For it is in giving that we receive.

- Frances of Assisi

CALD dementia-friendly communities

Aboriginal Yarn Up

Homelessness: Inspiring stories
Welcome to the summer edition of Diversity Matters. During the past six months, many activities have taken place across Victoria, engaging diverse communities on the topic of dementia.

I have been fortunate enough to participate in many of these activities, and have been consistently inspired by the number of unsung heroes from a host of different cultures and backgrounds, and their unconditional dedication to making a difference to the lives of people living with dementia.

As we approach the end of the year, it is a good time to reflect on how lucky we are to live in a nation that has such a great culture of giving back to the society in which we live.

During the last couple of months alone, two pioneers working with the ageing homeless population were officially recognised for their perseverance and dedication to making a difference to the lives of socially and financially disadvantaged people. The two men in question were Bryan Lipmann, CEO of Wintringham Specialist Aged Care and Paul Brophy, Manager of Sambell Lodge, Brotherhood of St Laurence. You can read more about their achievements on pages eight and nine of this edition.

In September, we celebrated our hugely successful Dementia Awareness Month. The entire state was buzzing with community events that engaged people working in the health sector and members of the general public from all backgrounds.

The theme of the month was Creating a Dementia-Friendly Nation. Our aim was to raise awareness and promote increased understanding of dementia, expand social networks, improve access to local facilities such as transport, shopping cafes, and improve the physical environment for people living with dementia.

The program comprised events involving people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, as well as members of the Aboriginal community, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community and the Homeless. You can read more about our Dementia Awareness Month activities on page four of this edition.

In October, Val’s Café - an initiative that seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of older LGBTI people - hosted its second National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Conference in Melbourne. The event featured moving and heartwarming stories told by people from the LGBTI community impacted by dementia, as well as presentations from Carol Bennett, National CEO Alzheimer’s Australia and Dr David Sykes, General Manager Learning and Development Alzheimer’s Australia Vic.

A dementia and LGBTI research paper entitled We Are Still Gay was launched during the conference. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic was involved in the development of the paper, which is Australia’s first evidence based study documenting the experiences and needs of LGBTI Australians living with dementia. You can read more about the conference and the paper on page 11.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has generously given their time to support the work of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic in making a difference to the lives of people living with dementia, their families and carers from a diverse range of backgrounds. Your support is very much appreciated. I wish you and your loved ones a safe and relaxing festive season, and hope to continue our collaborations in 2016.

Claire Emmanuel
Diversity Officer

The Power of Giving
We are quickly approaching the end of the year which, in many cultures, traditionally marks a season of giving.

At Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, we are incredibly fortunate to benefit from the many different ways in which people give:

- Our wonderful volunteers who donate their time and skills with enthusiasm and big smiles.
- People impacted by dementia who are willing to share their stories at events and with media, thus ensuring dementia remains a topic of conversation across the state and across Australia.
- The unpaid carers of people living with dementia who give their love and care with kindness and patience.
- Everybody who donates vital funds to assist the ongoing operations of our organisation—from members to community fundraisers to corporates and private donors.
- Staff and support workers in the aged care and health sectors, who are committed to supporting clients and their families.
- The creative people who go out of their way to develop solutions that better support and empower the vulnerable and needy.

Giving can take many different forms, and the positive impact it has on the lives of those who receive is mirrored in those who give.

This edition of Diversity Matters contains many articles and stories about people who have gone that extra mile to make a difference to the lives of people impacted by dementia.

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Disclaimer
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Dementia Awareness Month 2015

For the month of September, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted Dementia Awareness Month 2015 – Creating a Dementia-Friendly Nation.

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic has a vision to develop dementia-friendly communities and organisations across Victoria. A dementia-friendly community is one in which people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value. It is a place where people are aware of and understand dementia, where people with dementia feel included and engaged, and where they have control over their day-to-day lives.

