



Alzheimers News

Issue 107 | SPRING 2017

Alzheimers Manawatu
Memory Walk



In this issue

MPs gather to talk about dementia | World Alzheimer's Month | Memory Walks across the country | Experiencing dementia | Patron for Alzheimers NZ appointed | How Kiwis understand dementia

A message from our Chief Executive

It's been a massive season for us at Alzheimers NZ. We have used the opportunities provided by both the general election and World Alzheimer's Month in September to make sure the subject of dementia was front and centre with both MPs and policymakers, and New Zealanders in general.

We held a pre-election debate in Wellington, where spokespeople from New Zealand's major political parties discussed and debated the dementia challenge and how the government should approach it.

We have also just released the results of our public survey, "Getting our heads around dementia".

The survey showed there is an awareness within the community of the severity of the dementia challenge and a belief that the issue needs addressing at a government level. We sincerely hope the views of so many Kiwis will come to be reflected in government policy.

We announced the appointment of our new Patron, Sir Richard Faull, a respected researcher, and the co-Director of Brain Research NZ and a Director of the Centre for Brain Research. We are very appreciative of Sir Richard's commitment and the value he will add to our work, through his own.

Finally, we are very pleased to report that our national Memory Walks have again proved a great success and it was sunny in most areas. We want to thank all of you who helped arrange them and turned out on the day to walk with your friends and family.

Now we turn our attention to the immediate post-election activities we have planned. As you read this a new government will be in place and we look forward to engaging with them and enlisting their active support in making dementia a health priority and fully implementing the Framework for Dementia.

Also on our horizon is the upcoming launch of our Dementia Friends programme. Watch this space.

I would like to thank you all for taking the time to understand dementia and how it touches the lives of those affected. It is this empathy and compassion that will encourage a more dementia-friendly community.



Catherine Hall
Chief Executive

MPs gather to discuss dementia issue

MPs from the major Parties gathered in Wellington in early August to discuss the dementia challenge New Zealand faces and share their views about policy designed to address it at a pre-election debate held by Alzheimers NZ.

Participants were asked why New Zealand doesn't have a dementia strategy in place, what their government would do to reduce the growing rate of dementia by 2050, and what priority does dementia have in their health policies.

The audience included members of the dementia community in New Zealand, who had questions about the support services the MPs would see their Party provide if in government.

"We wanted to get first hand from these MPs their policy perspectives," says Alzheimers NZ Chief Executive, Catherine Hall.

"We wanted to know they understood the scope of the challenge and had given thought to how to support families and communities and reduce the risk to New Zealand."

The MPs who participated were Green Party Senior Citizens spokesperson Barry Coates,

Labour Health spokesperson David Clark, Minister for Seniors Hon Maggie Barry, NZ First's health spokesperson Ria Bond and United Future's candidate Baleikasavu Nadakuitavuki.

Most of the MPs had or have some connection to dementia through a family member, and their eagerness to participate in the debate was very pleasing.





How New Zealanders made a difference this World Alzheimer's Month

“September is a month in which we can all come together to be more dementia-friendly. We can reach out to people we know who are living with dementia, we can include them in our lives and activities, we can focus on their abilities instead of their disabilities.”

That was the message from Alzheimers NZ Chief Executive, Catherine Hall, as she marked World Alzheimer's Month in September.

Alzheimers NZ and local Alzheimers organisations were very active in September, raising awareness of dementia and its impacts across the country.

Our annual Memory Walks were hosted in 20 towns and cities around New Zealand. Thousands of Kiwis took to the streets from 16-24 September to walk and to show support for those with and affected by dementia.

Catherine said the walks were a great way to bring the attention of the public and the media to the issues posed by the dementia challenge facing New Zealand.

“The Memory Walks allowed the community to show their support for people with dementia and their families, friends and care partners. They were also a time for us to remember the people we know or have known with the condition.”

After having dreadful weather during our walks in previous years, we were thrilled to have blue skies and sunshine this year.

4000 Kiwis took part in the walks this year, which is a 25 percent increase on last year. The walks also generated publicity on both 1 News and TV 3, which was very pleasing.

We also joined with Ryman Healthcare Villages all over New Zealand, Brain Research New Zealand and local Alzheimers organisations to hold a series of public talks about dementia.

The talks were hosted at Ryman sites and were a chance for village residents and their families, along with the local community, to learn more about this condition and how it affects families.

These talks have been well attended and they help to educate the public about dementia and destigmatise it. A very useful combination. More talks are planned over coming months.

Continue reading to find out more about our World Alzheimer's Month activity.





MEMORY WALK

Memory Walks were hosted



Kate De Goldi,
Champion
for dementia,
Wellington



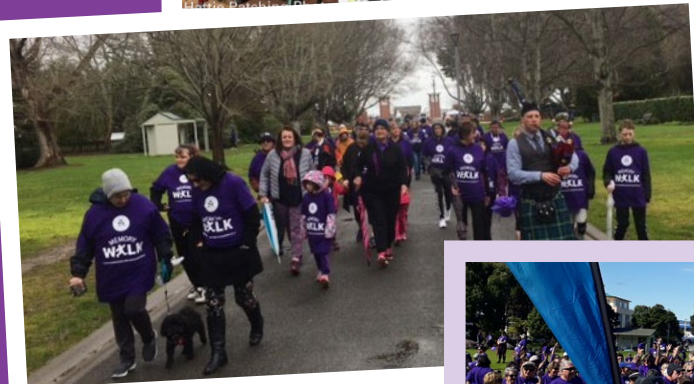
Dargaville



Feilding



Reuben Thorne,
Champion for
dementia, Nelson



Invercargill



Tauranga



in 20 towns and cities around NZ as part of World Alzheimer's Month



Gisborne



Feilding



Blenheim



Taupo



Kaitiā

Colin Mathrue-Jeffrey,
Champion for dementia,
Whangarei



Kapiti



Whangarei



Whakatane



Zealandia
Memory
Walk in
Wellington



Catherine Hall,
Chief Executive



Taranaki Memory Walk led by Sir Richard Faull,
Patron of Alzheimers NZ



Experiencing dementia *an eye opener for Lynne*

Arthur Crosbie was an “A Grade” mechanic who ran his own business in Winton. He built and installed central heating systems, constructed caravans from scratch and welded machinery. “Everyone in town knew they could go to Arthur to get anything done – he turned his hand to everything,” says his daughter, Lynne.

