

MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday July 4, 2018

York embraces dementia friendly community initiative

Alzheimer's WA's vision for York to become one of Australia's first dementia-friendly towns has taken great strides, with Alzheimer's WA today officially handing the project back over to the town.

CEO Rhonda Parker said Alzheimer's WA was thrilled the York community had stepped up and embraced the project with the great community spirit found so often in country towns.

"The objective from the start for the Dementia Friendly Communities (DFC) project was to reduce the stigma attached to dementia and instead develop a community that enables and supports people living with dementia to remain active in the community rather than be confined within the four walls of their home," Ms Parker said.

"I am so heartened by the stories I'm hearing since the project was introduced a few months ago, including retail staff from the local IGA who learnt the skills needed to identify and assist a local woman living with younger onset dementia who became lost in an aisle.

"For the local woman and her husband, the simple support by someone who had some basic training that enabled them to provide the appropriate assistance in the local supermarket has made the world of difference.

"We know in life small things make the world of difference, and the people of York and this project are living proof of that.

"This is now happening and there is a real buzz in the town. There is also interest from around the state and interstate about what has been achieved here."

Ms Parker said training sessions for the local community included background on dementia; how to recognise the symptoms; how to communicate with a person living with dementia in your community and workplace; and steps to take to enrich the community and workplace.

"Stigma is often a result of a lack of understanding or knowledge," she said.

"We are thrilled the York community has embraced the initiative. It is now more confident and more empowered on how best to support and involve people living with dementia."

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A morning tea will be held **Wednesday, 4 July 2018 at the Balladong Lodge, 20 Redmile Road, York WA from 10.30am – 12.30pm** to celebrate the positive changes achieved by the York township to better support people living with dementia.

Statistics

- There are currently 41,149 people living with dementia in Western Australia.
- This figure is predicted to increase dramatically to over 84,000 people in less than twenty years and almost 150,000 people by 2056¹.
- Dementia is the leading cause of death of women in Australia, and the second leading cause of death of all Australians². There is no cure.

Sources

¹ NATSEM calculations using Australian Bureau of Statistics population projections

² Australian Bureau of Statistics

– Ends –

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Notes to media:

Stories in the media about dementia may prompt concerns or cause distress for audiences and readers. When writing or talking about dementia, please encourage your audience/readers with the number for our Customer Support line on 1300 66 77 88, a free call, telephone information and support service.

What is appropriate language for talking about dementia and why we need it?

The words used to talk about dementia can have a significant impact on how people with dementia are viewed and treated in our community. In particular, please avoid the use of the word sufferer or suffering – the preferred language is a person/people living with dementia. Please read the [Dementia Language Guidelines](#) that have been developed by people living with dementia and carers.

About Alzheimer's WA

As the dementia experts Alzheimer's WA works with those living with dementia and the organisations that care and support them, to have the greatest beneficial impact on their dementia journey.

Our client services, advocacy work, training and consultancy programs are based on a philosophy of understanding the lived experience of dementia. We are guided by people living with dementia and our approach views dementia as a holistic experience for the person rather than just a biological illness. Call our Customer Support line on 1300 66 77 88 or visit www.alzheimerswa.org.au

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