

21 September 2020

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Dementia Action Week – a little support makes a lot of difference

Dementia Action Week is on 21- 27 September 2020 and this year's theme is Dementia. A little support makes a lot of difference.

Dementia affects close to half a million Australians and the number is set to double in the next 25 years. Dementia has become the leading cause of death among Australian women, and remains the second leading cause of death across all Australians.

At Catholic Healthcare we support many clients, residents, patients, and their families, who are living with dementia. We thank our staff for their tireless care and the work they do to support people living with dementia so they can continue to live active and rich lives, for as long as possible.

Like Dementia Counsellors, Kath Readford and Monique Edwards, who are based in the regional town of Dubbo but support the wider Orana region of NSW (currently 130 clients) with dementia counselling, advice and advocacy.

Kath has been working as a Dementia Counsellor with Catholic Healthcare for 27 years and is well known and regarded in the community. Kath has an OAM for her services to dementia. Monique joined Kath 12 months ago to job-share the full-time role while also working at Lourdes Hospital with the brain injury team.

“We provide a long-term service,” says Kath. “The first contact we often have with clients and their families is when they have concerns about their cognition. We work together to arrange an assessment and get a diagnosis. If a loved one is diagnosed with dementia we counsel clients on support services and support groups available in the community and with Dementia Australia. We can organise respite and support a transition to permanent care if required. We also provide grief and loss counselling.

“The support groups are very important for carers of people living with dementia. It's confidential and allows them to meet, share the challenges of caring for their loved ones, and educate themselves on dementia and how to best manage it at home.”

Catholic Healthcare also provides respite at its Home Club located next to Lourdes Hospital and the Home Care community centre in Dubbo. Kath set up Home Club 20 years ago specifically for people living with dementia. Home Club is a secure day centre which is open five days a week from 9:00am – 4:00pm and provides respite for carers of people living with dementia. At the moment, 8-10 clients are able to access the service every day.

“Home Club is like a family,” says Monique. “It’s a home away from home where we provide activities, socialisation and all meals. Clients might do exercises in the morning, plus activities like cards, quizzes and games to keep the mind active. We use whatever we think we can to help carers and the person living with dementia.”

For more information about Dementia Action Week and how you can support people living with dementia, visit the Dementia Australia website - <https://www.dementia.org.au/> or call the Dementia Australia Hotline on 1800 100 500.

To contact Kath or Monique call (02) 6881 3704 or visit them at 2 Tony McGrane Place, Dubbo. Please call to make an appointment. Opening hours are between 8:30am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

*Pictured are Kath Readford and Monique Edwards, Dementia Counsellors with Catholic Healthcare*

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