Dementia Best Practices Case Study
Ballina Shire Dementia Friendly Community Alliance (BSDFCA)
Australia

Who we are...

In collaboration with key stakeholders, communities in Ballina Local Government Area, Australia are making a commitment to improve the quality of life of its diverse population and to be more inclusive. People aged 65 and over make up 25% of the Ballina Shire population, as compared to 15% Australia wide. The Ballina Shire Dementia Friendly Community (BSDFC) Alliance is a coalition of individuals, including people living with dementia and their advocates, local businesses, groups and organisations, auspiced by a local disability service provider.

This initiative supports the development of a dementia friendly community across the Ballina Shire, by raising awareness of issues faced by local people with dementia and taking actions to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers.

Ballina focuses on the inclusion of people living with dementia and their carers who live, work, or have a connection with towns and villages in the Ballina Shire.

What do we do?

The BSDFC Alliance allows key stakeholders across the region to work together to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia.

Examples of activities are:
• **Moving Memories**, initiated by Ballina Shire library, involves volunteers delivering a personalised service of books, delivered to the door, for people living with dementia and their carers.

• **Dementia Community Café** is held the first Wednesday of each month between 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. It is a regular get together for people with dementia and their supporters to develop social connections, build understanding and create awareness. Everybody in the community is welcome. The event is sponsored by a local café and two not-for-profit organisations.

• **Engineering work**: Ballina Shire Council has begun a process of developing a set of accessible design guidelines. The intention is to improve accessibility to a range of public infrastructure. Council is working closely with local community stakeholders to ensure that the needs of people with dementia are included in the design solutions. Ballina Council has a dedicated Social Planning Coordinator to assist in this work.

• **A response protocol for when people with dementia become lost**. The protocol will be developed in collaboration with emergency services and carers.

• **Local business staff education and endorsement program**

• **Community consultation**

• **Public education and awareness raising**, for example **Dementia Music Muster** held during Seniors Week

• **Action plan to be developed for approval** of Ballina as a Dementia Friendly Community by Dementia Australia

• **Producing a database of community activities and support groups** for people with dementia and/or their carers

**How do we do our governance?**

Examples of processes and procedures that have been established to ensure long-term sustainability:

• **Dementia Friendly Alliance** established including members from: carer organisations,
educational/research institutions; local and state government; regional library; community members including people with dementia and their carers; and health care providers. Alliance Terms of Reference have been developed and endorsed.

- **Steering Committee** drawn from Alliance members with interest, experience and the capacity to take action in improving the quality of life for Ballina Shire residents with dementia has been established. Office bearers appointed with two Co-Chairs, one of whom must be a person with lived experience of dementia. Meetings held monthly. Working area leaders appointed and a strategic plan has been developed.

- **Dementia Advisory Group** has been set up, which consists exclusively of people living with dementia and their carers to advise the Alliance work and initiate own activities. Currently there are 11 members.

- Currently seed funding has been received from Dementia Australia for community engagement and to assist BSDFC Alliance activities and has improved the sustainability account. DAISI Services Limited is a registered charitable, not-for-profit organisation that is supporting grant applications and will auspice any funding received. Further funding is sought for other activities, including a symposium scheduled for 2020.

- Academics from Southern Cross University, Western Sydney University and the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, in collaboration with Wollongong University, are working with the Alliance to develop an Evaluation Framework to ensure outcomes are measured against input, processes and output.

- **Ballina Shire Council** unanimously moved a motion in March 2019 to receive a report on the strategies and actions that can put in place to be defined as a Dementia Friendly Community. This task has been included as part of the Council's annual operational plan. It is very likely that Council will work towards Ballina Shire being recognised as a dementia friendly community. Council is a member of the BDFCA and is supportive of the Alliance objective that Ballina Shire be recognised as a dementia friendly community. Council will make an application to Dementia Australia, in early 2020, to be recognised as a dementia friendly organisation.

- **Symposium 2020**: A rural regional Symposium will be held in Ballina. Council will provide the venue. The Symposium’s main aim is to consult with the community at large on practical actions that would make Ballina more dementia inclusive – what is working, what is not, what needs to happen and who will do it. To achieve this, the Symposium aims to improve the following for people living with dementia and their carers:

  1. Inclusive communities
2. Quality of life
3. Built environment
4. Attention for special needs groups/personalisation (e.g., culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people)
5. Stakeholder and/or user engagement with dementia-related activities and issues.

People will also be invited from across the region outside of Ballina, to demonstrate and influence other rural communities. Key speakers include people with dementia, from national peak bodies such as Dementia Australia, the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre and leading practitioners.

Photo: Example Dementia Cafe Ballina