



An Australian Government Initiative

Orana and Far West
NSW Region

You're Not Alone

Living Well with Dementia.



You're not alone. There might be help available right in your community. Try talking to your local GP, Council, or Neighbourhood Centre, and they can often point you to useful services.

It's also a good idea to check with your local library, community groups, or other support organisations, because new groups and activities can start anytime.

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What is Dementia?

Dementia is a term used to describe a group of conditions that affect the brain. It can cause a progressive decline in a person's ability to think, remember, and carry out everyday tasks. It is not a normal part of ageing.

Dementia can affect a person's memory, thinking, communication, behaviour, and the ability to perform daily activities. While it is more common in older people, dementia is not just about getting older. It is caused by diseases that damage brain cells.

There are different types of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia, and Lewy body disease. Each type of dementia can affect people in different ways.

With the right understanding and support, people living with dementia can continue to enjoy a meaningful and engaged life.

A photograph of two elderly women with short hair and glasses, smiling and looking at each other outdoors. The woman on the left has short blonde hair and is wearing a dark blue top. The woman on the right has short white hair and is wearing a green and white striped shirt. They are both smiling warmly. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting foliage.

When Should I Seek Help?

When Should I Seek Help?

Memory problems or changes in thinking or behaviour can happen for many reasons. These might be caused by things like:

- Low vitamin levels
- Hormone changes
- Infections
- Medications

These problems aren't always because of dementia. But if it is dementia, finding out early can really help. Knowing sooner means the person with dementia, their carer, family and kin, or friends can:

- Understand what's happening
- Make good choices about care and planning ahead
- Get support and services to help them stay independent at home

Questions to ask your local General Practitioner (GP)

- How can I stay independent for as long as possible?
- Are there any support services to help me and my carer, family and kin, or friends?
- Is there a local support group I can join?
- What should I do about my money, legal matters, and planning for the future?
- How sure are you about my diagnosis?
- Can you make a care plan for me, like a Chronic Disease Management Plan? A Chronic Condition Management Plan (GPCCMP) is a personalised care plan created by your local GP to help manage long-term health conditions. It outlines your health needs, treatment goals, and services, and can include referrals to allied health professionals).
- Will I have to stop driving?
- If I can't drive, what help is there for getting around?
- Are there any medicines or exercises that could help me?
- I'm having trouble remembering things, like appointments, keys, or how to use my phone. What can I do to manage these problems?

What Happens Next?

If you, your carer, family and kin, friends, or your local GP are concerned, the GP may organise some tests. These could include:

- Blood tests
- Brain scans (like a CT or MRI)
- Memory or thinking checks, like answering questions or doing simple tasks such as writing or drawing
- Refer you to a specialist such as Geriatrician, Neurologist, Old Age Psychiatrist or other services. They may do more specific testing to make a diagnosis.

Your local GP might also refer you to Dementia Behaviour Management Support Services (DBMS). The staff there support people living with dementia and memory concerns. They may talk with you, your carer, family and kin, or friends. This check-up might take 1 to 2 hours. The results are sent to your GP to help with diagnosis and planning.



Your local GP may also refer you to other experts such as:

- A neurologist (brain doctor)
- A geriatrician (doctor for older people)
- A neuropsychologist (memory and thinking expert)
- A psychogeriatrician (psychiatrist for older adults)

They can do more tests and help confirm the diagnosis.

What Else Do I Need to Know?

Your local GP might send you to other health workers who can help you stay healthy and feel better.

These health workers might include:

- **Aboriginal Health Worker** – supports the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- **Audiologist** – helps with hearing problems
- **Chiropractor** – works with bones, muscles, and joints
- **Dementia Counsellor/Care coordinator** – helps with adjusting to change specific to Dementia
- **Diabetes Educator** – teaches how to manage diabetes
- **Dietitian** – gives advice about healthy eating
- **Exercise Physiologist** – helps you stay active and build strength

- **Occupational Therapist** – helps you do everyday tasks at home or work
- **Optometrist** – helps with health conditions that affect your eyes and vision
- **Physiotherapist** – helps with movement and recovering from injury
- **Podiatrist** – looks after your feet
- **Psychologist** – supports your mental and emotional wellbeing
- **Social Worker** – helps with services and life problems
- **Speech Pathologist** – helps with talking, understanding, and swallowing

These people all work together to help you live as well as possible.

Changes in Behaviour

Sometimes, dementia can lead to changes in behaviour, which are often responses to unmet needs. This can be upsetting for people living with dementia, carers, family and kin, or friends. These changes may be expressions of unmet needs such as pain, discomfort, or emotional distress.

