**News release April 2018**

**Alzheimers NZ’s new Dementia Friends programme – Join us**

Alzheimers NZ is issuing a call to action as part of a new outreach and awareness programme launching on April 18.

Dementia Friends learn about dementia and the impact it has. They then make a commitment to action to help those living with dementia to live well. Dementia Friends choose the action or actions they are comfortable with and able to offer.

Dementia Friends has been informed and shaped by the voices and input of Kiwis living with dementia.

Whether you are a schoolkid or a chief executive, a Cabinet Minister or someone in between, you can be a Dementia Friend, Alzheimers NZ chief executive Catherine Hall says.

Ms Hall hopes thousands of Kiwis listen to Alzheimers NZ’s call and join the Dementia Friends community.

“We are inviting everyone in New Zealand to become a Dementia Friend to raise awareness and build a more understanding, inclusive and supportive New Zealand.

“Every action a Dementia Friend takes counts. Even small actions can make a big difference.”

“No action is too small. No action is too big. Actions can range from getting a better understanding and appreciation of dementia, to wearing a badge or a wristband to let people know they are a Dementia Friend, through to perhaps helping someone living with dementia to do something they might like help with or enjoy.”

To become a Dementia Friend, people complete a short, online programme. The programme includes a short video featuring three Kiwis living well with dementia.

Our hope is that tens of thousands New Zealanders choose to become a Dementia Friend, and their actions help increase awareness and create positive changes for their fellow New Zealanders living with dementia.

And Ms Hall hopes to grow the programme exponentially in coming years to increase the community of people committed to supporting Kiwis living with dementia to live the lives they want to.

Eighty per cent of people know or have known someone living with dementia, she says.

“That is a lot of us. We want to build and grow a community of people – Dementia Friends – who are prepared to take action to support people living with dementia. Every action matters.”

There is no cost to people who want to be a Dementia Friend, other than their time to take part in the programme.

***For more information and to join us and become a Dementia Friend*** [***here***](http://www.alzheimers.org.nz/get-involved/become-a-dementia-friend)***.***

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For more information please contact:

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Or visit Dementia Friends at [alzheimers.org.nz](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Caccou_000%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5C4E3GMKBR%5Calzheimers.org.nz)

**Editors’ notes:**Media are welcome to use the photo, but cannot alter it, of Alzheimer NZ’s Dementia Friends video stars; Helen Doyle, left, Alister Robertson, and Rita Masters. We also encourage media to use the video depicting three Kiwis living well with dementia. A link to the video is [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOfaekTBX_8&t=0s&list=WL&index=1).

The online Dementia Friends programme won’t be accessible, nor will people be able to complete the programme, until the embargo elapses.

Over time dementia can also have a significant impact on the person’s ability to communicate and make it hard for them to share their experience.

Added to that, the stigma associated with dementia sadly remains and so sharing their story takes courage and commitment.

Media are asked to keep this in mind and respect them when interviewing or interacting with them at all times.

Remember the individual behind the condition. Report them as a person first and one who has dementia second. Listen to their story.

Patience may be required when interviewing someone with dementia and, in some instances, it may be best to include their support person/family/whanāu.

Treat the person living with dementia like any other interviewee. Act naturally, greet them with a handshake, and avoid patronising or over-praising.

Allow more time for questions and repeat questions as required. Don't confuse dementia with a hearing disability. It may help to speak clearly, but is not necessary to raise your voice.

As dementia is a memory condition, it may be difficult for the person to answer questions which require them to draw on their memory.

# **Terminology**Please try to use the following terminology when reporting on dementia:

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| **USE** | **INSTEAD OF** |
| People/person with dementiaPeople/person affected by dementiaPeople/person living with dementiaPerson who has dementiaPerson who has a dementia | Dementia patientSuffererVictimDementedAgedAfflictedSenileCursed |
| Condition | Disease |
| Person who cares for/cares about/looks after/supports/helpsSupport personPrimary support personHelperFamily, friends and whanāu | CaregiverCare partner |
| Family carersUnpaid carers | Informal carers |
| Older person/people | Aged person/people |
| Challenging, debilitating, devastating | Hopeless, impossible, unbearable |
| Impact/effect of caring for a person with dementia | Carer burden, burden of caring |