The month comprised 29 events and activities across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Public Lecture

Alzheimer's Australia Vic hosted a Public Lecture on 3 September, with the keynote speech given by the UK’s Gill Ayling, Head of Global Action Against Dementia. Ms Ayling reflected on global examples of dementia-friendly communities and organisations to develop social action and awareness-raising activities is essential.

Over 130 people attended from multiple CALD groups including Chinese (Mandarin), Tamil, Sinhala, Macedonian, Egyptian, Iranian, Italian, German and Maltese.

Claire Emmanuel, Diversity Officer Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, addressed the audience about the importance of community leadership in driving strategies to achieve a dementia-friendly community.

Ms Emmanuel pointed out that CALD community members are agents of change and emphasised the motto, ‘If we know better, we can do better’.

‘We need to mobilise communities to take action and reduce the stigma around dementia.’

CALD Dementia-Friendly Communities

In South Morang on 15 September, with the support of the City of Whittlesea and the Municipal Association of Victoria, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic hosted the free event CALD Dementia-Friendly Communities – a forum for CALD groups to learn about positive attitudes towards people with dementia.

Mr Lovett-Murray spoke about Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s recent partnership with the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Indigenous Hip Hop Projects to develop an educational music dance video for young people about dementia. You can read more about the project on page 10 of this edition.

In some CALD communities, dementia is associated with mental illness, whilst in others it may simply be regarded as a normal part of ageing. Some community languages don’t have a word to describe dementia.

As CALD populations age and the prevalence of dementia increases, a partnership approach with local community organisations to develop social action and awareness-raising activities is essential.

Over 130 people attended from multiple CALD groups including Chinese (Mandarin), Tamil, Sinhala, Macedonian, Egyptian, Iranian, Italian, German and Maltese.

Gill Ayling, Head of Global Action Against Dementia UK

A group of CALD communities gathered at the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre in South Morang for a Dementia Awareness Month event.

Homelessness sessions

During September, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic conducted workshops to educate staff working in the Homelessness sector about strategies, effective communication and person-centred care for people living with dementia. These events took place at Geelong, Warrnambool, Ballarat, Stawell and Highton.

For more information about Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s work with the homelessness sector, email claire.emmanuel@alzheimers.org.au or go to bit.ly/dem2015dfc

Diversity Officer at Alzheimer’s Australia Vic by emailing claire.emmanuel@alzheimers.org.au or go to bit.ly/dem2015dfc

Let’s Talk About Sex

During Dementia Awareness Month, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic was delighted to partner with COTA Victoria in hosting the inaugural Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age conference.

The event, which took place on 8 and 9 September at the Pullman on the Park in Melbourne, aimed to challenge the assumptions, taboos and stereotypes that exist about the sexuality of older people.

“‘There needs a concerted effort by people of all ages, as well as CALD business people,’ Ms Emmanuel said.

Family carer, advocate and member of the Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee, Pushpa Jayakody shared her own personal story with attendees, while representatives from the City of Whittlesea also gave a presentation on positive ageing.

Group discussions were a core component of the event, giving participants the opportunity to share their own opinions and ideas for dementia-friendly strategies that could be driven within their own communities.

“We were delighted with the event. Attendance was high and feedback from participants was incredibly positive. We believe we’ve managed to collect some valuable insights into what might help enable CALD groups to become more dementia-friendly in the future, “ Ms Emmanuel said.

If you would like to support a dementia-friendly initiative within a CALD community, contact Claire Emmanuel, Diversity Officer at Alzheimer’s Australia Vic by emailing claire.emmanuel@alzheimers.org.au or go to bit.ly/dem2015dfc.

Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age

Over 200 guests attended the event, which was primarily aimed at health professionals facing concerns relating to sexuality and intimacy within their residential or community aged care setting. Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age had an extensive program which gave valuable insights and information on how best to resolve these concerns.

