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## **New free training set to improve hospital experience for people living with dementia**

A new free experiential training package has been developed to increase understanding and empathy towards people living with dementia when they are admitted to hospital.

Developed by Dementia Australia and funded by the Department of Social Services Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Program, the Insights into the Hospital Dementia Experience tool kit aims to help hospital and Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) staff deliver the best quality care possible to people living with dementia.

Susan McCarthy, the Executive Director of Client Services for Dementia Australia, said caring for people living with dementia in a hospital setting presented unique challenges for both the individual and staff.

"This training package enables staff to put themselves into the shoes of a person living with dementia, and provides greater understanding of how the condition might impact on an individual's hospital experience," Ms McCarthy said.

"Through the use of simulation and debriefing exercises, we aim to inspire participants to adopt a more sensitive, informed and considered practice leading to a more positive experience for the person living with dementia, their families and carers, as well as for the staff who work with them."

The training focuses on the importance of person-centred care and understanding behavioural responses. The simulation and debriefing exercise are designed to give participants a deeper insight into what it may be like to have dementia and the impact it can have on a patient in a hospital setting.

The training package has been tested through pilot workshops with educators from across Local Health Districts of NSW, with the results of the evaluations incorporated into the final package. During the development of the package, people living with dementia, their families and carers were invited to share their own hospital experiences to ensure the training captured the realities of a hospital or Multi-Purpose-Service stay for a person living with the disease.

A reference group made-up of consumers, dementia care specialists, members from the NSW Health Education and Training Institute and the Agency for Clinical Innovation was also established to help guide the project.

"We thank everyone who has been involved in the development of this training package and look forward to both patients and staff benefit from the insights it provides," Ms McCarthy said.

The package includes a facilitator guide, participant handbook and simulation resource. It is free and available to download for educators from hospital or Multi-Purpose Service sites across Australia at [www.dementia.org.au/resources/insights-into-the-hospital-dementia-experience-workshop](http://www.dementia.org.au/resources/insights-into-the-hospital-dementia-experience-workshop). For more information about the Insights into the Hospital Dementia Experience please contact Judy Bartholomew at [judy.bartholomew@dementia.org.au](mailto:judy.bartholomew@dementia.org.au) or 0418 412 127.

Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 425,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach more than 1.1 million by 2056. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer's Australia. Dementia Australia's services are supported by the Australian Government.

**National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500**

**Interpreter service available**

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

**Dementia is a National Health Priority Area**

[www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au)

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines](#).