

Media Release

National hospital program to protect people with dementia

Today The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care visited the Canberra Hospital along with Alzheimer's Australia National CEO, Carol Bennett and Associate Professor Mark Yates, Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, to mark Alzheimer's Australia's national endorsement of the Cognitive Impairment Identifier as part of the *Dementia Care in Hospitals Program*.

Alzheimer's Australia supports the Cognitive Impairment Identifier (CII) being adopted as a national identifier to support better care for people with cognitive impairment and would ideally like to see an integrated program rolled-out nationally.

The Dementia Care in Hospitals Program (DCHP) developed at Ballarat Health Services aims to improve awareness and communication with people with dementia and their families, to ensure they get the appropriate care in hospital.

Alzheimer's Australia CEO, Carol Bennett said, "the evidence shows hospitals can be a dangerous place for people with dementia. Cognitive impairment is often not detected or it is misdiagnosed, we know that 30-40% of cases of delirium in hospitals can be prevented."

"The symbol and the education that comes with it is working to create a culture shift in hospitals, where this program has been trialled and is making a positive difference to the delivery of care for people with a cognitive impairment," Ms Bennett said.

The program involves a targeted training program for hospital staff, linked to a visual bedside alert, the CII. The objective of the education is to ensure that when a CII is displayed, all staff respond more appropriately, supporting more person-centred and responsive care to the person with cognitive impairment. It aims to ensure both clinical and non-clinical staff, from the cleaner right through to the CEO of the hospital know how to respond when they interact with a patient who has dementia or a cognitive impairment.

The program also reinforces the importance of working with carers as partners in care. The DCHP model has been implemented in 22 hospitals in Victoria and with Government funding is now being rolled out nationally, in four lead hospitals in other States and Territories:

- The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in South Australia as part of the Central Adelaide Local Health Network
- The Canberra Hospital in the Australian Capital Territory
- The Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Western Australia
- The Royal Hobart Hospital in Tasmania

Professor Mark Yates and Ms Carol Bennett are available for comment – 0407 019 430

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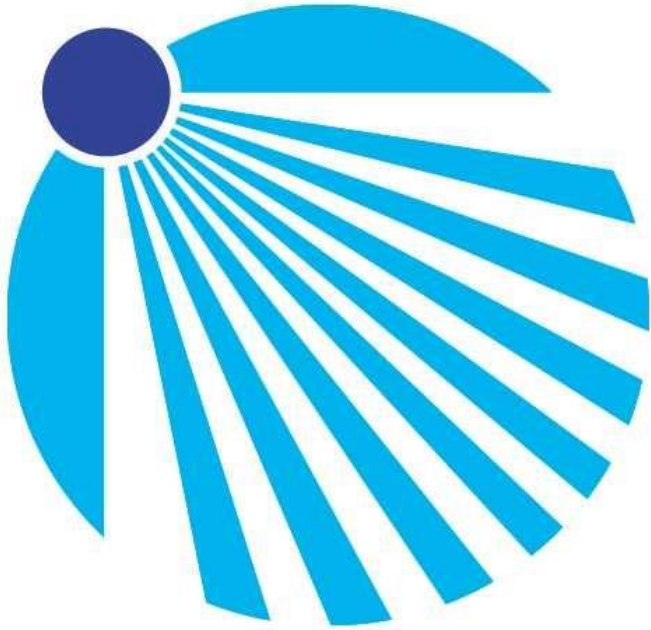
Alzheimer's Australia is the peak body representing people with dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. More than 353,800 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach more than half a million by 2030.

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500
An interpreter service is available

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

fightdementia.org.au

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The Cognitive Impairment Identifier which Alzheimer's Australia has endorsed to be rolled out nationally.

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