

## MEDIA STATEMENT

Prepared 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. Embargoed until date advised

### **Alzheimer's WA oppose funding changes for carers**

Alzheimer's WA CEO Rhonda Parker said the recent changes to the Federal Government's carer support funding model left carers of those living with dementia more isolated and unsupported, forcing them to look elsewhere for support.

"The government has consolidated funding across a number of programs to establish the Integrated Carer Support Program under the Department of Social Services, commencing in 2019" Mrs Parker said.

"These new services will not be dementia specific. Generic carer support groups do not offer the benefit that disease-specific groups do. We are unhappy about this shift in how government plans to support carers.

"These changes are a move in the wrong direction. At a time when aged and dementia care is increasingly being shifted to being delivered in the home, it is inappropriate to compromise the effectiveness of support to carers.

"Caring is a labour of love, and for those caring for a loved one with dementia, it is often around the clock. Carers are the backbone of the home care system. They deserve better than this.

Alzheimer's WA was established 36 years ago, primarily driven by the recognition that there were few or no supports for those living with dementia.

"Our commitment to carers has always driven us to find a way to support carers, and to lead the way in advocacy and support for those caring for someone on the dementia journey.

"We are currently directing our carers into existing opportunities such as the memory cafes.

"We are also reassuring them that we remain committed to carers and will continue to explore how we can offer support in the new funding environment.

"Supporting carers remains not negotiable for us. While we continue to work on identifying new ways and initiatives to support carers, we will also continue to lobby State and Federal Government of the need to increase the support of those caring for those with dementia."

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### 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 2056<sup>1</sup>.
- Dementia is the leading cause of death of women in Australia, and the second leading cause of death of all Australians<sup>2</sup>. There is no cure.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup> NATSEM calculations using Australian Bureau of Statistics population projections

<sup>2</sup> 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](http://www.alzheimerswa.org.au).