



# IMPROVING THE CARE OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR FAMILIES

## Alzheimers NZ Election priorities 2017

### The dementia challenge

Dementia is one of New Zealand's biggest health challenges.

It dramatically changes the lives of people who live with it, including people diagnosed with dementia, their families, and communities. It will have major personal, societal and fiscal impacts in the years ahead.



Worldwide, the urgency of responding to the dementia challenge has just been recognised in the Global Action Plan on Dementia of the World Health Organisation, passed by member states, including New Zealand, in its session on 29 May 2017. Through this plan the New Zealand government has committed to undertaking a whole-of-government public health approach to dementia.

Numbers of people with dementia in New Zealand have grown to over 62,000, and are expected to almost triple to over 170,000 by 2050. The economic costs of dementia are also rising rapidly – by 75 percent in five years – from \$955 million in 2011 to \$1.7 billion in 2016. These costs could rocket up to \$4.6 billion in today's dollars by 2050.

We can't afford to do nothing – and the blueprint for a model of care that would keep people healthier and living in the community for longer already exists in the government's own NZ Framework for Dementia Care, which was released in 2013.

Making changes which keep people well for longer and delay entry to residential care could achieve cost benefit ratios of 6.6 times the investment. That's a return of \$6.60 for every \$1 invested. More importantly, it would increase the quality of life of people with dementia, and their family/whānau and caregivers.

For the 2017 New Zealand general election, Alzheimers NZ is highlighting three strategies that will make a difference – Navigation, post-diagnostic support and good quality information.

**We need a breakthrough – or we will see a breakdown in health systems and families.**

**Everyone – voters, political candidates, political parties – needs to recognise this is a significant health and social issue and to commit to making dementia a public health priority.**

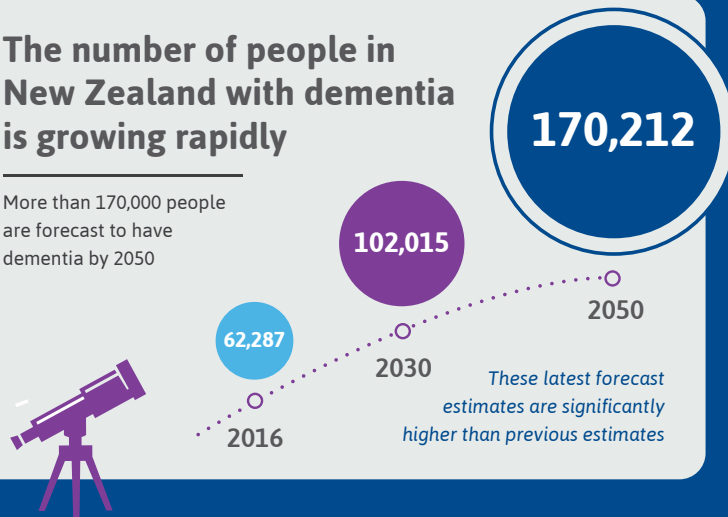
# Dementia: a significant and growing health challenge

March 2017



## The number of people in New Zealand with dementia is growing rapidly

More than 170,000 people are forecast to have dementia by 2050



## Potential benefits of change



INVEST

+

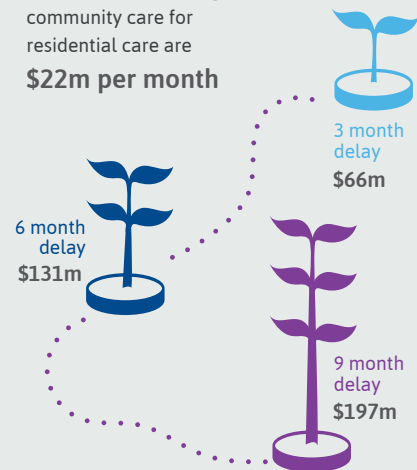


New models of care that might delay entry into residential care could achieve cost benefit ratios of **6.6 times**



SAVE

The potential net benefits of substituting community care for residential care are **\$22m per month**