Among the impressive line-up of speakers was Tony Walsh, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee Member, who spoke about finding a suitable residential facility for his late partner, Paul Wenn. Following some reluctant managers and difficult site tours, Tony and Paul eventually found a welcoming and supportive facility. When asked whether LGBTI-specific facilities were the way forward, Mr Walsh said he hoped eventually all facilities would become more inclusive.

Meanwhile, Ballarat couple and Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Younger Onset Dementia Reference Group members Anne Tudor and Edie Mayhew gave an inspiring opening address on the second day of the conference. Entitled Love Lifts Us Up, they recounted their experiences following Edie’s diagnosis of younger onset dementia. Anne and Edie appeared on ABC television’s 7.30 program to share their story. You can watch the segment here http://bit.ly/vcabc730edie.

Above Edie Mayhew, living with dementia and Anne Tudor, carer, speaking at the Let’s Talk About Sex: Relationships and Intimacy as We Age conference.

A group of CALD communities gathered at the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre in South Morang for a Dementia Awareness Month event.

Below Gill Ayling, Head of Global Action Against Dementia UK speaking in Melbourne during Dementia Awareness Month.
By Ann Reilly

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities keen to learn more about dementia**

Between July and December 2015, a number of CALD community groups received fully-funded dementia education sessions, conducted by Alzheimer’s Australia Vic.

Macedonian, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Greek, Arabic, Polish and mixed CALD community groups embraced the sessions, developed specifically for those people whose first language is not English, with each presentation supported by an appropriate interpreter.

Attendees learned about the different types of dementia, communication skills, diagnosis, health checks, carer wellbeing, risk-reduction strategies and the support services available.

The events were run in conjunction with organisations including the Macedonian Community Welfare Association, Kensington Neighbourhood House, Migrant Information Centre East Melbourne, Migrant Resource Centre North West region, New Hope Foundation Inc., Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre in Dandenong, Fronditha Care and the Australian Greek Welfare Society.

**Multicultural Seniors Festival**

In October, staff from Alzheimer’s Australia Vic attended the Multicultural Seniors Festival, organised by Hume City Council. The festival, which was held at the Lynda Blundell Senior Citizen Centre in Dallas, was a highly colourful affair attracting around 300 individuals from a range of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Guests were treated to performances such as Samoan, Sri Lankan and Indigenous dancing, as well as an array of Thai, Turkish and Italian foods. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff were on-site to answer dementia-related questions, and resources in various different languages were distributed, including help sheets on brain health and dementia risk-reduction.

**Talking About Dementia – A free training session for interpreters and translators**

In November, Polaron Language Services invited Claire Emmanuel, Diversity Officer Alzheimer’s Australia Vic to meet with their interpreters and translators.

Ms Emmanuel spoke about dementia and the challenges interpreters and translators face when it comes to the sensitivities associated with translating certain dementia-related words. Due to the high levels of stigma around dementia that exist within CALD communities, there is much debate around the most appropriate words to be used in each community language.

Attendees also learned about dementia signs and symptoms, prevalence in Australia and Victoria, types of dementia, communication and risk-reduction strategies.

The training session was conducted as part of the professional development offered by Polaron to improve its delivery of language services.

**Home-based Preferred Music Listening Program – Chinese Community Social Services Centre**

Our Home-based Preferred Music Listening Project (HPMLP) was a two-and-a-half-year pilot project, funded by the Department of Social Services under the Enhanced Best Practice in Aged Care Initiative, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic and a Registered Music Therapist.

The Project’s aim was to pilot an evidence-based strategy in home based music listening, to benefit the elderly consumers in our Home Care Packages Program, and people who provide informal (family carers) and formal (Home Care Workers) support to them, by transferring music therapy skills to daily packaged care service delivery.

The three-fold objectives:

- To improve elderly clients’ mood status;
- To reduce family carers’ stress;
- To increase Home Care Workers’ job satisfaction.

