

## Travelling and Holidays with Dementia

### Planning for Enjoyment, Not Stress

The summer holidays often mean road trips, visits to the bach, or family adventures. For someone living with dementia, travel can be both exciting and unsettling. Changes to routine, unfamiliar places, and long journeys may feel overwhelming, but with preparation, holidays can still be meaningful and enjoyable.

#### Choosing the right type of travel

When planning, think about the person's comfort level. Would a short day trip or an overnight stay nearby feel easier than a long journey? Familiar places, like a family holiday spot, can bring a sense of reassurance. Sometimes, the best "holiday" is simply a change of pace rather than a change of scenery.

#### Tips for smoother journeys

- Plan travel around their best times of day – Many people with dementia feel more settled in the morning.
- Keep routines where possible – Meal times, bedtimes, and favourite activities provide structure.
- Bring familiar comforts – A favourite cushion, blanket, or photo album can help anchor them.
- Prepare essentials – Carry medicines, snacks, and a copy of their care details in one bag.
- Allow for rest – Build in breaks and avoid rushing.

#### Managing expectations

It's important to focus on what matters most: spending time together, not ticking off destinations. A short picnic by the beach or an afternoon with extended family may bring more joy than a big trip.

#### Safety and support

Consider wearing a MedicAlert bracelet or carrying an ID card explaining the person's condition, in case of emergencies. If staying with whānau, talk beforehand about how they can help – for example, offering a quiet room for rest.

Travelling with dementia does take extra planning, but with patience and flexibility, summer holidays can still create happy memories.

👉 Source: Alzheimers Society UK – Holidays and travel | Dementia NZ





# Travelling Overseas?

## Consider the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard

Airports and overseas travel can feel overwhelming at the best of times, but for people living with dementia—or any hidden disability—the crowds, noise, and tight schedules can be especially stressful. The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard is a simple, discreet way to signal that someone may need extra patience or support while travelling.

### What is the sunflower lanyard?

First launched at London's Gatwick Airport in 2016, the Sunflower Lanyard was designed to help staff identify travellers who might need a little more time, clearer communication, or extra assistance. The lanyard doesn't give special privileges or let you skip queues—it simply acts as a quiet signal to staff that you may require understanding. Today, the Sunflower Lanyard is recognised in over 70 countries, across airports, airlines, train stations, supermarkets, and even universities.

### Available in New Zealand

Many airports here in Aotearoa now offer the lanyard, including Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Queenstown, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Nelson, New Plymouth, and Invercargill. Air New Zealand staff are trained to recognise it and respond with care. You can usually request one free from an airport information desk.

### Recognised around the world

If you're heading further afield, you'll find the Sunflower Lanyard is now widely recognised internationally. Airports such as Vancouver, Montreal, Chicago, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Austin, and many others in North America and Europe all take part in the scheme. Staff are trained to quietly offer assistance—whether that's giving you more time at security, providing clearer instructions, or helping you navigate the airport.

### Tips for using the lanyard when travelling

- Ask early – Many airports provide them free at their information desk, and some allow you to request one ahead of time.
- Carry essential info – Keep travel documents, medicines, and a brief care plan together in one bag.
- Know its limits – The lanyard is not a fast-pass; it's simply a signal for extra understanding.
- Communicate with your airline – If you need specific support (like wheelchair assistance or boarding help), arrange this in advance.

### Why it matters

For people living with dementia, wearing the lanyard can reduce the stress of repeatedly explaining their condition. It creates an environment where travel is less daunting, more inclusive, and more enjoyable for everyone.

If you're planning a trip overseas this summer, consider picking up a Sunflower Lanyard at the airport—it's a small thing that can make a big difference.





# A Message From Us



Welcome to our Summer newsletter!

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding year, we'd like to take a moment to look back and share some highlights with you all.

Our Memory Walk in September was a wonderful success — the weather was kind, and we had a fantastic turnout. As always, our amazing volunteers went above and beyond, serving up delicious homemade scones and cuppas afterwards.

A big congratulations to our raffle winners, Marion from Stoke and Murray from Richmond, who were both delighted with their prizes!

