

Dr Alison Clegg  
Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Further Information from Alzheimer's Australia's to the Inquiry into  
Dementia: Early Diagnosis and Intervention**

Dear Dr Clegg,

Following a meeting with Committee Member Mr Ken Wyatt, MP on 12 March, 2013, I undertook to think about what Australia should be aspiring to if we are to provide better diagnosis and higher quality care for people with dementia, and to suggest a set of key indicators that will let us know, by 2018, if we are progressing towards these goals.

Subsequently, Mr Wyatt suggested I send the work we have done to the Committee as a formal submission. This I now have pleasure in doing.

The attached document lists six aspirations and associated indicators that Alzheimer's Australia believes are the highest priority for action to improve the lives of people living with dementia. They may be helpful for example in guiding the work of the Standing Council of Health Ministers on the National Framework for Action on Dementia.

If helpful, Alzheimer's Australia would be pleased to provide further information on any of these areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further information.

Glenn Rees,  
CEO, Alzheimer's Australia  
15 April, 2013

## **Aspirational objectives to improve the quality of life for people with dementia in Australia by 2018.**

### **Background**

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing is undertaking an Inquiry into Dementia: Early Diagnosis and Intervention. Following discussion with Committee Member Ken Wyatt, MP, Alzheimer's Australia agreed to develop a number of aspirational goals and indicators that would reflect real improvements in the lives of people with dementia in Australia, around which the Committee's final report and recommendations might be shaped. These aspirations are set within a 5-years timeframe (objectives to be achieved by 2018), with a range of suggested indicators and high-level strategies through which these could be achieved.

### **Aspirations**

In 5 years time, Australia should aspire to:

1. Be a dementia friendly society
2. Provide more choice and flexibility for people with dementia wishing to receive long-term care in their own homes
3. Ensure higher quality residential aged care services for people with dementia
4. Make hospitals safer places for people with cognitive impairment and dementia
5. Ensure people with dementia are diagnosed sooner and with sufficient support from their healthcare providers to ensure the best possible outcomes
6. Provide a greater level of support for dementia research

### **Indicators**

While it is difficult to put numerical indicators around these high-level aspirations, it is important to develop reliable measures that will allow the evaluation of outcomes for consumers, and guide improvement in programs and services.

For the purposes of illustration, indicators could include:

| <b>i Aspiration</b>                       | <b>ii Indicators</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dementia Friendly society              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% recognition among consumers that dementia is a chronic disease that can affect people of all ages</li> </ul>                                                          |
| 2. Choice & Flexibility in community care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of consumers assessed as needing formal support services receive the services that they want, where they want to receive them within 1 month of assessment.</li> </ul> |
| 3. Quality residential care               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 10% of people with dementia in residential care on long-term antipsychotic or sedative medication.</li> </ul>                                                    |
| 4. Safer hospitals                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of people with dementia in hospitals identified at admission</li> </ul>                                                                                                |

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5. Timely diagnosis     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Six months average time from first consultation with doctors about symptoms to specialist diagnosis</li></ul>            |
| 6. Support for research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment of \$200 million additional funding (over and above current NHMRC investment) over 5 years to 2018.</li></ul> |

### Strategies

The Tackling Dementia measures announced as part of the *Living Longer. Living Better* reform package are a good start to achieving better care and support for people with dementia across both the health and aged care system. But in order to achieve these aspirations there will be a need for additional ongoing investment, partnership and co-operation between federal and state governments, and with consumers, clinicians and service provider organisations.

Alzheimer's Australia recommends that these aspirations and specific, measurable targets are included as a central component of the National Dementia Action Plan that is currently in redevelopment.

Alzheimer's Australia  
April 2013