It's important to talk to your local GP if you notice any changes in behaviour. This helps make sure you get the right care and support.

Where Can I Get Information?

If you or someone you care for has been told they have dementia, it's important to know where to find good information. Getting the right support can help you, your carer, family and kin, or friends:

- Understand the symptoms and how dementia might change over time
- Learn helpful ways to manage changes in behaviour and needs
- Find out what services and support are available

For your carer, family and kin, or friends, the right information can also:

- Help them learn how to give good care while looking after their own health
- Give them a chance to talk with others who are going through similar things.

Support can come from many places, like family and kin, friends, church groups, men's or women's groups, or local clubs. You can talk to your local GP, and you can also call your local Council and they might know about other services not listed here.



Across Orana and the Far West NSW, there are dedicated dementia support groups that offer more than just fun and social activities. They also provide a sense of connection and understanding through peer support. These groups create a welcoming space for people living with dementia to engage with others who share similar experiences. At the same time, carers are given valuable time to themselves, which they can use for everyday needs like shopping or appointments, or for personal enjoyment such as golf, learning something new, or catching up with friends.

Services you could contact



Services

Care finders

Here to help – (If you have no one to help you)

Care finders is a free service designed to support vulnerable older people who don't have family and kin, friends, or others who can help them. It is specially for older people who need extra help and ongoing support to access aged care and connect with local services.

This service helps people to:

- Understand what support is available
- Apply for aged care and other services
- Get the help they need set up and working

To help connect someone with this service, you can call any care finder organisation in your region.

Website: www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder

or scan the QR code for
**My Aged Care –
Care Finder**



Care finders is delivered by Marathon Health and Kirinari Community Services across Western and Far West NSW. See below to find your local provider based on your Local Government Area.

Marathon Health

Local Government Area: Dubbo Regional, Gilgandra, Mid - Western Regional, Narromine and Warrumbungle Shire LGAs, Cabonne, Forbes, Orange and Parkes LGAs

Phone: **1300 418 222**

Kirinari Community Services

Local Government Area: Bathurst Regional, Blayney, Cowra, Oberon and Weddin LGAs

Phone: **1300 547 462**

My Aged Care

Organise an assessment to access funding and support.

Website: www.myagedcare.gov.au

Phone: **1800 200 422**

or **scan** the QR code for the **My Aged Care** website.



Hearing Australia

Offers hearing tests, device repairs, ongoing care, and support through counselling and rehabilitation and are available online, in-centre, or in your home.

Phone: **13 44 32**

Get Healthy Service

Provides free health coaching over the phone and online to help you make positive lifestyle changes.

Phone: **1300 806 258**

Younger Onset Dementia and Me Blog

A website where people with younger onset dementia can connect with others.

Website: www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia/younger-onset-dementia

or **scan** the QR code for **Dementia Australia** website.



Dementia Australia

(Dementia Support Australia)

This is a **free and private service** that gives support to people living with dementia, as well as their carers and families. Trained counsellors can help with the emotional and practical challenges of dementia.

The Helpline also offers:

- Information about dementia and where to find local support
- Details about education and learning programs
- Brochures, fact sheets, videos, and books you can borrow
- Special resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Your Story Matters), people from different cultural backgrounds, and LGBTI communities

Website: **www.dementia.org.au**

National Dementia Helpline

Phone: **1800 100 500** (24 hours, 7 days)

Café Groups

Dementia Australia has developed a Community Café Toolkit for establishing a café group for people living with dementia.

Website: **www.dementia.org.au/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/dementia-friendly-community-tools-and-resources**

Phone: **1800 100 500**

Scan the QR code for
tools and resources.



Forward with Dementia

This website helps people after they find out they have dementia. It includes easy-to-understand advice from doctors and researchers, useful tips, real-life stories from people with dementia and their carers, and tools to help with daily life.

Many people with dementia still live happy and meaningful lives after their diagnosis.

Website: **www.forwardwithdementia.au**

Dementia Support Groups Australia

Changes in behaviour can mean that someone needs more help or different care. You can call the 24/7 helpline anytime to speak with dementia experts. They will listen to your situation and help you understand what the changes might mean.

They can suggest the best services for your needs and give you useful tips, advice, and support to help you care for your loved one.

Website: **www.dementia.com.au**

Phone: **1800 669 799**

(24 hour for dementia support)

Dementia Training Australia

Helps by improving the health and wellbeing of people living with dementia and the staff who support you.

Website: **www.dta.com.au**

Phone: **1300 229 092**

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway is a free service from the Australian Government that helps people who look after a family member or friend. It gives support to carers who are not paid for the care they give.

