**News release**

**Government urged to implement first-ever national dementia plan**

The dementia sector has released a national plan to reduce the rapidly growing incidence of dementia among New Zealanders, and provide better support for those diagnosed with the condition

Alzheimers NZ is urging the Minister of Health Andrew Little and the Associate Minister Dr Verrall to accept and implement the plan as the government’s formal response to what is predicted to be a looming dementia crisis for New Zealand.

A Dementia Economic Impact Report (DEIR) released last month by Alzheimers NZ showed dementia numbers spiking in New Zealand, with a particularly strong growth curve among Māori, Pasifika and Asian communities.

“Aotearoa NZ desperately needs to do something to address what is a major and growing health priority and this plan provides the government with all the answers it needs,” said chief executive Catherine Hall.

The plan is a first for New Zealand and focusses on four priority areas:

* Reducing the incidence of dementia.
* Better supporting those living with it, and their care partners.
* Building dementia friendly and inclusive communities.
* Monitoring and measuring progress on the plan’s implementation.

A recent World Health Organization [report](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/344701/9789240033245-eng.pdf) urged governments around the world to have a plan for dealing with dementia.

New Zealand is one of those countries that have been slow to respond, but the government has at least indicated support for the plan.

Ms Hall said people can show their support for the plan by signing an open letter to the Ministers that urges them to [deliver for dementia](https://deliver.alzheimers.org.nz/?fbclid=IwAR2F7aw7vUi09W-kBSONOeWzpoQlVU2hTIEmtmQOhyrdo29fkhNLIlNpuyc).

The Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan was written by Alzheimers NZ, Dementia NZ, NZ Dementia Foundation and The Mate Wareware Advisory Rōpū.

Kaiwhakarite of the Mate Wareware Advisory Rōpū, Dr Makarena Dudley, acknowledges the partnership with Māori in the development of the plan.

“This plan addresses the inequities experienced by Māori as well as other cultural groups living with mate wareware in Aotearoa New Zealand.”

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For more information or to arrange interviews contact Daniel Paul (021) 400993