand and better assist people with dementia.	Provide staff training about dementia. Alzheimer's Australia has some useful Help Sheets at: fightdementia.org.au/about-dementia/resources/help-sheets
Where appropriate, get to know the person's carers.	This may be essential when important transactions are involved.
Look out for people in difficulty.	When people have problems handling money, don't rush them. Ask if you can help to count out the right money.
Make buildings easier for people with dementia to navigate.	Place signs at key decision points. Reduce noise and where possible provide quiet places. Make sure the lighting is bright enough for people to see clearly.
Provide written information that is clear and easy to understand.	Keep language simple, avoid jargon. Present information one piece at a time. Use at least 12 point font size, but 14 point is better.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

The idea of making our communities better places to live for people with dementia is something a lot of people are interested in. The most important stakeholders in this process, of course, are people living with dementia, their families and carers.

Listening to the voices of people with dementia about their needs and preferences ought to be at

the heart of creating a dementia-friendly community and is the best way of understanding the experience of life with dementia.

Sometimes engagement strategies need to be tailored to the abilities of participants. Some suggested strategies are outlined below.

Talking to people one-to-one	Losing the ability to communicate can be one of the most frustrating and difficult problems for people with dementia and their carers. As the illness progresses, a person with dementia may find it more and more difficult to express themselves clearly and to understand what others say. Talking to people one-to-one may allow you to meet their particular needs.
Talking to groups of people	Group discussions may have advantages over individual interviews by reducing pressure on people to respond, providing mutual support and the opportunity for shared experiences to trigger memory and help people to articulate their own thoughts. Working in established groups where people know and feel comfortable with each other can help to find out the views and opinions of people with dementia. It may be easier for many people with dementia to think about ideas and proposals themselves in a facilitated group in their own time, and then convey their responses.
Asking people if they would like to fill out a survey	Many people with dementia are able to fill out a survey on their own, whereas some may need assistance or prompting. The survey on page 29 is designed to help people to have their say on what a dementia-friendly community means to them.
Taking a walk with people to see how they experience their community	People at different stages of the illness have much to offer during a walk around their community. This can be a very effective way of finding out how people with dementia experience their local environment and identify ways in which to support local facilities to become more dementia-friendly. Never assume that people with more advanced dementia cannot enjoy this process or have nothing to offer.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS CHECKLIST

Small changes can make a big difference. For many people with dementia the environment (both indoor and outdoor) can have a significant impact on their ability to continue to access everyday activities such as shopping, banking or using public transport.

This checklist gives a range of design recommendations to help improve the quality of life of people with dementia in the outdoor and indoor environments.

Outdoor Environments	
Provide acoustic barriers, such as planting and fencing, to reduce background noise.	
Use clear, large signage for toilets and other public spaces.	
Provide obvious and easy access to shaded areas, with adequate seating.	
Provide seating that looks like seating, such as a wooden bench rather than more abstract designs.	
Provide adequate parking with easy access to parks, libraries or public facilities.	
Ensure ground level changes are clearly marked and well-lit, with handrails and non-slip, non-glare surfaces.	
Ensure clear visibility from top step to bottom.	
Provide sensory stimulation in gardens and parks by using different colours, scents, textures and sounds.	
Ensure main paths are wide enough for two users to walk or use wheelchairs.	
Ensure entry and exit signs are clear and obvious.	
Avoid structures such as pergolas that cast shadows, which may be interpreted as depth changes by people living with dementia.	
Ensure undercover areas in parklands are provided for accessibility in all weather conditions.	
Utilise visual landmarks are in place to assist way finding such as garden beds, murals, water fountains or features.	
Ensure bus shelters are enclosed and have adequate seating.	
Ensure signs have large graphics and symbols in clear colour contrast to the background, preferably dark colouring on a light background.	
Avoid bright light and deep shadows.	

Indoor Environments

Ensure indoor spaces have good lighting with natural light sources.	
Minimise loud noises like music or announcements.	
Provide quiet spaces with adequate seating for people with dementia.	
Allow for shading where required through the use of window treatments like external sun shading, curtains and blinds.	
Ensure all manually operated entry doors/gates are easily operated with lever handles or push plates.	
Ensure all glass doors are clearly marked.	
Ensure level changes are clearly marked and well lit with handrails and non-slip, non-glare surfaces.	
Provide obvious hot and cold indicators on water taps.	
Use contrasting colours for floors, walls and furnishings.	
Avoid bold patterns on carpets, wall paper and floor coverings as these might cause perceptual problems. Plain walls and curtains are recommended.	
Use changes in texture or colour of floor coverings to indicate potential hazards.	
Use colour contrast to differentiate between toilet seats, toilet bowls and floor. Use uniform signage for male and female toilets.	
Choose furniture colours that clearly contrast with the colour of the carpet and walls.	
Use simple signage giving clear and essential information.	
Fix signage to walls at eye level (around 1400–1700mm above floor level where possible).	
Create straight and direct layouts to destinations, with limited changes in direction.	
Provide quiet spaces for anyone who might be feeling anxious or confused.	
Provide obvious and clear entry and exit signs.	