The Project was an add-on service and has been shown to be cost-effective (in terms of staffing and the recruitment process), building on the credentials of an existing aged care service. The strategy adopted is simple to use; thus can be applied to various aged care service settings, and can be generalised to services for other ages.

The simple yet effective methodology is to conduct preferred music listening activities for consumers in their home environment; either by consumers themselves, by family carers, or by Home Care Workers (while providing home/personal care service to them).

In total, 66 elderly consumers were involved in the data collection process of our Project. Overall, 83.3 per cent of participants have mood improvement and 16.7 per cent participants maintained the same mood state most of the time.

Focus group and phone interviews were also conducted with family carers and Home Care Workers. The result also indicated that family carers’ stress was reduced, and Home Care Workers’ job satisfaction was enhanced, alongside with the mood improvement of the elderly consumers.

For further information on HPMLP contact Ann Reilly, Services Operations Manager Alzheimer’s Australia Vic on 03 9615 7800.

Mei Yau, Program Manager Home Care Packages Program, Chinese Community Social Services Centre

**Multicultural Memory Lane Cafés come to Geelong**

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic is delighted to have received funding from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to host Memory Lane Cafés for all multicultural groups in the Geelong area.

In partnership with Multicultural Aged Care Services (MACS), the inaugural Multicultural Memory Lane Café was held in December for people experiencing memory loss, their family members and carers.

The cafés provide an opportunity for people with dementia and their family members to enjoy time together with refreshments and entertainment, in the company of people in a similar situation to themselves. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic counselling staff and trained volunteers also attend.

For more information on forthcoming café events, call Multicultural Aged Care Services Geelong on 1300 622 778.

Below: A group photograph following a dementia education session for interpreters and translators from Polaron Language Services

Above: Guests at the inaugural Geelong Memory Lane Café join in the musical fun

Left: A 100-year-old consumer with hearing impairment listening to her preferred music by using a high definition headphone
Homelessness News

Champion for the older homeless honoured

The founder and chief executive of Wintringham Specialist Aged Care, Australia’s largest aged care provider for the homeless, has been named Melburnian of the Year, and called for the sector to embrace work with the disadvantaged.

Bryan Lipmann told Australian Ageing Agenda he was very grateful for the honour and it was a “great thrill” to see work with the homeless recognised.

Providing aged care to the homeless has been a passion for Mr Lipmann for more than 30 years. “It gives me a focus in my own life, it grounds me… It’s the most rewarding work you can get,” he said.

Prior to establishing Wintringham in 1989, Mr Lipmann worked as a social worker in night shelters around Melbourne, where he was touched by the plight of the elderly homeless he saw.

Around the same time, his father needed aged care and he had to intersect with the sector for the first time.

“I had no idea how good it was. So I naturally thought, ‘I’m going to get my guys out of the shelters and into aged care’,” he said. “But I didn’t have any luck at all. None of the mainstream aged care providers would take referrals from me,” he said. “So I left and set up Wintringham.”

For the first two years, Mr Lipmann was the organisation’s only employee. Now Wintringham employs over 600 people and is the largest provider of aged care services specifically to the homeless.

Mr Lipmann said that in a sector where most organisations were funded by bonds or contributions, he was grateful of government support to allow organisations like Wintringham to adapt the system to care for “the fish that John West rejects.”

However, he said more broadly, the sector still had a way to go in embracing care for the disadvantaged or those of diverse backgrounds.

“The aged care industry and the peaks aren’t interested in our work at all,” he said. “No one’s really interested in the aged homeless, it’s strange.”

In particular, he said he took issue with charitable not-for-profits competing with for-profit providers for clients who could afford to pay large accommodation bonds.

Mr Lipmann also expressed concerns about the move towards consumer directed care, a system he said presupposes all older people would be able to advocate for themselves or had someone who will be able to help them to do so.

He said the aged care system was geared around an archetypal client – female, aged around 85, white, Anglo Saxon, with a loving family – but the real test of the system was how it responded to the needs of people who did not fit that mould.