But it was after surgery in Dunedin that his son, Wilson, noticed his father was starting to forget things. A later diagnosis of dementia came as a shock to Arthur who had a one-word response: “Rubbish.”

In time, Arthur and his family adjusted to his diagnosis and as

his illness progressed, Arthur went into respite care and eventually into full-time care.

Arthur’s family turned to their local Alzheimers organisation for help. They attended support meetings where they connected with others in a similar situation. It opened Lynne’s eyes to how many people are affected by dementia. Around 62,000 Kiwis are currently living with dementia and that is expected to rise to 170,000 by 2050. Four in every five people know someone affected by dementia.

“I support Alzheimers New Zealand because I’m sure people with dementia can be helped before they get to the stage my father did,” she says.

She was grateful to still have

glimpses of the father she knew, even in the later stages of his illness. “It didn’t matter to me that he no longer knew who I was, I knew who he was and that’s what’s important,” she says. “He was still my dad.”



Every day on her way to work, Lynne walks past the building where her father used to have his business. And permanently embossed on the wall is a reminder of the man who was so admired for his mechanical skill – “Arthur Crosbie Ltd.”

Sir Richard Faull appointed as Patron of Alzheimers NZ

Alzheimers NZ is pleased to announce a new Patron - distinguished Professor and brain researcher, Sir Richard Faull.

With 40 years of human brain research under his belt, Sir Richard is the Director for the Centre of Brain Research at the University of Auckland, and is co-Director of Brain Research NZ, which has research clinics in Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Sir Richard was always told by his parents the most important thing he could do is look after people. In his new role as Patron of Alzheimers NZ, he plans to do just that.

“It has been an honour and a privilege to do the work I do, and

it’s so important for me to share it with New Zealand,” he said.

Alzheimers NZ chair, Ngaire Dixon says: “We are delighted to welcome Sir Richard Faull as our Patron. As New Zealand’s most well-respected researcher in this area, he will make a significant contribution to our aim of raising more awareness of dementia. It is a privilege to have Sir Richard as part of our Alzheimers NZ family.”

Sir Richard said the role will allow him to bridge the gap between the research community and the dementia community.

“The more our two communities work as a team, the more we can do to find solutions to what is one of the biggest healthcare



From left: Champion for dementia Colin Mathura-Jeffree, Chair of Alzheimers NZ Dr Ngaire Dixon, Alzheimers NZ Chief Executive Catherine Hall and Sir Richard Faull

challenges facing New Zealand and many other countries,” he says.

Sir Richard has been working with families with Alzheimer’s for the last 30 years and says this research wouldn’t be possible without the generosity of the families who are touched by dementia.

“These families give us the most incredible and wonderful gift; it is my duty to give back to them.”

Survey says Kiwis want more to be done about dementia

A clear majority of Kiwis think it is important that government acts to address the looming dementia crisis New Zealand faces.

That's one of the key findings from a recent survey conducted by Alzheimers NZ and released during World Alzheimer's Month (September).

Over 80 percent of survey respondents said it is important to do more to support people with dementia and 53 percent said they would be willing to pay more tax if it means more would be done to support people with the condition.

Alzheimers NZ Chief Executive, Catherine Hall, says the tools to address the challenge of dementia already exist in the NZ Framework for Dementia Care.

"The Framework outlines some good initiatives that we support. This includes making changes which provide the support needed by people living with dementia, their families and care partners."

Alzheimers NZ undertook the survey to investigate the level of awareness and understanding of dementia in New Zealand.

According to the survey:

- 83% of respondents said that it was important to support and train GPs to recognise dementia earlier
- 81% said it was important to do more to support people with dementia
- 79% said it was important to recognise dementia as a major health priority

- 79% said it was important to provide better support for local Alzheimers organisations
- 77% said that it was important to provide funding for groups that are trying to develop dementia-friendly communities

Findings also showed 81 percent of respondents know or had known someone with the condition. Almost 70 percent of those have or have had a family member with dementia.

A disappointing statistic was that nearly 40 percent of respondents agreed they would worry about how someone with dementia may act in public and just over 25 percent said they would find it hard to talk to someone with dementia.

Catherine says even though dementia is one of New Zealand's most significant health and social service challenges there is very little discussion or acknowledgement of its everyday impacts.

"We need New Zealand to be an open and inclusive society - a place where people with dementia feel valued and safe, and where they can contribute to and participate in their communities," she said.



Read more at
understandingdementia.org.nz

GETTING OUR HEADS AROUND DEMENTIA IN NZ

53%

**SAID THEY
WOULD BE
WILLING TO PAY
MORE TAXES
IF THAT TAX
WAS USED TO
SUPPORT PEOPLE
WITH DEMENTIA**

79%

**THOUGHT IT
WAS IMPORTANT
TO RECOGNISE
DEMENTIA AS A
MAJOR HEALTH
PRIORITY**

*with you for
generations
to come*

**Public
Trust**



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