



Alzheimers New Zealand

Position paper

Fund community-based dementia services appropriately

Our position

We urge the Government to invest a total of \$127.3 million in New Zealand's 17 Alzheimers and community-based dementia support services over three years so they can respond to the rapidly growing demand within their local communities. Funding community-based dementia services, which is also one of priority actions in the [Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan](#), would relieve rapidly growing pressure on the more expensive health system.



The problem

The country's community-based dementia services provide critical support for people living with dementia and their care partners/family, but they can't cater to the existing demand we are experiencing now, never mind the 240 per cent increase in dementia cases New Zealand can expect by 2050, up from an estimate of 70,000 in 2020. The problem is chronic, long-term under-funding by successive Governments – one service in the Wairarapa receives no Government funding at all – and many of them are struggling to survive.

The background

Government funding for dementia support services only covers the operational cost to support a fraction (13 per cent) of the people living with dementia. As a result, some 37,600 people with dementia² can't get the community support they need because the community services are significantly under-resourced. Without this community support, families struggle, and carers experience increased stress and mental health challenges. If properly funded, these community services would cost just \$11.11 a day, are far cheaper than aged residential care or a hospital-level bed.

The solution

We urge Government to invest in our woefully under-funded community-based dementia services so they can meet the rapidly growing need and relieve significant and growing pressure on the much more expensive health system. It is estimated a total of \$127.3 million is needed over three years to support a new service model that allows these organisations to deliver early and ongoing support services to 37,400 families. This investment would help to free-up much-needed hospital and emergency department beds, and provide many thousands of New Zealanders with the care they desperately need.

² Of the 83,000 people estimated to have dementia in 2025, 11,000 (13 per cent) people receive services from local Alzheimers and Dementia organisations, 25,000 (30 per cent) are in residential care, and if 20 per cent are able to pay for their services and/or receive support from one of the pilot programs. This leaves an estimated 37,600 without support.