

MEDIA RELEASE



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Carers Australia supports call for a dementia-friendly nation

This year's Dementia Action Week is shining a spotlight on the stigma and social isolation experienced by people with dementia and often by those family members and friends who care for them.

Results of a survey released by Dementia Australia this week indicate that 90 percent of family members and friends say that their friend or relative with dementia is treated with less respect than other people, 73 percent say that people make jokes at the expense of their friend or relative with dementia, and 96 percent say people don't know how to act toward people with dementia.

"People diagnosed with dementia want to live in their own homes and communities as long as they can, just like other older people," said Liz Callaghan, CEO of Carers Australia.

"However, poor community attitudes, including displays of embarrassment, avoidance and derision when coming into contact with people with cognitive difficulties and lack of social inhibition, can push people with dementia into social isolation, exacerbating their condition and hastening their transfer to a residential care facility.

"It's not just strangers who treat people with dementia this way and it is not just the person with dementia who experiences discrimination. Eighty percent of family and friends say that discrimination comes from friends and other social circles, and 71 percent complain of exclusion from family activities.

"For the sake of people with dementia, those who care for them and, indeed, the very large number of people who will be diagnosed with dementia in the future, we must cultivate dementia-friendly communities where people with dementia are treated with understanding and are valued and supported.

"We can do this by raising awareness among individuals and organisations."



About Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's unpaid carers, advocating on their behalf to influence policies and services at a national level. Its member organisations, the Network of state and territory Carers Associations, deliver a range of essential carer services across states and territories.

About carers

An informal, unpaid carer is a family member or friend that cares for someone that has a disability, chronic or life-limiting illness, is frail aged, has a mental health illness, alcohol or other drug related issue. Informal carers are distinct from paid support workers who are colloquially also called carers but are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration

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