



**National Dementia
Conference**
by informa ...

28 - 29 April 2026
Crown Conference Centre Melbourne



**Aged Care Reform
Forum**
by informa ...

CONFERENCE DAY 1 | Tuesday, 28th April 2026

JOINT PLENARY KEYNOTE SESSION
CONFERENCE CENTRE HALL 1

08:15 Registration & Morning Coffee

08:50 DAY ONE OPENING

08:55 Opening remarks from the Chair

Dr Ellen Gaffy, *Research Fellow, Social Gerontology Division, National Ageing Research Institute*

09:00 OPENING ADDRESS | Living with Alzheimer's: My Personal Journey

Tim Moore, *Retired Small Business Owner & Active Senior Member - Rotary International, Living with Alzheimer*

09:20 KEYNOTE | National Dementia Policy Update

Daen Dorazio, *First Assistant Secretary, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing*

09:50 EXECUTIVE PANEL | Navigating the New Aged Care Act: Impacts on Providers and Consumers

- What are the key changes in the new Aged Care Act, and how will they affect people living with dementia, carers, and providers across both home and residential settings?
- How can we translate the Act's core aims - rights, safety, quality, and transparency - into specific, day-to-day practices and decisions?
- What immediate actions should organizations take now? What longer-term transitions are required, and how can providers, consumers, and government collaborate to deliver person centred care?
- Which elements of the Act are forthcoming, and what do these timelines mean for service delivery, workforce readiness, and consumer choice?

Treasure Jennings, *Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission*

Isabelle Meyer, *Executive Director, Dementia Training Australia*

Sarah Yeates, *Chief Executive Officer, Caladenia Dementia Care*

Dr Kaele Stokes, *Executive Director Services, Engagement & Research, Dementia Australia*

Moderator: Faye Spiteri OAM, *Chief Executive Officer, Fronditha Care*

10:30 SESSION SPOTLIGHT | Are we there yet? The journey to improving Dementia diagnosis and care.

The Aged Care Act has set a new bar, but how to reach it is unclear. The clarity of human rights approach at its centre is obscured by confusion about the expectations on GPs, nurses, Allied Health professionals and carers to diagnose and support those living with Dementia. What is it exactly that we are all responsible for and how do we do it? While the Act itself is new, our journey to this point has been a long one since the Royal Commission. Are we there yet? Let's reflect on the education programs we are delivering that might assist and discuss a way forward from here. Our GP and nurses program has focused on improving diagnostic skills and care, and over 10,000 carers and professionals have undertaken training in managing changes in behaviour in the past 12 months. Is it enough to create the skilled resilient workforce we need? Is the Act steering us towards a better care future or creating confusion and fear? For those who need a skilled workforce to help them thrive - are we there yet?

Isabelle Meyer, *Executive Director, Dementia Training Australia*



11:00 Networking Break & Morning Tea

Hosted with Aged Care Reform Forum in the pre-function area



NATIONAL DEMENTIA CONFERENCE
CONFERENCE CENTRE HALL 1

"The Dementia Journey: From Diagnosis to Dignity"

11:30 Opening remarks from the Chair

11:35 KEYNOTE | Telehealth and early dementia diagnosis: Overcoming accessibility challenges

- Understanding the early symptoms of dementia
- Differentiating between normal aging and cognitive decline
- The role of primary care in early detection

Dr Desmond Graham, *Chief Medical Officer, Geriatrician*, **Geriatric Care Australia**

12:05 PANEL | Exploring Spectrum of Dementia

This panel will delve into the diverse types of dementia, including childhood dementia, younger onset dementia, and other less common forms. We will discuss the unique challenges, care approaches, and support systems required for individuals across different age groups and stages of life. The session will also explore innovative treatments, early diagnosis strategies, and the impact on families and caregivers.

Darryl Steff, *Chief Executive Officer*, **Down Syndrome Australia**

Megan Maack, *Chief Executive Officer*, **Childhood Dementia Initiative**

Naomi Moylan, *Younger Onset Dementia Project Coordinator*, **Brightwater Care Group**

A/Prof Anita Goh, *Clinical Neuropsychologist & Director of Aged Care and Social Gerontology*, **National Ageing Research Institute**

Moderator: Dr Ellen Gaffy, *Research Fellow, Social Gerontology Division*, **National Ageing Research Institute**

12:50 The roles of digital health and research in dementia care

- What are journeys through health and aged care systems like for people living with dementia?
- How do clinical trials and research provide opportunities and support for dementia care?
- What role are the opportunities and challenges with digital health in care and research?