At Wintringham, many of the residents, who were younger than those in mainstream facilities, did not have families of their own, which was why it was important to create a sense of community and trust, Mr Lipmann said.

Residents were younger as the experience of being homeless had prematurely aged them, and Mr Lipmann said that while it may seem counter-intuitive in aged care, the longer residents stayed at Wintringham, the better their health tended to get.

“If you work hard enough you can find ways to do this kind of stuff within the aged care envelope,” he said. “That’s something to be quite proud of, I’ve always thought aged care should make more of that, they should be more positive about diversity and how flexible the industry can be if it has to be.”

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic would like to thank Australian Ageing Agenda for generously allowing us to reproduce this article and the article on page nine. Wintringham Specialist Aged Care is a member of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Homelessness Advisory Committee. The original stories can be found at australianeighbourageagenda.com.au.

Homelessness conference

In September, the Council to Homeless Persons hosted a conference at Melbourne Town Hall, attracting 350 delegates.

The conference addressed vital issues that affect homeless people and service providers. Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s Diversity Officer Claire Emmanuel was in attendance and gained a broader understanding of the sector which will inform the organisation’s important work in this area going forward.

To read more about the program and topics presented, see the following link – cthconference.com.au.

The Council to Homeless Persons is represented on Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s Homelessness Advisory Committee.

Daring to make a difference

For Paul Brophy, his work begins with building connections – with his residents, other aged care organisations and the community.

For more than 15 years Brophy has been the manager of the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s Sambell Lodge, a 43-bed aged care facility for the disadvantaged. Many of his residents have experienced homelessness, mental illness and alcohol abuse.

“Many of them have guardians in place, many of them are resentful of coming into care. I think that’s the challenge – not only for us at Sambell, but everybody involved in residential care – getting future residents to come to terms with the idea of moving into a facility,” he says.

For Brophy, the best way to tackle that challenge is to innovate and go beyond the job description. Most importantly, find out residents’ stories and their hopes for the future. He says:

“People come into aged care homes in the latter stages of their lives and we’ve missed out on so much of the good stuff, so much of their journey. These people who have lived challenging lives, we have to instil a sense of trust and belief in them and inspire them.”

Brophy is passionate about creating opportunities for his residents, many of whom are without families of their own to proporcionate for and he says it’s incumbent on all facility managers to be aware of possibilities to do so.

To this aim, in 2006 Brophy approached seven other aged care facilities and the City of Yarra with plans to put on a social sporting event for residents that coincided with the Commonwealth Games.

Having never organised anything like it before, Brophy – in the midst of an accreditation year – said he was occasionally stressed about what could go wrong. However, the event was heralded as a resounding success, with 300 residents, family and volunteers packing the Collingwood Town Hall. It demonstrated to Brophy the power of taking calculated risks in the industry.

“Hitting that vision, you need passion and belief in it,” he says. “In the end, you need to work together more and share our information for the betterment of all.”

In the same vein of community participation, Brophy has also started taking his residents out on Sunday evenings to volunteer at a foodvan in the inner city. It inspires him to see people, many of whom have once been homeless themselves, giving back.

“Yes, it’s about the bread rolls, the soup and the fruit – but most importantly it’s about social inclusion; the social contact that they can get when they go down,” he said.

Recently, he’s also been taking a colour chart round to each resident and asking them what colour they would like to paint the wall outside their room. There’s also a slab of brickwork where he’s asked each resident to paint a brick each however they wish. Brophy says it’s helping to make residents feel more connected and at home in the facility.

“It’s about creating something that you can make your own and it’s about bringing them together,” he says.

In the future, he’s enthusiastic to replicate the events in regional areas.

Many residents spend months planning their outfits and learning songs in the lead up. The most recent event, held in September, was circus-themed. “We had a children’s circus, we had an older woman’s circus, and we had some professional circus performers from CircusOZ. It was fantastic,” he said.

