BECOMING A DEMENTIA - FRIENDLY COMMUNITY: THE PORT MACQUARIE EXPERIENCE

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WHY IS A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY IMPORTANT

Imagine if you have dementia....

What sort of society would you like to live in?

Would you like to live in a community that valued, accepted, included and supported you?
‘Sometimes people ignore me completely, sometimes they talk down to me’

Quote from a person living with dementia
THE JOURNEY STARTS

Port Macquarie:

• 420km north of Sydney on the Mid North Coast of NSW

• Population around 77,500 people

• Estimated over 1,700 people living with dementia and rising
THE PORT MACQUARIE EXPERIENCE – A GRASS ROOTS APPROACH

A small group of people met in 2012 to discuss the growing numbers of people living with dementia in Port Macquarie.

- Mrs Leslie Williams MP
- Mr Gary Thomas
- Mrs Kath Storey
- Mrs Margaret Allen
- Professor Rick van der Swan (SCU)
- Dr Matt Kinchington
AND THEN...

Mrs Williams undertook a tour of the UK to study dementia friendly communities.

A larger Steering Committee was formed to progress strategies to move Port Macquarie towards becoming a dementia friendly community.

Funding was approved to develop a Guide using Port Macquarie as an example.
THE PORT MACQUARIE STEERING COMMITTEE - DECEMBER 2013

• Chair, Mrs Leslie Williams MP.
• People living with dementia and their family / carers / partners
• Representatives from Local Council, service clubs, emergency services, Local Health District, community and aged care services, AlzNSW, church groups, Business Chambers, transport, Education Department
FOCUS GROUPS

People with dementia and family carers attended 2 focus groups, plus phone/email contact

Looked at:

• Physical environment
• Social environment/inclusiveness
• Support and health services
PHYSICAL ACCESS, SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS AND SUPPORT SERVICES
AN ACTION PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Progress to date:

• Colour contrast doors at local public toilet block
• Input by people living with dementia into Town Green and Town Square redevelopment
• Dementia awareness training for Local Council staff
• Extensive use of media
• Business taking an interest in becoming more dementia-friendly, local café
NEXT STEPS

Project officer has been employed to progress initiatives:

• Form a local Dementia Alliance
• Dementia Mates volunteer buddy program
• Assist local organisations/businesses to become dementia-friendly
• Develop an action plan for 2016-17
KEY POINTS

• Actively involving people living with dementia and their families

• The support of a high profile leader

• Use of Media

• Whole of community approach and involvement
A GUIDE TO BECOMING A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2014

TALKING ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S ACROSS AUSTRALIA
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