Dr Sanka Amadoru, *Consultant Geriatrician*, **Austin Health, Bendigo Health, and Aria Health**; *Elected Councillor & Company Director*, **Australian & New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine**

13:20 Networking Lunch

Hosted with Aged Care Reform Forum in the pre-function area

14:20 Dementia-Friendly Design: Creating Supportive Environments Through Community, Culture & Connection

- Principles of dementia-friendly design shaped by lived community experience
- How nature, culture, accessibility and sensory design improve wellbeing
- The role of community co-design in creating safe, non-judgemental environments
- Intergenerational and cross-cultural inclusion in environmental design
- Lessons from the Reflections at Eppalock respite villa (globally recognised as fit-for-purpose accommodation)

Sandra Slatter CM, *Founder & President*, **Dementia Alliance**

Marg Rae, *Carer Coordinator*, **Dementia Alliance**

14:50 Empowering Carers through Advocacy

Cathy Roth OAM, *National Chairman*, **PALZ – Professionals with Alzheimer’s & related diseases**

15:10 **IN CONVERSATION** | The Carer’s Journey

- Illuminate the evolving realities of caring across the dementia trajectory - from suspicion and diagnosis to end of life and bereavement.
- Share practical strategies, tools, and supports that meaningfully reduce strain and improve quality of life for both carer and people living with dementia.
- Identify policy, system, and community changes that can make caregiving more sustainable and equitable.

Jan Thwaites, *Carer*

Jane Moore, *Carer*

Cathy Roth OAM, *National Chairman*, **PALZ – Professionals with Alzheimer’s & related diseases**

15:40 Networking Break & Afternoon Tea

Hosted with Aged Care Reform Forum in the pre-function area

16:10 **CASE STUDY** | Dementia support and the role of pharmacists in dementia care

- Discussing the role of pharmacists in Dementia care
- Dementia Support Pharmacist program, insights after 2 years of the Country SA PHN program

Dee-Anne Hull, *Dementia Support Pharmacist*, **Pharmaceutical Society of Australia**

Nicola Sander, *Dementia Support Pharmacist*, **Pharmaceutical Society of Australia**

16:40 Person-Centred Care is as Simple as a One-Eyed Egg

- Dementia causes cognitive/physical decline and feelings of hopelessness when people lose control; person-centred care with Wellness and Reablement aims to preserve function and independence for as long as possible.
- SereneCare begins with each person’s life story and uses a multidisciplinary team to tailor programs around retained abilities and preferences.
- Advocating for people living with dementia and promoting engaging cognitive, physical, and social activities can boost confidence and self-worth and may delay the need for more intensive services.

Jenny Puxley, *Diversional Therapist*, **SereneCare**

17:10 Closing Remarks from the Chair

17:15 End of Day 1 & Networking Drinks

Hosted with Aged Care Reform Forum in the pre-function area



CONFERENCE DAY 2 | Wednesday, 29th April 2026 Conference Centre Hall 1

08:20 Registration & Morning Coffee

08:50 DAY TWO OPENING

08:55 Opening remarks from the Chair

Kate Lamont, *Director & Registered Occupational Therapist, Thrive Aged Care Consultants*

09:00 OPENING KEYNOTE | New Frontiers in Alzheimer's Treatment: Donanemab and Lecanemab

A/Prof Paul Yates, *Consultant Geriatrician; Director of Research and Medical Lead, Memory Clinic; Deputy Head of Unit, Geriatric Medicine, Austin Health*

09:30 INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE | Dementia and Cancer: Expert Practitioner Contributions to a UK National Oncology Digital Clinical Placement

A dementia consultant nurse from an international oncology centre in the UK collaborates with a national expert in Digital Clinical Placements to deliver high-quality clinical education to thousands of pre-registration nurses across Adult, Mental Health, Children's, and Learning Disability fields.

Through the DCP model, learners gain direct access to real-world expertise in supporting people and families affected by dementia and cancer.

Lorraine Burgess, *Macmillan Dementia Nurse Consultant, The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, UK*

Kirsty Marsh, *Digital Clinical Placement National Expert, The Christie Institute for Cancer Education, The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, UK*

10:10 Alzheimer's, Advance Care Plans and Autonomy, but whose autonomy?

Advance care planning is grounded in the principle of autonomy - the right of individuals to make decisions about their future health care. This presentation explores the tension between the autonomy of the 'earlier' person and the roles played by families and clinicians acting on behalf of an incompetent patient who completed an advance care plan.

Dr Denise Craig OAM, *Advanced Psychologist - Dementia Advisory, Queensland Health*

10:40 Reimagining Dementia Care

- The Mercy Health Dementia Model of Care redefines traditional residential aged care by placing greater emphasis on residents' personal choices, independence, and overall quality of life.
- The model is built on four foundational principles: person centred care, engagement and connection, dementia friendly environments, and staff capability uplift. These principles were developed collaboratively with residents, their families, and staff.
- The methodology of the evaluation of this model, conducted by Monash University, will be presented. And early insights and learnings of residents and staff will be shared.