Brophy said part of the reason these events are successful is that they are supported by staff working at the grassroots. He takes delight in seeing them enjoy the day along with residents. The events have also helped to bolster cross-organisational networks – something that Brophy says is wonderful to see. “We need to work together more and share our information for the betterment of all.”

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“It’s starting to look pretty crazy with our tapestry of colour, but you’ve got to try these things. It’s just a coat of white paint if I stuff up. We’ve got to prepared to have a go and the risk. I want to empower the residents,” he said.

“It’s all about connections, community, family and daring to make a difference in what you do.”
Aboriginal News

Indigenous Hip-Hop Project: ‘Yam-up about dementia’

Earlier this year, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, the Gunditjmara community, former AFL player Nathan Lovett-Murray, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Indigenous Hip Hop Projects collaborated on the production of a hip-hop music video resource focused on dementia, wellbeing, culture and respect. Young people from the Gunditjmara communities of Heywood, Portland and Hamilton were involved in the project.

The music video is now available on DVD, to be used as an educational resource across Australia. The DVD was officially launched at the Drum Theatre in Dandenong in September, at an event hosted by the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Alford Health.

You can watch the video at the following link - bit.ly/vichiphop

Bendigo Aboriginal Co-op

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s Bendigo Office is located directly opposite the office of the Bendigo Aboriginal Co-op, known to most Bendigo residents as BDAC.

A strong relationship is being forged between the two organisations, with Alzheimer’s Australia Vic staff regularly attending BDAC events and networking meetings. In return, BDAC staff and clients regularly attend events hosted in the locality by Alzheimer’s Australia Vic.

Most recently, Alzheimer’s Australia Vic’s Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Jo Middleton and Dementia Consultant Carolyne Taplin attended a Planned Activity Group (PAG) organised by BDAC, where they got to know BDAC clients and shared ideas around dementia-friendly activities that could be incorporated into the sessions.

Activities included music, gardening and brain games, followed by a brain-healthy lunch.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)

2015 LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Conference, Melbourne

The Second National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Ageing and Aged Care Conference was held at the Arts Centre, Melbourne on 26 and 27 October 2015.

The conference was hosted by Val’s Café – an initiative that seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of older LGBTI people. The two-day event explored how communities, governments, service providers and older people can work together to promote and provide healthy ageing for older LGBTI people and ensure their needs are understood, respected and addressed in Australia’s aged care policies, programs and services.

The project was built around a philosophy of ‘Nothing About Us Without Us’, with almost a third of speakers being older members of the LGBTI community. This strategy ensured their part in the conversation for change regarding their health, wellbeing and pathways to healthy ageing.

Among those who spoke were member of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee Tony Walsh, members of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Younger Onset Dementia reference Group Edie Mayhew and Anne Tudor, who shared their insights and experiences regarding ageing and dementia among the LGBTI community.

Carol Bennett, National CEO Alzheimer’s Australia attended guests with a presentation on dementia-friendly nations, and the importance of supporting LGBTI people with dementia as well as LGBTI carers with appropriate and inclusive services.

Dr David Sykes, General Manager Learning and Development Alzheimer’s Australia Vic spoke about the numerous resources available for people living with HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders (HAND), their families, friends and carers.

More information on these resources can be found on page 12 of this edition.

Above Bendigo Aboriginal Co-op members enjoy gardening at a Planned Activity Group

Above David Sykes, General Manager Learning and Development Alzheimer’s Australia Vic, sharing insights about our work

We Are Still Gay

Alzheimer’s Australia recently collaborated with Val’s Café, the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society and La Trobe University to develop a resource entitled We Are Still Gay.

The resource is Australia’s first evidenced-based study documenting the experiences and needs of LGBTI Australians living with dementia. We Are Still Gay outlines the key issues identified from the research and provides suggested strategies to help service providers meet the needs of LGBTI people living with dementia.

