



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 over three years in New Zealand's 17 Alzheimers and dementia community-based dementia services. This amount includes the current \$11.8 million per year for these services, which is not enough to meet the rapidly growing demand in their communities. Funding these services is a priority action in the [Dementia Mate Wareware Action Plan 2026-2031](#). This investment will allow these services to keep pace with community needs and help relieve rapidly growing pressure on the more expensive health system.



The problem

Community-based dementia services provide critical support for people with dementia, their families, and care partners. They help people through their dementia journey, stay active, and live independently at home for as long as possible. But these services cannot meet the existing demand, never mind the 170,000 dementia cases New Zealand can expect by 2050. The problem is chronic, long-term underfunding by successive Governments have left many services struggling to survive. The Wairarapa service receives no Government funding at all.

The background

Government funding for these services covers only the operational cost for about 13 per cent of people with dementia. This leaves around 37,600 people with dementia² without the help they need. Without support, families struggle, carers face more stress and people with dementia may decline faster, leading to more hospital visits and added pressure on the already overloaded health system. If properly funded, these services would cost just \$11.11 a day, 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 growing demand. A total of \$127.3 million over three years, including the current \$11.8 million per year, is needed to support a new service model. This investment will enable these services to deliver early and ongoing support to 37,400 families, help free-up hospital and emergency department beds, help people stay at home longer, prevent health crises, and better support families and care partners.

² Of the 83,000 people estimated to have dementia in 2025, around 11,000 people (13 per cent) receive support from local Alzheimers and Dementia organisations, 25,000 (30 per cent) are in residential care, and, it is assumed, 20 per cent are able to pay for their services and/or receive support from one of the other programmes.

This leaves an estimated 37,600 people without support.