**Realising a more dementia friendly top of the South Island**Public Trust is joining Alzheimers NZ in its ambitious goal to make a dementia friendly New Zealand a reality.

Nelson and Blenheim Public Trust customer centres will be recognised during this year’s World Alzheimers Month as one of the newest members of Alzheimers NZ’s Dementia Friendly Recognition Programme.

They join two other awarded organisations and businesses throughout New Zealand in meeting the programme’s seven standards and making a commitment to actively support their customers living with dementia.

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a group of conditions that affect the way our brains work.

Nationwide, the number of people living with dementia is expected to rise from over 60,000 people in 2016 to 170,000 by 2050.

Both Public Trust centres will be awarded Dementia Friendly certificates at separate ceremonies on the 6th September.

Alzheimers NZ chief executive Catherine Hall is delighted that Public Trust, one of New Zealand’s longstanding organisations is further cementing their commitment to their communities.

The more organisations that are willing to become Dementia Friendly, the more likely we are to see a more inclusive and supportive New Zealand, she says.

“Part of our Dementia Friendly mission is to raise awareness of, and challenge the stigma associated with dementia.

“In doing so, we will be able to live in a New Zealand in which we are all feel included and valued, where we are able to participate in and contribute to our families and our communities, where we get the services and support we need, and where we feel safe – whatever our disabilities.

“So, it is fitting that we recognise the Nelson and Blenheim Public Trusts during World Alzheimers Month.”

Public Trust’s General Manager (Retail) Julian Travaglia says the increasing rates of dementia mean more and more families are facing ongoing challenges associated with the condition.

“Meeting these challenges has been a focus of Public Trust for some time, as we develop tailored services to manage the finances of those who are ill or incapacitated.

“Developing our customer centres to be Dementia Friendly is an extension of our commitment to address the challenges posed by the condition.”

**Editor’s note:**
Media are welcome to speak with Alzheimers NZ chief executive Catherine Hall, please call contact Daniel Paul 021 400 993. Public Trust’s General Manager (Retail) Julian Travaglia is also available for comment, please contact Ian Letham 022 070 0979.

Media are welcome to attend events:

* Alzheimers Society Marlborough, 8 Wither Rd, Blenheim;
	+ Award to be presented at 10.45am
* Hotel Nelson, 40 Waimea Rd, Nelson;
	+ Award to be presented at 2.45pm

**About Alzheimers New Zealand**Alzheimers NZ represents people living with dementia at a national level by raising awareness of dementia, providing information and resources, advocating for high quality services, and promoting research about prevention, treatment, cure and care.

We support local Alzheimers NZ organisations throughout New Zealand, each of which is a member of Alzheimers NZ.

**What is dementia?**Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms that affect how well our brains work.

Dementia can affect anyone, and as people get older the chances of developing dementia increase.

The symptoms each person experiences depends on the parts of the brain that are affected. However, the most common dementia symptoms include changes in memory, thinking, behaviour, personality and emotions. These changes affect a person’s ability to perform everyday tasks and interfere with their everyday lives.

**Key statistics:**

* More than 170,000 Kiwis will be living with dementia by 2050
* Dementia impacts more women than men - around 30% higher
* The total cost of dementia to NZ is now around $1.7b and will reach around $5b by 2050
* New models of care that keep people healthier at home for longer could achieve cost benefit ratios of 6.6 times the value of investment.

[**Click here to view the infographic**](http://www.alzheimers.org.nz/getmedia/df1bc32a-bffb-4d80-aaa9-c3bf4e564eb8/DEIR-2016-one-page-summary.pdf/).