Ben Gatehouse, *Dementia Clinical Nurse Consultant, Mercy Health*

11:10 Networking Break & Morning Tea

Hosted with Aged Care Reform Forum in the pre-function area

11:40 **Breaking down barriers to accessing dementia-friendly eyecare**

People living with dementia are more likely to miss out on routine eyecare, increasing their risk of experiencing preventable sight loss. Poor eyesight makes life with dementia harder, increasing risk of falls, social isolation and loneliness, and dependence on others for support. Everyone living with dementia should have regular eye tests, and our research set out to make this easier for everyone involved in the process. Come along and hear about the links between dementia and eyesight, free resources we've made to help people living with dementia get regular eye tests, and find out how you can help shape a future dementia eyecare pathway for residential aged care.

Dr Marianne Coleman, *Orthoptist & Prof Henry Brodaty Mid-Career Research Fellow*, **National Centre for Healthy Ageing**

12:10 **Behaviour is in the eye of the beholder**

When we broaden our perception of behaviour we can effortlessly bring about a significant shift in work practices resulting in decreased numbers of incidences. To facilitate such a shift, 3 points will be explored:

- What's in a label?
- The linguistic impact on our emotions
- The 3 filters that sustain beliefs

The information shared is grounded in Family Therapy, Advanced Systems Theory, and Neurolinguistic Programming, has been trialed and tested in diverse cultures around the world with consistent constructive outcomes for all involved. Real life accounts will be shared highlighting the change in behaviour as a result of the shift in focus.

Jane Verity, *Founder & CEO*, **Dementia Care International, Melbourne Australia**

Tania Hammond, *Nurse Practitioner & Spark of Life Master Practitioner*, **Eyre & Far North Local Health Network, Rural & Remote Health, South Australia**

12:40 **CASE STUDY | Advocacy: Challenges of accessing services when living with dementia**

- Vulnerability of someone living with Dementia in a regional town
- Accessing appropriate services to remain at home
- Challenges of accessing services in an area where there are limited options

Brenda McAuley-Hines, *Team Leader Advocacy*, **Elder Rights Australia**

13:10 **Networking Lunch**

Hosted with Aged Care Reform Forum in the pre-function area

14:10 **Innovative Education and Tailored Support in Dementia Respite Care: Discover DREAM**

Respite care for people with dementia is intended to support both the person and their informal carer to continue to live within their community - the effectiveness and uptake of respite services is dependent on a well-trained and knowledgeable dementia respite care team.

- The Wicking Dementia Centre, University of Tasmania, in partnership with Dementia Support Australia, launched Dementia Respite Education and Mentoring (DREAM) in June 2024. Funded by the Australian Government, DREAM builds aged care workforce's capability to deliver quality dementia respite care through five tailored online learning modules, a virtual support network, and in-person coaching.
- By October 2025, DREAM exceeded its June 2026 target KPIs, attracting 7,158 workers in residential (42.2%), community (31.7%) and acute settings (1.9%). Participants include personal care workers (28.1%), registered nurses (10.5%), management (9.6%), administrative (3.9%), volunteer (3.3%) and leisure and lifestyle staff (5.6%).
- Aligned with the reforms, DREAM meets the need for free, concise, tailored, and relevant dementia education. Designed for the respite workforce, DREAM is accessible and relevant to all workers providing care for people living with dementia.

Dr Kathleen Doherty, *Senior Lecturer*, **Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, University of Tasmania**

14:40 **CLOSING PANEL | The role of Healthcare Professionals in Palliative/End-of-Life Care**

- When should healthcare professionals introduce palliative care in dementia, and what changes for carers when it's introduced early versus during a crisis?
- Which communication approaches have most helped to align care with what matters to the person and carer?
- How can multidisciplinary teams work better to deliver compassionate, person-centred palliative care?
- What are the most practical ways to support families through grief and bereavement?

Dr Gaya Wang, *Consultant Geriatrician, Northern Health/Monash Health*

Dr Sadie Dunn, *Deputy Director, Parkville Integrated Palliative Care Service, Royal Melbourne Hospital and Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre*

Kathy Kirby, *Director & Registered Nurse, Thrive Aged Care Consultants*

Dora Mansbridge, *Manager of Social Support Programs – Treehouse & Treehouse4two, Central Highlands Rural Health*

Moderator: A/Prof Anita Goh, *Clinical Neuropsychologist & Director of Aged Care and Social Gerontology, National Ageing Research Institute*

15:15 **Closing Remarks from the Chair**

15:20 **End of Conference & Afternoon Tea**

Note: Due to unforeseen circumstances before or on the day of the conference, agenda is subject to change