Digital education to transform dementia care training

A new digital learning platform to inspire care workers to learn more about dementia will be developed by Dementia Australia over the next three years, with the support of Gandel Philanthropy.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said it was an absolute honour to have been awarded a Gandel Philanthropy multi-year Major Grant.

“This Grant will enable Dementia Australia to develop a unique digital platform that will provide access to valuable education about dementia for the thousands of care workers in Australia,” Ms McCabe said.

“Whilst care workers are committed to providing high-quality care unfortunately many are not supported with sufficient training. We want to ensure care workers are well equipped to expand their knowledge and understanding about dementia to ensure high quality care for people living with dementia.

“Through the platform care workers will learn how improving communication skills, making changes to their behaviour and encouraging engagement will make a significant difference to the quality of life and care for people living with dementia.

“With 70 per cent of the 447,000 Australians with dementia living in the community and more than 50 per cent of residents in aged care living with a dementia diagnosis, it is essential that all care workers – working in community care and residential care - are provided with opportunities to access appropriate dementia care education.

“I extend our appreciation and gratitude to Gandel Philanthropy and the Gandel family for making this exciting project possible.”

Gandel Philanthropy Grant Manager, Australian Programs, Alexandra White said it was critical that more people working within the care industry receive dementia specific training designed to be practical, accessible and flexible to fit the day-to-day reality of working within a 24 hour care system, and around rosters and home visits.

“The vision for this new digital platform is to create unique and immersive learning experiences that move, inspire and inform participants to ensure meaningful, learning outcomes that can be translated into the everyday practice of care workers,” Ms White said.

“Gandel Philanthropy is proud to partner with Dementia Australia to apply cutting edge technology to deepen online learning experiences, and ensure better care to people living with dementia, their families and carers.”

Gandel Philanthropy is one of Australia’s largest private family foundations and it has been the vehicle for charitable giving by the extended Gandel family since 1978. In that time the family has contributed over $100 million dollars to support leading charities across several areas of interest, including healthy and positive ageing.

Development of the dementia digital platform will be led by Dementia Australia’s Centre for Dementia Learning, which offers Australian and international aged and community care providers and health professionals a comprehensive suite of evidence based learning and consultancy services.

The Centre for Dementia Learning is a world-leader in creating innovative, interactive technology and learning tools. This includes the multi-award winning Educational Dementia Immersive Experience – EDIE™ and the Virtual Dementia Experience™, both of which use virtual reality so that users can build empathy and better understand what it is like to live with dementia.

Development of the new digital platform began in October 2019 with plans to release the first learning tools in 2020.

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 447,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. 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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**Media contacts:** Andrea Hogan, 0490 128 304, andrea.hogan@dementia.org.au | Christine Bolt 0400 004 553, christine.bolt@dementia.org.au
People living with dementia, their families and carers request all media adopt these Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines when writing and talking about dementia.