The project was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, and was launched during the Second National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Conference in Melbourne.

To read more about We Are Still Gay click here - bit.ly/vicwasg

Innovations

Tony Walsh participates in hackathon on ageing population

Earlier this year, member of Alzheimer’s Australia Vic Consumer Advisory Committee Tony Walsh was invited to represent our organisation at a hackathon to discuss matters related to ageing, including dementia.

“A hackathon brings together computer programmers and developers to compete in teams in collaborating intensively on new and innovative software projects.”

This particular hackathon, hosted by HealthXL, brought together a mix of IT experts from all over the world. Participants each had an interest in the global ageing population, and how technology might be able to assist in overcoming some of the associated issues.

Here is what Tony had to say about his experience:

“While participants recognised the use of technology amongst older people is currently quite low, it was suggested the ageing baby boomer generation could provide an opportunity to change this.

“Teams were invited to look specifically at issues surrounding dementia, malnutrition and isolation. I was given the opportunity to talk about dementia and describe the experiences of myself and my late partner Paul, who passed away after living with dementia.

“Participants appeared to quickly understand the issues involved, both from the patient and carer perspective.

“Each team went on to develop proposed technological aids, and the results were fantastic.

“One application proposed measuring the ability of older people to drive, using a device mounted on the vehicle dashboard. The device would measure rates of acceleration and deceleration, combined with any near misses over time. It was suggested this could result in a more accurate assessment than the current testing process,” Mr Walsh said.

Virtual Dementia Experience recognised at Victorian Public Health Awards 2015

Alzheimer’s Australia Vic was delighted when the Virtual Dementia Experience™ was named Gold Winner at the Victorian Public Health Awards 2015, in the category ‘Excellence in person, family and community centred care award’.

Now in their eleventh year, the awards recognise quality, innovation and excellence demonstrated by government-funded healthcare providers and organisations delivering public health research and programs.

The Virtual Dementia Experience™ is an immersive, interactive virtual reality experience that simulates the senses and takes people into the world of a person living with dementia, simulating thoughts, fears and challenges.

The Virtual Dementia Experience™ aims to revolutionise carer understanding and their approach to the important and intensely personal ‘job’ of caring for people living with dementia.

Since launching in October 2013, the Virtual Dementia Experience™ has been experienced by over 2,000 people and its long list of accolades includes recognition at the Microsoft Imagine Cup 2015, an International APICTA Award for Education and eLearning and a Victorian and Australian iAward eLearning Award.

To find out more about the Virtual Dementia Experience™ click this link - bit.ly/vicdexp
Why you need a Will

A Will is a very important and personal legal document. Every adult should have a Will. Surprisingly, about half of all Australians do not have one. A Will ensures your personal wishes will be honoured after your passing. It is also the first step in supporting the people and causes you love and care about. Ideally you should consult a legal advisor, such as a solicitor or trustee, to ensure your Will is legally valid and professionally administered.

If you die without a Will your property will be distributed by a court-appointed administrator and divided among your surviving spouse, children, and possibly other relatives in whatever manner the law in your state or territory specifies. If you have no relatives, your property will go to your resident state or territory rather than to a family member, friend or charity of your choice. It is important to review your Will regularly.

Key milestones when you should update your Will include:
• Marriage
• Birth of children or grandchildren
• Separation or divorce
• Change of financial circumstances
• A death in the family

Gifts for dementia support in our communities

Please accept my donation of $ Please debit my credit card

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Expiry date

Cardholder’s name

Signed

Please send me information on how to make a Will

I would like to find out more about making a gift in my Will to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic

I have already included a gift to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic in my Will

I would like more information about becoming a member

Please send your donation to:
Alzheimer’s Australia Vic
Locked Bag 3001, Hawthorn 3122
For more information contact:
Telephone 03 9815 7860, Facsimile 03 9815 7861

Donations of $2 or more to Alzheimer’s Australia Vic are tax deductible.