

# Media Release

2 September 2024

## New guide aims to combat isolation for people living with dementia at home

If you've ever been touched by dementia, you'll know what a cruel and heartbreaking disease it can be. For the person diagnosed, but often more so, for their loved ones.

It can also be an isolating experience. Individuals and their families reportedly feel "lost" after receiving a diagnosis. This is exacerbated by a lack of guidance for the community care workforce into where and how to find dementia support (Guidelines Adaptation Committee 2016, [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety – Final Report, 2021](#)).

**With this in mind, for-purpose organisation aged and disability [VMCH](#) is proud to have partnered with [Caladenia Dementia Care](#) and [My Dementia Companion](#) to begin the development of Australia's first dementia practice guide to help Case Managers and Care Coordinators who support people living with dementia and their carers in their homes. 'Your Guide to Implementing Person-Driven Care' will provide workers with information to help refer clients to appropriate and individualised support as their needs change.**

If the trial is successful, the guide could also be used within allied health, residential aged care and disability settings (where the client/resident has a diagnosis of Younger Onset Dementia) and by families and carers, as well as care workers.

"We know that 70 per cent of people diagnosed with dementia live in the community and receive regular community care," says VMCH Dementia Services Specialist Elizabeth Baxter.

"Clinical Guidelines are available to clinicians, however, there are no guidelines for staff working in the community sector for people post diagnosis. There is also a workforce shortage in community care and less experience in providing dementia-specific support."

VMCH CEO Sonya Smart says the guide reflects the organisation's long-standing commitment to supporting those living with dementia and their loved ones.

"Unfortunately, a 'cure' for dementia is likely not something we may see within our lifetime, but what is within our control is how we can support those struggling with the disease now.

"Here at VMCH we are passionate about investing in innovations, such as this guide and our specialist dementia care units, among other initiatives, to help make life easier for people touched by dementia, and their families.

"It's also critical that we collaborate with like-minded professionals and organisations to share our respective expertise and to equip our dedicated workforce with the skills and tools they need to provide the highest quality care. As more and more people opt to receive care in their own homes as they age, this need becomes vital."

VMCH Executive General Manager of Quality and Clinical Excellence, Funda Ozenc, notes that while countless resources on dementia exist, there is a lack of consolidated practice guidelines.

"These would provide various stakeholders with streamlined access to individualised resources and, consequently, enhance the quality of and access to care and services."

The VMCH, Caladenia Dementia Care and My Dementia Companion team will launch the guide – which has been in the works for around nine months – at the International Dementia Conference in Sydney this week (5-6 September).

"We are hoping after the conference to invite industry leaders to express interest and establish some timeframes as to when we can officially launch the guide," Elizabeth says. "We also plan to approach [NARI](#) (National Ageing Research Institute) to put together a full research project into how and where the guide can be best utilised in practice and then evaluate its efficacy."

### Media enquiries

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## About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, love, joy, hospitality and courage aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

