

Ageing Australia State Conference WA

Future-Ready Workforce: Innovations in Aged Care Training and Measurable Impact

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Facts and Stats

**Every
3 seconds**
someone in the world
develops dementia.

In 2026, there are
an estimated
446,500 people
living with dementia
in Australia.

In 2026 there are
an estimated
29,000 people
with young onset
dementia in Australia.

By 2054 it is
estimated that
812,500 people
will have developed
dementia in Australia.

Facts and Stats

- In Australia, 54% of all permanent residents in aged care are living with dementia. This equates to approximately 131,000 people.
- Dementia is the primary reason many people enter permanent residential aged care, with the rate climbing even higher when including those with moderate-to-severe cognitive impairment.

Dementia Australia is the national peak body

- Advocate to influence policy change
- Provide a voice for people impacted
- Trusted source of information
- Awareness Raising
- Thought leadership
- Fundraising and philanthropy
- Research
- Counselling and Support Programs
- Education



Dementia refresh

Dementia is an umbrella term to describe a **set of symptoms caused by brain disease.**

Typical signs of dementia are **gradual changes in thinking that get in the way of a person doing everyday things.**

No two people are affected in exactly the same way.

It is not a normal part of ageing.



Common symptoms

- Memory problems, particularly remembering recent events
- Increasing confusion and disorientation
- Reduced concentration
- Personality or behaviour changes
- Apathy and withdrawal or depression
- Loss of ability to do everyday tasks
- Problems with abstract thinking
- Perception issues

People living with dementia may have difficulty with

- Expressing their needs
- Finding words or constructing sentences
- Reading and understanding written information
- Trouble processing information
- Changes in perception or sensory awareness
- Slower response time



- We provide dementia specialist education to more than 20,000 health, aged care and disability workers each year.
- Funded and Fee-For-Service
- We bring a person-centred approach to professional development and training, informed by the experience of people impacted by dementia, latest research and practices.



World-leading Specialised Dementia Care Training

- Dementia Essentials
- EDIE and D-Esc – immersive VR experience building empathy and understanding
- Talk with Ted – AI communication simulator
- Dine with Ted
- Ask Annie – mobile, on-demand learning

Building capability



Professional Development and Training

Equipping staff with specialised dementia care training

Across industries:

- Aged care
- Allied health
- Disability care
- Home and community care
- Hospitals
- Retirement living
- University and TAFE

Supporting roles:

- Aged care decision-makers
- Aged care frontline staff
- Allied health assistants
- Dietitians
- Disability care staff
- Diversional therapists
- Enrolled nurses
- Facility managers/coordinators
- GPs and other referrers

Supporting roles:

- Lifestyle officers
- Occupational therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Practice nurses
- Registered nurses
- Residential care workers
- Social workers
- Speech therapists
- Support staff

Dementia Essentials

Accredited training for those providing support to people living with dementia

- Nationally accredited unit of competency
- Available as face to face or online
- Combines theory and practical components
- Participants learn how to create supportive environments for people living with dementia and those that care for them



Outcomes – Dementia Essentials



98% agreed or strongly agreed that **they developed the skills expected** from this program



99% built on their current knowledge and skills



98% said they learned to how to **plan and manage their work**



Technology and dementia

For over 15 years Dementia Australia has become a world-leader in developing technology tools for immersive education, supporting engagement, building empathy and awareness raising

Visit dementia.org.au/technology for more information



Educational Dementia Immersive Experience

EDIE has been found to improve:

- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Empathy
- Understanding of care needs



Enabling EDIE

- Dementia can change a person's perception of their environment, making it hard to process visual cues, navigate familiar places or adjust to new ones.
- EDIE is an immersive workshop that enables participants to see the world through the eyes of a person living with dementia using VR technology.
- Participants reported feeling more immersed in VR experienced greater **improvement in understanding** of dementia care environments.
- Carers from non-English backgrounds can benefit from immersive technology **over and above** standard training methods to achieve improved understanding.

Klem Hedenig, Dementia Australia facilitator has successfully delivered dementia education in remote/regional locations in the Northern Territory and Western Australia for over 9 years



“As a result of this training, I have become a more professional/respectful/mindful carer. The segment on communication was eye-opening.”

“I have also reconnected with my Mum (who has Dementia) and have been able have care for her so much better. I used to argue with her – now I just listen - I don’t correct her, I just ‘am’ with her, and focus on her needs.”

Testimonials

“ As discussed today I would like to let you know about a shift that I really noticed in the XXX wing following the EDIE training. I noticed staff taking more time, being calmer with residents, validating their emotional experiences, and just generally being more supportive of residents rather than being firm and directive with their interactions.....

