People with dementia may need extra support or understanding when they are interacting with staff in the community. The experiences of the person with dementia in public situations will vary but may include:

- Have problems remembering what they are doing
- Have difficulties in communicating clearly
- Have problems handling money
- Have problems navigating in complex or confusing environments
- Language and word finding impairments
- They may appear to have no symptoms at all

How staff respond to people experiencing these issues can make a real difference. People with dementia tell us repeatedly that it is the attitude of those they encounter in their communities which has the biggest impact on their lives in their community.

What do staff need to know?
A basic understanding of the impact of dementia and how to support and communicate with people who have dementia can make a huge difference both to the experience of the customer and to the staff member/s involved.

The amount of training staff need will depend upon their role. However, there are likely to be some similar themes and needs across all public-facing situations:

- Why it matters
- How to recognise that people may be having problems
- How to respond to people who may be having problems, regardless of whether there are visible symptoms of dementia
- How to communicate more effectively with people with memory problems or cognitive impairment like confusion and language difficulties
- What to do if someone needs help

This document outlines a range of resources (mostly free) which are already available to assist staff in knowing how to respond to a person with dementia.

**EXISTING RESOURCES**

**Dementia Language Guide**
Alzheimer’s Australia has developed a ‘Dementia Language Guide’ alongside people living with dementia. The aim of the guide is to promote the consistent use of appropriate inclusive and non-stigmatising language when talking about dementia.

The words used to talk about dementia can have a significant impact on how people view or treat people with dementia in our community.

Respectful language is important and recognises that dementia is not the defining aspect of someone’s life and does not prejudge their capacity or level of understanding.

**Further information about the guide can be obtained from:** www.dementiafriendly.org.au

**Is it Dementia Training Resource**
The ‘Is it Dementia’ national training resource was produced by Alzheimer’s Australia South Australia and was launched nationally in May 2013. The resource comprises a suite of 12 short films created by award winning filmmakers highlighting how dementia can impact the everyday work lives of Australians. The resource contains films, factsheets and facilitator guide questions for a range of industries including banking, transport, emergency services and retail.

The resource aims to raise awareness of dementia and educate employees working in industries on the signs of dementia and considerations in effectively communicating with a person with dementia.

**Further information about the resource can be obtained from:** http://isitdementia.com.au/
**Talk to Me Brochure**

The Talk to me brochure was developed by the Alzheimer’s Australia Dementia Advisory Committee to set out good communication tips for talking to people with dementia.

The committee hopes it will be used to help family, friends, carers, service providers, health professionals and the general community alike.

The Dementia Advisory Committee is made up entirely of people living with dementia. The committee’s role is to advise and determine the priorities of people with dementia in regards to consumer advocacy, new policy, service delivery and program development. The committee is supported by Alzheimer’s Australia.


**Dementia Enabling Environment Project (DEEP)**

Alzheimer’s Australia is working to address the gap between existing research about dementia friendly environments and current design practices via a project which is funded through the Alzheimer’s Australia National Quality Dementia Care Initiative (NQDCI). This national project aims to translate research into practice in the area of enable environments for people with dementia. The project website serves as a clearinghouse for information on:

- Resources
- Environmental audit tools
- E-newsletters
- Workshops for professionals and families
- A national library lending resource


**Building Dementia and Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods Report**

This paper identifies features that can help create optimum dementia and age-friendly outdoor environments. Those features have been compiled into the Alzheimer’s Australia NSW Dementia-Friendly Outdoor Design Checklist, which is intended to help guide planners and policy makers when developing Community Strategic Plans, Development Control Plans (DCPs) and other planning instruments.

The paper also examines the literature, discusses the issues and makes recommendations for policy change to help ensure people with dementia and their carers can remain living in and connected to their neighbourhoods for as long as possible.


**Dementia Training Study Centres (DTSC)**

The DTSC aims to improve the quality of care and support provided to people living with dementia and their families through providing development opportunities for existing and future dementia care health professionals.

The DTSC provides a dedicated range of courses, workshops, seminars, scholarships, support, and curriculum development that translates contemporary knowledge into practical, effective approaches to helping people living with dementia and their families.

University of Tasmania- Understanding Dementia MOOC

The University of Tasmania’s Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Understanding Dementia, is a 9-week online course that builds upon the latest in international research on dementia. It’s free and anyone can register. The curriculum draws upon the expertise of neuroscientists, clinicians and dementia care professionals in the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre.

University of Tasmania- Bachelor of Dementia

The Bachelor of Dementia Care is fully online and available nationally and internationally to students looking to specialise in the aged care industry and in the provision of care for people living with dementia. It will prepare you for a range of career paths in the aged care industry, as well as for entry to graduate programs in medicine and allied health, which can lead to a wide range of career paths throughout the public and private health sector.

Alzheimer’s Australia Education and Training

Alzheimer’s Australia offers a range of education and training services for people with dementia, family and friends of people with dementia, health professionals and care workers, community volunteers, members of the community and carer support group leaders.

To obtain further information regarding training and education available through your local Alzheimer’s Australia office, please contact the Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

Alzheimer’s Australia would like to acknowledge Innovations in Dementia in informing the development of this resource.