



Alzheimers NZ's recommendations for Budget 2023

Alzheimers NZ is urging the Government to use Budget 2023 to provide \$9 million/year to remedy the urgent and immediate funding gap in community-based dementia mate wareware services.

The \$9 million is an essential first step in ensuring community-based dementia mate wareware services remain in place and viable to support the implementation of the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan.

Urgent and immediate funding required

New Zealand's dementia sector faces an urgent and immediate problem that must be addressed now.

Aotearoa New Zealand's ageing population is placing increasing pressure on community-based dementia mate wareware services delivered by local Alzheimers and Dementia organisations.

This is creating two major problems:

1. Based on the [Dementia Economic Impact Report 2020](#), existing services are only able to support 10.6% of those who need help. As many as 27,000 New Zealanders and about the same number of care partners are missing out on much-needed community support, which puts additional and totally unnecessary pressure on struggling families.
2. This issue is even more serious and urgent because historic underfunding, outdated contracts, and increasing pressure on other revenue sources have put our community-based dementia mate wareware services at imminent risk of collapse.

Community-based dementia mate wareware services delivered by Alzheimers and Dementia organisations need an immediate injection of \$9 million/year to

remain viable and to make a start on improving equitable access to their services.

We cannot stress strongly enough that without this funding, these local community-based dementia mate wareware services will become financially unsustainable. This is not a long run issue; it is likely to happen in the immediate future.

If left unchecked, this situation will only get worse – more people will miss out on services, further pressure will be placed on the core health sector, and implementation of the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan will be undermined.

We urge you to provide this funding in Budget 2023. A full briefing on the issues facing our community-based dementia mate wareware services and the need for the additional funding is in the attached Alzheimers NZ and Dementia NZ Funding Case, which was also provided to you earlier this year.

Dementia mate wareware is a large and growing problem for Aotearoa New Zealand

Dementia mate wareware is one of the major health conditions of the 21st century. There is no cure, and none is currently on the horizon. Dementia mate wareware has an enormous impact on the lives of people affected by it, their families and care partners, the health system, and the economy.

While dementia mate wareware is not an inevitable part of ageing, age is the most significant risk factor. With a growing and ageing population, the number of New Zealanders living with dementia mate wareware is increasing at an unprecedented rate.

An estimated 70,000 of us were living with dementia mate wareware in 2020 and this number is expected to more than double by 2050. This number will increase faster among Māori, Pasifika, and Asian communities, because those

communities are ageing faster than the general population. This will lead to significant equity issues for these dementia communities.

The 2022 World Alzheimers Report [Life after diagnosis: Navigating treatment, care, and support](#) focuses on the importance of post-diagnosis support and outlines the impact of diagnosis on people living with dementia. The Report also highlights that government's leadership and implementing national dementia plans are crucial to improve post-diagnosis support.

Community-based dementia mate wareware services are essential

Alzheimers and Dementia organisations are the primary source of community-based dementia mate wareware services in all communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

They deliver a range of essential services to support people living with dementia mate wareware, their family, and whanau. Referral to these services is a core part of each former DHB's Cognitive Impairment pathway.

These services make a positive difference in the lives of people with dementia mate wareware. They help people understand the diagnosis and prepare for the journey, make decisions about matters that are important to them, modify the risks, and maintain their independence, thus ensuring they have a better quality of life and can navigate the various transitions along the dementia mate wareware journey.

Without this help, people with dementia mate wareware are likely to experience a faster cognitive decline, adding more pressure to already burnt-out care partners. Without support, people with dementia mate wareware will experience more acute health events, seek more support from primary, secondary, and tertiary health care, and increase their need for aged residential care. This will add more pressure to the healthcare system.

The problem is urgent and will only get worse

Right now, too many New Zealanders living with dementia mate wareware cannot get the help they need. Access is inequitable for Māori, Pasifika, Asian communities, and those in rural communities. Demand is increasing due to the ageing population, and funding is inadequate and reducing.

Growing cost and funding pressures make it impossible for these organisations to match payrates of care workers or health professionals in other parts of the sector, provide sufficient professional development or invest in telecommunications and technology to build their resilience and innovation.

A 3% funding increase does not solve the problem

The recent 3% increase in contract funding does nothing to address the CPI increase over the past 12 months. Adding 3% on top of the existing contracts makes the variation in contract funding across the country even worse and exacerbates the inequities. It certainly will not help the organisation that does not have a contract or contract funding.

What will help is an immediate increase in contract funding for community-based dementia mate wareware services of \$9 million/year.

As outlined, the need is urgent and immediate, and the amount is modest.

This \$9 million/year will stabilise community Alzheimers and dementia services so that local organisations can continue to deliver essential services, play their part in Pae Ora and localities, and support the implementation of the Dementia Mate Wareware Plan.

Next steps

This funding will do no more than provide a short-term band aid. It is in no way a sustainable solution for the sector. We are now working to describe and cost

community-based dementia services for people with dementia mate wareware that are accessible, equitable and can be applied nationally through locality commissioning. We expect to complete that work in 2023.

Conclusion

Chronic underfunding of community-based dementia mate wareware services and increasing demand mean only a fraction of the people needing help can get it from their local Alzheimers or dementia organisation.

These organisations are also struggling to survive and unable to invest in their own resilience and innovation.

We urge the Government to make an urgent and initial investment of \$9 million in Budget 2023 to address these immediate problems, so that the dementia sector can support more people who desperately need help.

Providing that funding urgently would be in keeping with Cabinet's endorsement of the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan. Ignoring this urgent request undermines the integrity of that endorsement and risks the loss of essential services at a time of rapidly increasing demand.