**Media Advisory**

**The Alzheimers NZ Conference is the event of the year for the New Zealand dementia community, attracting leading speakers from the region and globally, harnessing knowledge and insights from a range of sectors.**

**October 10, 2018**

**WHAT:** Alzheimers NZ is hosting a three-day conference from October 25 in Auckland to discuss the major dementia challenge facing New Zealand. Dementia is one of this country’s most serious unmet health needs, affecting four out of five Kiwis in some way, and this conference aims to find solutions. Find out more [here](http://www.alzheimers.org.nz/get-involved/2018-conference/2018-conference-abstracts-and-programme).

This year’s event builds on the hugely successful 2016 conference, which was also the 19th Asia Pacific Regional conference. In a world first, 20 per cent of the nearly 400 attendees were people with dementia and their care partners.

Among the international and local speakers this year are:

* **Professor Alison Wray;**
  + A Professor in Language and Communication from the United Kingdom’s Cardiff University, she will illustrate how communication shapes the dementia experience in her talk titled *Mind what you say*. On October 26, Professor Wray will demonstrate methods to developing resilience in communication.
* **Phyllis Fehr;**
  + A board member of the Dementia Alliance International – a collaboration of like-minded individuals diagnosed with dementia who provide a unified voice – will speak of the importance of citizenship and rights for people with dementia on 25 October.
* **Professor Lee-Fay Low;**
  + As an Associate Professor of Aging and Health from the University of Sydney, she will – alongside Dementia Advocate/Peer Supporter Bobby Redman – detail prescribing engagement: Supporting people recently diagnosed with dementia on 25 October. Additionally, she will invoke a systematic review of attitudes and practices of health practitioners with her question, why aren’t people with dementia told their diagnosis?
* **Dr Margaret Dudley;**
  + University of Auckland lecturer, and clinical psychologist, Dr Margaret Dudley (Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri and Ngāti Kahu) is currently undertaking a three-year Health Research Council-funded Postdoctoral Fellowship to develop Māori-focused standards for thinking/cognitive performance. On 27 October she will speak to the Māori approach of assessing and managing dementia.
* **Matthew Croucher;**
  + Psychiatrist of Old Age Christchurch and Leader of the South Island Dementia Initiative, he will convene a day focused on ‘what works’ on the second day of the conference. Mr Croucher will also explore the importance of living well with dementia and how we think about it.

**Tackling dementia: it’s everybody’s business**There are nearly 70,000 New Zealanders with dementia now and we expect that number to almost triple to 170,000 by 2050.

Dementia dramatically changes the lives of people who live with it, including people diagnosed with the condition, their families and communities. It will have major personal, societal and fiscal impacts in the years ahead.

We cannot afford to do nothing about the rapidly growing dementia challenge that affects four out of five Kiwis in some way.

**Editor’s note:**  
Media are welcome to interview speakers ahead of the conference. Their availability is variable, so please contact Daniel Paul on (021) 400 993 for any enquiries.