Looking ahead, we're hoping to grow our volunteer team in the New Year.

We're very lucky to have a wonderful new volunteer who has gifted us a few hours each week to help with this effort. If you, or someone you know, could spare 1–2 hours a week and would like to support our work, please do get in touch — we'd love to hear from you!

This year has also seen some important developments behind the scenes.

We've updated our constitution and held a Special General Meeting where members approved the new version. All that's left now is for it to be uploaded to the Charities website, and we'll be all set.

It's been a busy year for everyone, and we're all looking forward to a well-earned break over the festive season. Thank you to all our supporters, volunteers, and friends — we couldn't do it without you.

We look forward to catching up with you all in 2026.

Our office will be closed from 12.30pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> December opening again on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026.



*From The Team at Alzheimers Nelson Tasman*







# Keeping Safe in the Heat

## Supporting Someone with Dementia in Summer

Summer in New Zealand is a time for sunshine, beaches, and enjoying the outdoors. But hot weather can also pose risks for people living with dementia. Because dementia can affect a person's ability to recognise thirst, express discomfort, or respond to changes in temperature, it's important for whānau and carers to take extra care during the warmer months.

### Why heat is a concern

Our bodies naturally cool down through sweating, but in older adults this process is less effective. Dementia can add another layer of vulnerability: a person might forget to drink water, wear heavy clothing, or not realise when they are overheating. Dehydration and heat stress can develop quickly and may appear as confusion, agitation, or sudden tiredness.

### Practical tips for carers

- Encourage regular fluids – Offer water or juice often, even if they don't ask. Ice blocks, jelly, or juicy fruits like watermelon can also help keep fluids up.
- Keep cool indoors – Draw curtains in the heat of the day, use a fan, and dress in loose cotton clothing.
- Plan outings wisely – Go out early morning or evening when it's cooler, and avoid the midday sun.
- Watch for warning signs – Flushed skin, rapid breathing, headache, or unusual confusion may signal heat exhaustion. Seek medical advice promptly.

### Comfort measures

*Simple things like a damp flannel on the forehead, sitting in the shade, or enjoying a cool bath for the feet can make a big difference. If you're heading outdoors, don't forget sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat.*

*Summer can still be enjoyed with some planning – the key is to keep the environment comfortable and check in often with your loved one.*

👉 Source: [Alzheimers NZ – Wellbeing](#) | [Alzheimers Society UK](#)





## Making Holiday Gatherings Dementia-Friendly

Family gatherings can be joyful but also overwhelming for someone with dementia. A few thoughtful adjustments can make celebrations more inclusive.

### Consider:

- Keeping background noise (TV, music, multiple conversations) to a minimum.
- Setting aside a quiet space where the person can retreat and rest if needed.
- Involving them in simple traditions, like setting the table or choosing music.
- Introducing visitors one at a time, with a reminder of who they are.
- Serving familiar foods, as tastes and routines can be very reassuring.

Small changes like these help the person feel connected, valued, and included while reducing stress for everyone.

## Dates to remember

### Rabbit Island Picnic

We hope you will join us for our annual picnic and enjoy a relaxing afternoon by the sea.



**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 11am**

Bring your blankets, chairs and a picnic lunch, throw in your sunscreen, towels and togs if you dare to go for a swim!



**Al-Zingers Music  
Sessions with Colette**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February  
2-3pm**

## The Gentle Shift: How to Redirect with Respect

Sometimes a person living with dementia gets stuck on a topic, concern, or activity. Redirecting is a skill that can ease distress — when done gently and kindly.

Validate first: “You’re worried about your coat — I’d be looking too.”

Gently shift focus: “Let’s look after that after morning tea.”

Use sensory distractions — music, touch, movement.

Don’t argue, dismiss, or correct.

If one approach doesn’t work, try another later.

Redirection isn’t about control — it’s about comfort.

“Meet them where they are, not where you want them to be.”

“

Being kind means responding to the needs of others — and people can be kind, no matter how old or young they are.

Mister Rogers



# Coffee & Chat Social Groups

For more information on these groups please contact us on (03) 546 7702

These social groups for people living with dementia and their carers were created to provide carers and people living with dementia the opportunity for social engagement and outings together in a safe and supportive environment.

