Carer research highlights real impact of dementia

Alzheimer’s Australia welcomes the findings in the *Ageing and Mental Health* journal - *Homicidal ideation in family carers of people with dementia* (published online: 20 July 2015). These results are the first of their kind, and underline the pressing need for more support programs for carers and family members of people with dementia.

Carol Bennett, CEO Alzheimer’s Australia said, “Our experience has shown it is not just the individual with dementia who needs assistance but the family, friends and carers. It is essential that carers of people with dementia are supported to both manage the impact of a diagnosis and the significant challenges that 24 hour care can have on their lives. Alzheimer’s Australia encourages carers to seek support to help them cope and reduce the risk of carer burnout.”

The Griffith University study interviewed 21 Australian carers and explored their thoughts of homicide. It highlighted that compassion, isolation, a sense of being trapped, exhaustion and self-defence were contributing factors.

“Alzheimer’s Australia welcomes research to inform better services and programs, not only for people with dementia but their carer’s and family members” Ms Bennett said.

Alzheimer’s Australia has a number of programs that support carers and family members of people with dementia including:

- **Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program (YODKWP)** which offers information, counselling, advice and advocacy not only to the person with dementia, but their family, friends and carers who are embarking on the dementia journey.
- **National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500** which offers counselling and support services to assist individuals who are caring for someone with dementia as early as possible, to avoid them feeling as though they are alone and cannot cope.
- **National Website** which provides support and services for family and carers through pages that offer specialised evidence-based dementia education programs
- **Carer Support Groups**
- **Family Carer Education**

With over 1.2 million people currently involved in the care of a person with dementia and projections indicating Australia faces a shortage of more than 150,000 paid and unpaid carers for people with dementia by 2029 the need for more services and support programs will only increase.

Ms Bennett says, “We rely on carers as 70% of people with dementia live in the community. It’s important that we are on the front foot in addressing the growing needs of people with dementia and the impact that this will have on carers now and in the future”

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Alzheimer’s Australia is the charity for people with dementia and their families and carers. As the peak body, it provides advocacy, support services, education and information. More than 342,800 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach more than half a million by 2030.

National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500
An interpreter service is available
(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)
**Dementia is a National Health Priority Area**