## Dementia impacts more women than men

35,254

27,033

The number of women with dementia is around

**+ 30% HIGHER**

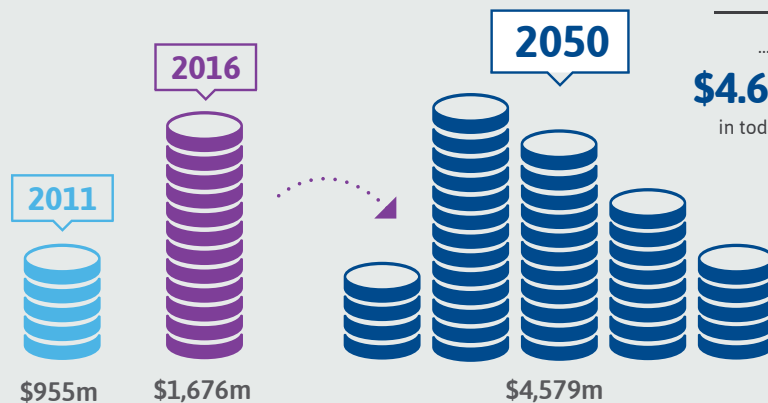
than the number of men with dementia in 2016



## Economic costs have increased

**75%**

since 2011



... and could be over **\$4.6 BILLION** in today's dollars by 2050

A dementia friendly New Zealand | Aotearoa, he aro nui ki te hunga mate wareware

# Guiding the way through the dementia journey

**Selina's story\***: Mum was in her 70s when she first showed signs of dementia. She was having troubles with memory, getting lost, working out what was real and what wasn't. Some days she would just say to me, I'm so lost, I'm so muddled.

Mum wanted to stay in her own home as long as possible. I wasn't aware of what to expect next, there was no one to shine a light on what was to come and where to go. It was extremely stressful and time consuming.

I know all services are stretched as I've seen incredible nurses, doctors, caregivers, needs assessor, legal advisors, and community groups. For all the people involved, our time would be used more efficiently and we could be more productive if each person gave consistent information, and didn't need to reiterate the same information.

Having a Dementia Navigator would allow people travelling the journey from diagnosis to death – the person themselves, and their carers – to have a much smoother path, illuminating where to go next and how to navigate that next step.

*Selina\* is a member of the Alzheimers New Zealand Consumer Advisory Group*

*\* Name changed by request. Photos posed by models to protect privacy.*



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## Three strategies that will make a difference

This election, Alzheimers NZ is highlighting three strategies which lead to new models of care that will improve quality of life and contribute to future financial savings.

**1. Fully fund Dementia Navigation as outlined in the Framework:** In the *NZ Framework for Dementia Care* the Government undertook to establish a Navigation service to ensure that people with dementia and their family/whānau can access appropriate services. Evaluations show these positions have positive outcomes for people with dementia and their caregivers.

**2. Provide post-diagnostic support services for a minimum of 12 months:** The early post-diagnostic period is one when newly diagnosed people and their family/whānau carers are coming to terms with future changes and becoming aware of the support they will be able to draw on. High quality specialised post-diagnostic support can equip people living with dementia and their families and carers with the tools, connections, resources and plans they need to live as well as possible with dementia, and to prepare for the future.

**3. Provide high quality information resources:** Information that is easily accessible, consistent and regularly reviewed to represent 'best practice' is an essential component in supporting people with dementia and their carers and one of the most cost-effective ways of improving outcomes.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

**Voters:** ask political candidates and parties what their policies are to address the growing challenge of dementia.

**Political parties:** ensure your policies will improve the quality of life for people with dementia, and address the long-term costs of dementia services.

Other issues that Alzheimers New Zealand would like to see addressed by political parties and candidates:

- Support and funding for the development of dementia friendly communities;
- Increase the availability, flexibility and quality of respite care for informal carers;
- Increase funding for research;
- Collect data and report about the prevalence and incidence of dementia in New Zealand;
- Support prevention campaigns and information that help New Zealanders with lifestyle changes required for healthy bodies and healthy brains.

## About Alzheimers NZ

Alzheimers New Zealand represents people affected by dementia at a national level by raising awareness of dementia, providing information and resources for people affected by dementia, advocating for high quality services for people affected by dementia, and promoting research about prevention, treatment, cure and care of people affected by dementia.

We support local Alzheimers NZ organisations throughout New Zealand, each of which is a member of Alzheimers NZ. Local Alzheimers organisations provide support, education, information and related services directly to members of their communities who are affected by dementia.

For the latest report on the economic impact of dementia in NZ, please visit: [www.alzheimers.org.nz/news/dementia-economic-impact-report-2016](http://www.alzheimers.org.nz/news/dementia-economic-impact-report-2016)



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For dementia support, call 0800 004 001

Alzheimers NZ is a member of Alzheimer's Disease International, the umbrella group for 90 Alzheimer's disease organisations.