**No Cafes in January**

## Nelson

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**Alz Cafe**  
**Mitre10 Mega Cafe**

2nd Thursday of the month  
10.30am - 12pm

### Nelson Library Drop-Ins

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month  
10am - 11.30am

## Motueka

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**Alz Cafe**  
**Toad Hall**

1st Wednesday of the month  
10am - 11.30am



Coffee doesn't  
ask silly questions.  
Coffee understands.

## Richmond

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**Zink Cafe**

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month  
10.30am - 12pm

### Richmond Library Drop-Ins

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month  
9.30am - 11am

### Dementia Friendly Richmond Library Group

Fortnightly on Tuesdays  
10.30am - 11.30am

## Moving On

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Friendship and support for people  
who have been carers.  
Meets monthly for lunch  
on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

New members are always welcome  
- for more information contact:  
Rae Hill on 03 547 6548  
Or email Karen at: [karenmw47@gmail.com](mailto:karenmw47@gmail.com)

A photo of their final get together for 2025  
at the Brick Eatery.







# Carer Support Groups

To attend a Support Group, contact Heather or Sue on 03 546 7702

These carer support groups were created to get together with other carers who understand what you are going through; establish connections with others who are also on a dementia journey, and create additional peer support networks and get support and advice from our community Dementia Advisors.

## Richmond

### Our Lady of the Bays Catholic Parish

10am - 12pm

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month

2nd December 2025

**NO SUPPORT GROUP IN JANUARY**

3rd February 2026

3rd March 2026

## Stoke

### Baptist Church

10.30am - 12pm

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month

3rd December 2025

**NO SUPPORT GROUP IN JANUARY**

4th February 2026

4th March 2026

## Tahunanui

### 75 Tahunanui Drive

10am - 11.30am

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month

4th December 2025

**NO SUPPORT GROUP IN JANUARY**

5th February 2026

5th March 2026

## Tahunanui

### 75 Tahunanui Drive

10am - 12pm

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month

9th December 2025

**NO SUPPORT GROUP IN JANUARY**

10th February 2026

10th March 2026

## Motueka

### Jack Inglis Friendship Hospital

10am - 12pm

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month

17th December 2025

21st January 2026

18th February 2026

18th March 2026

Be gentle with  
yourself. You're  
doing your best,  
and that's all  
that matters.



# We thank the following for their ongoing support

Our sincere gratitude to all who have made donations to Alzheimers Nelson Tasman. Your donations assist us to provide advice, support and information to an ever-increasing number of families living with dementia in the Nelson/Tasman area.



**Rātā  
Foundation**



**Lottery Grants Board**  
Te Puna Tahua  
LOTTO FUNDS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

**Te Whatu Ora**  
**Health New Zealand**  
Nelson Marlborough



**Nelson City Council**  
te kaunihera o whakatū



**tasman** | Te Kaunihera o  
district council **te tai o Aorere**

## RG & EF MacDonald Trust

### Alzheimers Nelson Tasman Annual Membership Subscription:

Individual or Household \$25.00  
Corporate Membership \$35.00

#### Donations in lieu of flowers

Thank you to all the families who have requested donations to Alzheimers Nelson Tasman be made in lieu of flowers. These donations help us to continue giving support, information and education to those families who are caring for someone living with dementia.

### Donation/Membership Form

Title (please circle) Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss

First Name: .....

Surname: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Post Code: .....

Phone: .....

Email: .....

☐ I want to help you to provide valuable services and enclose a donation of \$.....

☐ I have donated \$..... via internet banking to Alzheimers Nelson Tasman's Westpac Account: 03 1709 0025074 00

*(Please ensure you still send us this form so we can track your donation and issue you with a receipt).*

☐ I would like to become a member and enclose my subscription of \$.....

☐ I would like to become a member and have paid my subscription of \$..... via internet banking.

☐ I would like to commit to a monthly donation of \$..... (please send details).

☐ Please send me information on making a gift in my Will.

75 Tahunanui Drive, Tahunanui, Nelson 7011 Phone: 03 546 7702

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 8.30am-4pm

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