

Dementia Project



Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership
(BLPCP)

BACKGROUND

Project Time Span – 2016- 2017

The Project aimed to “Improve the awareness and recognition of Dementia and develop and implement pathways to support improved assessment, diagnosis and support for people living with Dementia, and their families within the Bendigo Loddon catchment.” Three communities were targeted for this work- Inglewood, Boort and Heathcote.

Project Objectives

- Identify consumer and carer needs in accessing local information on Dementia services and supports
- Establish locally based Dementia pathways inclusive of assessment, diagnosis and support in three locations across the catchment utilising General Practice, Community Health and small Rural Health Services as the settings
- Promotes points of access for diagnosis, information and support
- Develop and implement a training package for organisations and service providers to ensure a Dementia friendly environment and culturally sensitive service response

PARTNERS

- DHHS Regional office Loddon Mallee Region
- Bendigo Health Research facility (CHERC)
- Bendigo Health Community Dementia Nurse Consultant
- Alzheimer’s Australia
- Murray PHN
- Bendigo Loddon PCP

- St Anthony's Medical Practice
- Community member/carer with a PhD in Dementia care

METHOD

BLPCP managed the Project through the employment of the Project worker, facilitation of partnerships to support the work within the catchment and all accountability requirements. The Project benefited from the guidance of the Project Governance Group. The membership is outlined above. In addition, links were made with the John Richards Dementia initiative, Latrobe University, Bendigo.

The project methodology utilised a Knowledge to Action (KTA) framework

1. Discovery and design workshop (1) with key stakeholders to better understand current Dementia support and services in small rural communities, identification of gaps and challenges.
2. One to one consultations and focus groups to better understand consumer, carer and families' experience of living with Dementia and the potential challenges of accessing services.
3. First round knowledge evidence paper detailed increased understanding of the issues from a service provider and consumer perspective.
4. Knowledge action workshop (2) to draft local pathways through a process of co design.
5. Design of local pathways and Coordination of local pathways support access for diagnosis, information and support.
6. Dementia Friendly training package/workshop for Health services and providers about "Dementia friendly" environment and service response.
7. Knowledge Exchange workshop (3) Collaborative reflection on the process for participating service providers, consumers, carers and their families, presentation of local pathways for each community and plans for promotion and implementation.

OUTCOMES

The Project achieved a very successful outcome in Heathcote due to the engagement and participation of service providers, carers and community in a location that has an "active awareness of Dementia" due to the work that has already occurred through the health service and their connection with community.

Challenges were experienced in both the Inglewood and Boort communities due to a range of identified situations and circumstances. These include readiness and receptivity due to change of key leadership roles in the community and other local issues predominating (drought, Royal Commission into Institutional Child Abuse), change fatigue in small rural organisations and a continuing stigma of dementia within the community.