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Dementia can have a profound impact on people’s social lives. Many people wish for more social contact with others in the community.

Social Engagement	
Include people with dementia in community initiatives and projects, giving them the opportunity to provide their input and feedback.	
Hold community events and activities at convenient times to enable full participation, for example during the day for people with dementia who are not working.	
Provide a calendar that outlines dates for the events, community programs, etc. This helps maintain orientation.	
Ensure information about community events and activities is readily available, including details regarding accessibility of facilities and transportation options.	
Review the language used in promotional materials. Use plain language, include all demographics and have a clear message.	
Provide affordable community transportation options for people with dementia and their carers.	
Ensure venues for community events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.	
Support people at an increased risk of social isolation to remain engaged with their community, including people living alone and other marginalised populations.	
Recognise people with dementia for their past and ongoing contributions to their community.	
Promote volunteering opportunities offered by communities, businesses and organisations to increase social engagement.	
Promote training and education opportunities for people with dementia.	
Provide and promote flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for people with dementia to assist them to continue working, or become employed.	
Ensure adequate support is provided by training and education institutions to people with dementia undertaking further study.	
Adapt workplaces and work practices to meet the physical and cognitive needs of people with dementia.	

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources for people with dementia and their carers

- 1. Living well with dementia website**
livingwellwithdementia.org.au
- 2. Alzheimer's Australia Vic's online dementia support for people living with dementia, their families and carers**
helpwithdementia.org.au
- 3. Alzheimer's Australia Vic services**
vic.fightdementia.org.au/vic/support-and-services/services-and-programs-we-provide
- 4. Dementia Alliance International**
dementiaallianceinternational.org/

Resources to raise awareness

- 5. A range of Help Sheets, available in more than 30 languages, which provide advice, common sense approaches and practical strategies on the issues most commonly raised about dementia**
fightdementia.org.au
- 6. A series of videos where people can learn about what dementia is, who gets it and some of its most common forms, including signs and symptoms**
helpwithdementia.org.au/
- 7. Is it dementia? – a training resource for recognising the signs of dementia**
isitdementia.com.au
- 8. Victorian dementia prevalence data**
vic.fightdementia.org.au/vic/research-and-publications/dementia-statistics-for-victoria
- 9. Alzheimer's Australia Vic library – provides access to quality dementia related consumer health information and resources.**
vic.fightdementia.org.au/vic/support-and-services/library

Resources for communities

- 10. First Steps to Becoming a Dementia-friendly Australia – examples that have been undertaken around Australia**
fightdementia.org.au/files/First_Steps_web.pdf

- 11. Dementia Enabling Environment Principles**
enablingenvironments.com.au
- 12. Department of Health and Human Services dementia-friendly environments**
[health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/dementia-friendly-environments'](http://health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/dementia-friendly-environments/)
- 13. Living well, longer. Dementia-friendly communities and organisations.**
globalchallenges.uow.edu.au/living/UOW164773.html
- 14. Universal design principles for sports and recreation**
sport.vic.gov.au/design-for-everyone-guide/overview-of-universal-design
- 15. Alzheimer's Australia dementia-friendly resources**
vic.fightdementia.org.au/national/campaigns/dementia-friendly-communities/resources
- 16. World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Cities**
who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/

Resources for councils and organisations

- 17. A toolkit for businesses who want to become dementia-friendly**
fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/Business_toolkit.pdf
- 18. Creating a dementia-friendly work place: a practical guide for employers**
alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=2963
- 19. Alzheimer's Australia Vic education and training**
vic.fightdementia.org.au/vic/education-and-consulting/education-and-training
- 20. Uniting Age Well – Dementia-friendly social support checklist**
unitingagewell.org/Documents/Dementia%20friendly%20social%20support%20checklist.pdf

NATIONAL DEMENTIA HELPLINE 1800 100 500
FIGHTDEMENTIA.ORG.AU/VIC

UNDERSTAND ALZHEIMER'S
EDUCATE AUSTRALIA