



Advocacy toolkit

Taking action

Overview

Following the outcome of the 2023 General Election, now is a great time to start talking to your local Member of Parliament (MP) and other local community leaders if you haven't already!

The coalition agreement between National and NZ First has some provision for further support for dementia mate wareware and the aged care sector, so we need to do everything we can to help keep this top of mind and encourage the Government to act.

This toolkit has been developed to support Alzheimers NZ Members' advocacy activities. It provides examples and templates to guide your advocacy efforts on dementia mate wareware challenge.

Effective advocacy influences the decision makers who make policy, and Aotearoa New Zealand urgently needs better policy around responding to the dementia mate wareware challenge our country faces. This resource will help us all channel our advocacy activities to give them more impact.

What is advocacy?

All of us 'do' advocacy. Every time we stand up for people living with dementia mate wareware, we are advocating.

Advocacy is a combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political and community support for a particular goal. Action may be taken by, or on behalf of, individuals and groups to create living conditions which promote health (WHO, 2005).

Our advocacy efforts play a critical role in influencing Alzheimers and dementia mate wareware policy at the local and national levels. Working together we are making an impact.

What do we want to achieve?

Effective advocacy aimed at policy change is key to secure high-quality support for people with dementia mate wareware in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our job is to ensure the Government has all the correct and important information and can make well-informed, evidence-based decisions when considering developing and implementing policy.

We want the Government to recognise dementia mate wareware is a health priority that has a range of major impacts, and to take the necessary steps to deliver on our vision.

Our goal is to improve the wellbeing of people with dementia mate wareware and decrease the impact of this health condition across Aotearoa New Zealand by influencing policy and practice.

Taking action

Alzheimers NZ works with Government directly at a national level, engaging with Ministers, MPs, and officials. But it is also important we broaden that circle of influence to include what is happening in the dementia mate wareware space at a community level. This is particularly relevant with this Government, which focuses on community-managed healthcare model.

We need to ensure decision-makers at both a local and national level understand and appreciate what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how doing it will create many benefits for so many people, whānau, and communities.

To do that, we need to work together, with a clear plan and a commitment to taking the actions that are necessary. Connecting grassroots like you and community members to advocate on campaigns and issues you are passionate about in your local communities can help us achieve our goal.

Collectively we can leverage each other's activities and thus greatly strengthen our voice. If we can effectively connect with politicians and policy makers at both a local and national level, and with other community leaders, we can have a big impact!

Government

Alzheimers NZ welcomes the provisions in the [Coalition Agreement's priorities](#) to focus on the aged care sector to improve the lives of our seniors.

These provisions are:

- Engage openly and constructively with the aged-care sector.
- Undertake a select committee inquiry into aged care provision to include supporting people with early onset conditions and what asset thresholds are appropriate in 2023/24.
- Work on establishing bipartisan agreement to fund both care and dementia beds that New Zealand needs now and with a focus on the long-term needs by 2040.

Alzheimers NZ's recommendations to Government are outlined in the [Briefing to the incoming Minister](#) (BIM) we co-authored with Dementia NZ.

We ask the Government to provide support that will reduce the number of people living with dementia mate wareware and its implications for the economy, health, and social systems.

Simple ideas to help make a difference

Use these **key messages** in your communications with politicians and your community, to help with your mahi (work).

- Dementia mate wareware is a growing problem for Aotearoa New Zealand. With an ageing population, the number of Kiwis living with dementia mate wareware is increasing at an unprecedented rate.
- Aotearoa New Zealand's ageing population is increasing. By 2034, about 1.2 million people or more than [one in five New Zealanders will be aged 65 years or over.](#)
- Four out of five New Zealanders know or have known someone living with dementia mate wareware. By 2050, the number of New Zealanders living with dementia mate wareware will rise to 170,000 and it will cost the country almost \$6 billion in today's dollars, if nothing changes. It will hit our Māori, Pacific, and Asian communities hardest, creating major health equity issues.
- Call for action: Government must do these three things now to stem the worst impacts:
 - Fully implement and fund the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan.
 - Provide funding of \$127.3 million over the three years 2024-2026 in Budget 2024 to Alzheimers and Dementia organisations through nationally consistent contract(s) to deliver community-based services.
 - Develop a health strategy and plan for an integrated continuum of care for older people.
- These three recommendations will reduce the number of people living with dementia mate wareware in future, provide better and more equitable support for people with this health condition, relieve pressure on the health system, and reduce the future cost of dementia mate wareware to Government.

If we all keep sharing the same key messages in our communications, there is more chance they will be heard!

Meet with your local MP and community leaders

One way you can help advocate for people living with dementia mate wareware is building a relationship with your local MP and community leaders such as your local mayor, councillors, religious leaders, and your counterparts in other community NGOs.

An MP is your representative in Parliament. You can call or email the office of your local MP to request a meeting. Make sure you prepare for the meeting and clearly define its purpose and goals.

