

MEDIA STATEMENT

12 November, 2018

Margaret River to become WA's next dementia friendly town

The town of Margaret River looks set to become another dementia friendly community, following confirmation of funding and support from the Shire and the local Lions and Rotary Clubs.

CEO Rhonda Parker said Alzheimer's WA was delighted Margaret River would be the next country town to embrace the initiative that empowers communities with the knowledge on how best to support and involve people living with dementia.

"The objective from the start for the Dementia Friendly Communities project was to reduce the stigma surrounding 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 thrilled the Margaret River Shire and the Margaret River Rotary and Lions Clubs have thrown their support behind this worthwhile initiative."

Mrs Parker said a dementia diagnosis was often accompanied by stigma, isolation, discrimination and misunderstanding which can impede the person with dementia living with meaning and purpose in the community.

"People with dementia deserve to participate in everyday life, and require support and understanding to do so," she said.

"Through this Dementia Friendly Communities work, participating community members and businesses are educated on the background of dementia, how to recognise symptoms, and how to communicate with a person living with dementia."

Mrs Parker said there was a real buzz in the towns of Manjimup and York; the first two Western Australian towns to become dementia friendly communities in their entirety, using a 'whole of town' approach.

"The outcomes with Manjimup and York were much greater than we could ever have predicted," she said.

"Staff were trained within the local shops to identify and properly assist people living with dementia.

"In Manjimup, they introduced quiet hour at a large grocery chain– where music is turned down, and the pace at the checkout is 'relaxed' – to make shopping a more enjoyable experience.

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“There has also been innovative community-led responses such as opening memory cafés in York to improve the inclusion of people with dementia.

“We know in life small things make the world of difference and the people of Manjimup and York are living proof of that.”

Consultations to start the planning process to implement the Dementia Friendly Communities project in Margaret River will be held on Wednesday 28 November at the Shire of Augusta & Margaret River. To register and for more information please call 1300 66 77 88.

This project is supported by the WA State Government through the WA Country Health Service.

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

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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 to call 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.