



## **Alzheimers NZ: Submission on the Fair Pay Agreements Bill**

**May 2022**

### **Introduction**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Fair Pay Agreements Bill. Alzheimers NZ supports the intention of the Fair Pay Agreements Bill with its potential to bring about many of the much-needed improvements to the dementia mate wareware workforce.

### **About Alzheimers NZ**

Alzheimers NZ is well acquainted with dementia mate wareware workforce issues. We have been raising awareness of dementia mate wareware, supporting people with dementia mate wareware to live well, and advocating for more and better services for all New Zealanders affected by dementia mate wareware for over 35 years.

### **Dementia mate wareware and workforce issues**

Around 70,000 people have dementia mate wareware in Aotearoa NZ. Most live in their own homes, with around 30 percent living in residential care.

The current workforce does not meet current needs and will not meet the needs of the forecasted reach 100,000 people with dementia mate wareware in 2030.<sup>1</sup> Numbers of people of Māori, Pasifika, or Asian descent are all projected to increase by at least 70% during that period, making the issues even more urgent.<sup>2</sup>

The workforce problems, particularly in relation to home and community services, have been recognised elsewhere, notably in the Health and Disability Review (p. 143). As well as staff shortages, the dementia mate wareware workforce is characterised by:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M'au *et al*, (2021) *Dementia Economic Impact Report*

<sup>2</sup> M'au *et al*, (2021) *Dementia Economic Impact Report*

<sup>3</sup> See Ravenswood, K., Douglas, J. & Ewertowska, T. (2021) *The New Zealand Care Workforce Survey 2019 Report*. Auckland.

- a major power imbalance
- large numbers of employers
- poor training
- ageing staff
- largely female workers
- many new migrants
- poor pay and conditions
- irregular hours
- little job security

The *Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan*, put together by the dementia mate wareware sector and endorsed by Cabinet in November 2021, calls for a workforce strategy and comments that:

*Significant numbers of additional staff will be needed ... . Recruitment and retention is already a problem given current remuneration levels, poor access to education opportunities, and an ageing workforce. There is no workforce strategy to make sure there are adequate numbers of people with the right training to deliver quality services for this rapidly growing population.*<sup>4</sup>

### **Alzheimers NZ support for intent of the Fair Pay Agreements Bill**

While the Fair Pay Agreements Bill does not offer a workforce strategy for dementia mate wareware, it can help ameliorate some of the current workforce issues. Specifically, Alzheimers NZ supports:

- the intention to remedy some of the weaknesses of Aotearoa NZ labour markets, particularly its intention to improve conditions for vulnerable workforces;
- the capacity for occupation wide minimum employment terms;
- the capacity to improve jobs with inadequate working conditions, low wages, and low labour productivity; and,

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<sup>4</sup> Alzheimers NZ; Dementia NZ; Mate Wareware Advisory Rōpū; NZ Dementia Foundation, (2021) *Improving dementia mate wareware services in Aotearoa New Zealand: Action Plan*, Wellington, New Zealand: Dementia NGOs.

- better labour market outcomes for Māori, Pacific peoples, young people, and people with disabilities who are over-represented in jobs where low pay, job security, health and safety, and upskilling are significant issues.

## **Conclusion**

We look forward to positive improvements to the dementia care workforce and are pleased at the opportunities the Fair Pay Agreements Bill provides to bring these about.