Carer Gateway offers things like:

- Counselling (**someone to talk to**)
- Respite care (**a break from caring**)
- Coaching and advice
- Help with everyday tasks

Website: **www.carergateway.gov.au**

Phone: **1800 422 737** (Monday to Friday)

Advocacy Support

If you or someone you know needs help to understand or speak up about their rights when using aged care services, support is available.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

You can contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) for free and private help. They are independent and on your side.

They can help with:

- Understanding your rights and responsibilities in aged care
- Speaking up if you have worries or complaints about your care
- Finding your way through the aged care system
- Talking to aged care providers on your behalf

OPAN works with older people to make sure their voices are heard and their choices are respected. Their services are free and available all across Australia.

Website: **www.opan.org.au**

Phone: **1800 700 600**

First Nations Dementia Resource

NeuRA

This organisation looks at Aboriginal ageing and brain health as something that happens throughout a person's life. It aims to teach, share information, and support Aboriginal communities to stay strong and healthy as they get older.

Website: www.neura.edu.au/health/aboriginal-ageing

or **scan** the QR code for
more information.



Local Services



Far West Local Health District Palliative care and support in Far West NSW

The Community Specialist Palliative Care Service is available to support people with serious illnesses and their families, whether you are at home, in hospital, or in aged care. They care for people living with conditions such as advanced cancer, end-stage heart, lung or kidney disease, motor neurone disease, and other advanced neurological conditions such as dementia.

The Broken Hill Specialist Palliative Care team is based in Broken Hill Hospital and is open 8am to 4pm, 7 days a week.

Website: www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/fwlhd/services/palliative-care

Phone: **08 8080 1300** and ask for palliative care

Scan the QR code for more information on Palliative care and support.



For local dementia support, contact the services below:

Orana and Far West Local Services:

Broken Hill

Broken Hill - Dementia Service

Provides information & support for people with Dementia and their carers.

Phone: **1800 580 580** Live Better

Dubbo

Dubbo Dementia Alliance

The Dubbo Dementia Alliance is a local group that wants to make Dubbo a better place for people living with dementia. The group is led by community advocate Bruce M.

They work to help people understand dementia, break down negative ideas (stigma), and make sure people with dementia and their carers feel included. The group runs awareness events and supports activities that help make the community more caring and welcoming.

Email: **contact@dda.org.au**

Phone: **0418 525 558**

Western NSW Dementia Awareness and Support Team Dubbo Friendship Group

Monthly support group specific to carers of people living with Dementia.

Email: **kreadford@chcs.com.au**

Dubbo Men's Carers Group

The Carers: Dementia Men's Group is a friendly place for men who care for someone with dementia. It is part of the Dubbo Dementia Alliance.

The group gives men a chance to meet others, share their experiences, and get helpful information and support in a relaxed and caring space. Led by community advocate Bruce M, the group helps men support each other and feel less alone while caring for their loved ones.

Email: **bruce@btmbs.com.au**

Email: **mensgroup@dda.org.au**

Phone: **0418 525 558** Bruce M

Sing Out Choir

A weekly singing and social group with a major focus on people living with dementia.

Phone: **0401 944 387**

National Association for Loss & Grief

Dementia Carers Support Group – Monthly support group and workshops specific to carers of people living with Dementia, who are experiencing loss and grief whilst that person is still living

Phone: **02 6882 9222**

Catholic Healthcare

Dubbo Home Club – Daily respite for those people living with dementia. Operates five days per week.

Phone: **1300 183 917**

Hammondcare

Carer's Support Group – Monthly support group specific to carers of people living with Dementia. Including Respite care. Held the last Monday of every month at the Respite Cottage, 4 Cudgegong Place, Dubbo.

Phone: **1800 998 111**

For GPs and Clinicians

Western NSW HealthPathways:
westernnsw.communityhealthpathways.org

Other Helpful Websites

Palliative Care Australia:
www.palliativecare.org.au

Palliative Care New South Wales:
www.palliativecarens.org.au

National Association for Loss and Grief (NSW) Inc:
www.nalag.org.au



About Us

Western NSW Primary Health Network is committed to improving health outcomes for people across Western and Far Western NSW, with a focus on enhancing access to services and support in rural and regional communities.

We work collaboratively with local organisations and health providers to build community capacity and improve health literacy. Our dedicated Aged Care Team supports older people, carers, and service providers with information, guidance, and referrals, including through the care finder program.

Website: www.wnswphn.org.au/community

If you need help nearby, try talking to your local GP, Council, or Neighbourhood Centre to see what support they can offer. You can also check out community groups, libraries, or support services that might have useful programs or new groups starting up.

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