

Communities for Dementia

Research Project Update

Welcome to the Communities for Dementia Project Update

'Communities for Dementia' is a research project that aims to develop a framework and approach to support local Dementia Friendly Communities (DFCs) to evaluate their impact. The project also aims to build evidence regarding what works for whom and where to create inclusive societies and environments for people living with dementia. The project is led by A/Prof Lyn Phillipson (Uni of Wollongong) as part of her DCRC Mid-Career Fellowship which is funded by the Dementia Australia Research Foundation.

It has been a busy number of months for the project marked by many consultations and conversations. We have reviewed literature and searched for easy to use tools and evaluation resources that can be used by Dementia-Friendly Communities throughout Australia to monitor and refine their activities. This will aid their efforts in building inclusive, connected and supportive environments for people living with dementia.

"We want to work with communities, building skills and tools to support the process of understanding their impact. Overall, the goal of this collaboration is to build the capacity of people at the grass roots to create even better places for people with dementia and their care partners."

Assoc-Prof Lyn Phillipson



Progress to date

Project Advisory Group meetings

Two meetings have occurred with our Project Advisory group. We are very thankful to have the knowledge and experience of Dementia Advocates Dennis Frost, Margaret Allen, Dubhglas & Eileen Taylor, Bobby Redman and Trish Lorgan. They have provided ideas, feedback and constructive criticism on the project methods and outputs when needed.

Stakeholder consultations

Stakeholder consultations were conducted in November to support co-design of the Australian DFC Evaluation Framework. This occurred online via Zoom meeting with 18 participants attending. All participants, including another 17 participants who were unable to attend, were sent a report of the findings of the consultation for their follow up review and feedback via email.

We are so grateful to all who attended this meeting and/or gave feedback after the meeting – this consultation was crucial in gaining the perspectives of those on the ground, doing the work in DFCs.

A number of meetings have been held with the Dementia Australia DFC program manager, Belinda Curtis, and DFC staff to establish our partnership approach. The DA DFC team has been very supportive of this project, and will work alongside the research team and DFC action groups (Alliances) to trial the draft framework.

Desk-based research

A desk-based baseline evaluation was completed from January to May using 22 DFC Action Plans. This research activity gave insights into the scope of DFC aims and activities, and highlighted some avenues for supporting DFCs in completing Action Plans.

Results from the Consultations and Action Plan review been used to produce a DRAFT

evaluation framework, toolkit and other resources. These have been reviewed by the research team, the Advisory Group and Dementia Australia DFC staff. Feedback from these groups was incorporated into the developed resources.

An Ethics application has been approved for the Phase 3 of the project which is trialling the Evaluation framework and resources in 6 DFC communities, with support of the research team and Dementia Australia Community Development Officers associated with each DFC.

What did we find?

Stakeholder consultation

Our consultation found that most key stakeholders were in favour of communities undertaking some local self-evaluation activities. However, the process and tools supporting this would need to be simple and straight forward so as not to increase the burden on DFC members.

Key stakeholders thought the evaluation processes needed to be linked to current Action Planning and Reporting processes, and tools and approaches must be inclusive of people with dementia.

Beyond self-evaluation some stakeholders believed that some important evaluation activities required specialised skills to undertake and wanted to see other external specialist evaluation funded by DA/ Government in consultation with researchers.

Action Plan analysis

Our Action Plan analysis found DFCs across Australia had aims strongly focused on raising community awareness of dementia, creating inclusive services within the community, and promoting quality of life for people living with dementia and their care partners.



Actions to work towards this focused on community education and engagement with local businesses, as well as developing diverse activities and resources for people living with dementia including:

- peer support groups
- dementia cafes
- art, music and exercise-based activities
- community gardens
- prescribing of 'green scripts', and
- the development of local information directories.

What's happening next?

In the next 6 months we plan to work with 6 Dementia-Friendly Communities using our draft framework and developed resources, alongside and supported by Dementia Australia DFC Community Development Officers.

This will incorporate supporting and training these communities to use the framework and developing evaluation measures or indicators appropriate to each community's context, experience, and resources. The draft framework and resources will be adapted and refined as needed during this process.

For more information

If you would like to know more about the preliminary results of this project, and/or the new DFC Evaluation framework or how to get involved in the pilot project, please email Lyn Phillipson lphillip@uow.edu.au or Keryn Johnson kerynj@uow.edu.au

For more information on Dementia-Friendly Communities, please visit the Dementia Australia website:

<https://www.dementiafriendly.org.au/>



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