Your local MP may be a newly-elected. They may also be unfamiliar with dementia mate wareware and the challenges faced by the sector. So, when you get the opportunity to meet your MP:

- Keep it simple but take the time to explain the work your organisation is doing. You can share stories to inspire actions and you could even invite them to visit the service to help understand the reality of what you're trying to do.
- Get to the point quickly and use the time constructively leading with most important points. Show that you know how valuable their time is.
- Firstly, explain why you wanted to meet with them. They can use their voice/position to help us to help the rapidly growing number of New Zealanders living with dementia mate wareware and their care partners.
- Use available data, facts, case studies. If possible, invite a person with dementia mate wareware or their care partner to go to the meeting with you.
- Mention your call to action – the thing you want the person with whom you are meeting to do – and encourage them to take action.

This helps them understand the work we do, why what we are asking for is important, and how they can help the cause at a local and national level. Use the meeting to outline the benefits of what you are asking for, and the risks of continued inaction on addressing dementia mate wareware challenge.

After the meeting, remember to send a note of thanks to the person with whom you met. Include in it some of the key points you covered in the meeting and gently reinforce the call to action. Follow up your visit with a phone call or subsequent letters if your requests are not met.

More tips on [going to meetings](#) and [talking with your MP](#) are on our website.

Who is your local MP?

The list of electorates according to local Alzheimers organisations.

Alzheimers organisation	Electorate	Name	Electorate Phone number	Email
North Island				
Eastern Bay of Plenty	East Coast	Dana Kirkpatrick	N/A	Dana.Kirkpatrick@parliament.govt.nz
Gisborne/Tairāwhiti	East Coast	Dana Kirkpatrick	N/A	Dana.Kirkpatrick@parliament.govt.nz
Manawatu	Palmerston North	Tangi Utikere	06 356 5958	Tangi.Utikere@parliament.govt.nz
Northland	Whangārei	Dr Shane Reti	09 438 9992	Shane.Reti@parliament.govt.nz
Taranaki	New Plymouth	David MacLeod	06 758 2919	David.MacLeod@parliament.govt.nz
Tauranga/WBOP	Tauranga	Sam Uffindell	07 577 0923	Sam.Uffindell@parliament.govt.nz
Wairarapa	Wairarapa	Mike Butterick	027 357 7945	Mike.Butterick@parliament.govt.nz
Whanganui	Whanganui	Carl Bates	N/A	Carl.Bates@parliament.govt.nz
South Island				
Marlborough	Kaikōura	Stuart Smith	03 579 3204	Stuart.Smith@parliament.govt.nz
Nelson/Tasman	Nelson	Rachel Boyack	03 539 0480	rachel.boyack@parliament.govt.nz
Otago	Dunedin	Rachel Brooking	04 817 8807	rachel.brooking@parliament.govt.nz
South Canterbury	Rangitata	James Meager	0274 275 197	James.Meager@parliament.govt.nz
Southland	Invercargill	Penny Simmonds	03 218 5060	Penny.Simmonds@parliament.govt.nz

The complete list of New Zealand MPs

There are 123 MPs representing 6 parliamentary parties in the 54th New Zealand Parliament. [Click here](#) to see the list of the current MPs.

More information on how to find contact details for MPs and how to address people in Parliament when you correspond with them is available on [NZ Parliament website](#).

Local media

Writing a letter to your local newspaper is another good way to bring attention to dementia mate wareware. Local newspapers may have a submission form on their website that steps you through the process.

If you know someone living with dementia mate wareware or somebody in their whānau is willing to share their story publicly, this will increase your chance of getting media coverage.

Social media

Use your social media channels to help raise awareness of what is needed for people living with dementia mate wareware in your community.

You could tag your local MP or other leaders/influencers with whom you have a connection, or even – with appropriate permissions - share stories from some of the whānau you've supported about the benefits of your service – photos of people are great to share impact!

Use these social media tiles and the above key messages to help share your story.

We're urging Government to take **three key actions** to stem the worst impacts of dementia



Recommendation one

Fully fund and implement the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan



Recommendation two

Properly fund community Alzheimers and Dementia organisations to ensure Kiwis can get the help they urgently need




Recommendation three

Create a better plan to improve health care services for older Kiwis



For example:

 We provide vital support services to whānau in our community who are living with dementia mate wareware – but we need more support from Government to keep doing this.

We urge Government to fully implement and fund the Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan, to fund Alzheimers and Dementia organisations, and develop of a health strategy for a better care for older people.

Do not forget to add hashtags on the appropriate channels. Try [#alzheimersnz](#) [#dementia](#) [#matewareware](#) or start a new one specific to your community. You can also tag your local MP and your other influential connections.

Or, keep an eye out on the Alzheimers NZ social media pages and share (or retweet) these posts and add your own commentary.

More ways to advocate

Here are some other ways to help you with your advocacy work. **Click on the icons** to download tips and templates to make it easy:



Write to your MP



Connect with your MP
in person



Write a letter to the
Editor



Go to a political meeting and
ask a question



Use social media

You can share these templates with your community, so they support you too!

Useful information to help:

- [Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan](#)
- [Dementia Declaration](#)
- [Dementia Economic Impact Report 2020](#)
- [Data for Aotearoa New Zealand](#)
- [Booklets and factsheets about dementia](#)

For more support reach out to:

Policy Advisor

policy@alzheimers.org.nz

Comms Advisor

comms@alzheimers.org.nz