I also had feedback from a family member in the career support group last night, where she reflected that she had noticed a massive shift in the approach staff had taken in the past week, which she had noticed while spending time with her mum. She had also had a conversation with a carer who has worked at XXX for a long time, who told this family member that her approach and perceptions of how to best support residents with Dementia had completely shifted following the EDIE training.”

Kind Regards
Natalie James
Ph D student Clinical Psychology/provisional Psychologist
Mental Health Trainee Swinburne University
School of Psychology, Faculty of Health, Deakin University



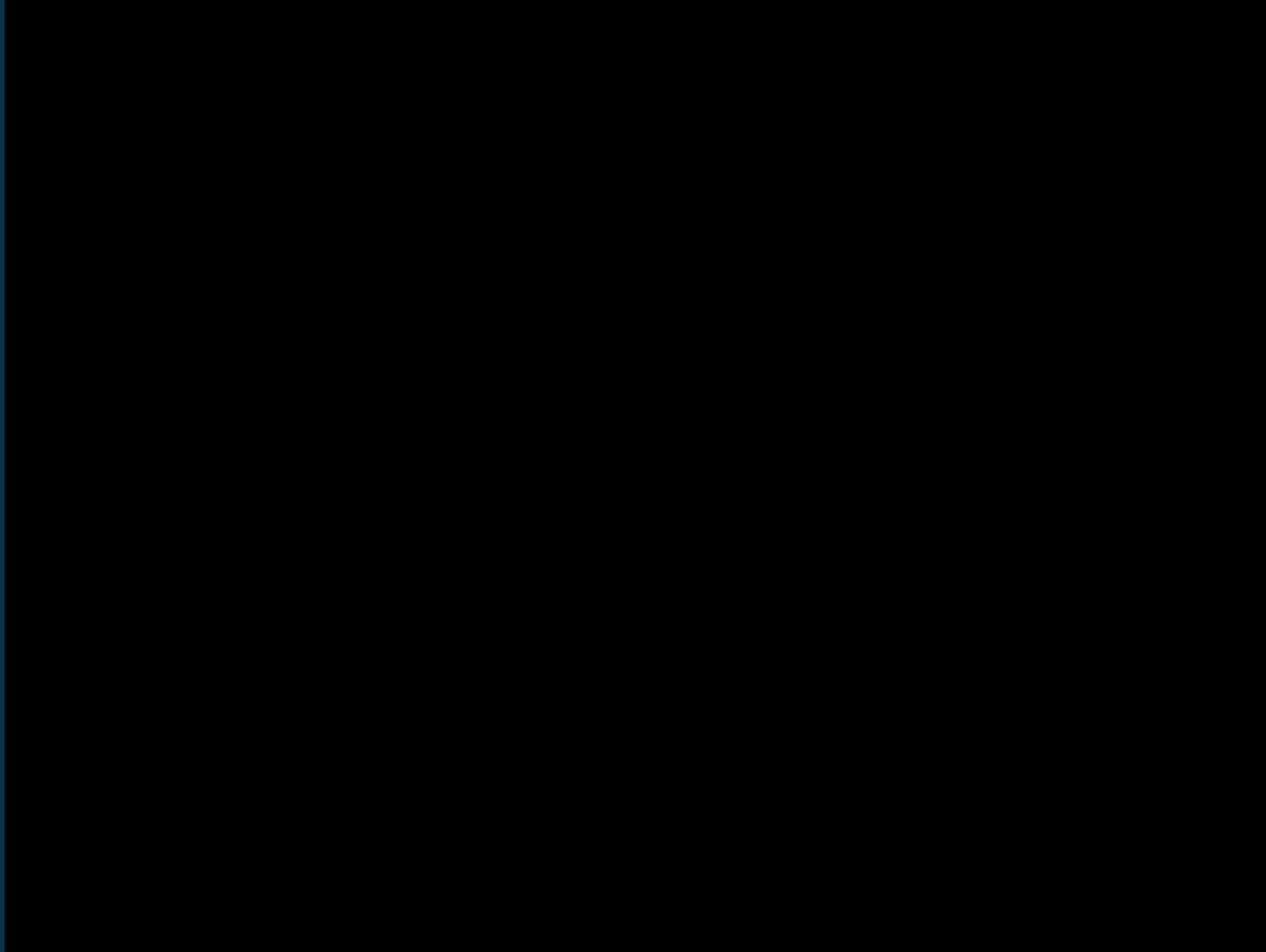
D-Esc

Virtual reality (VR) training helping care workers to respond to changed behaviours

- D-Esc (short for de-escalate)
- VR simulates a behavioural emergency for an aged care worker
- combines VR experience with engaging discussions via workshop
- develop person-centered de-escalation skills
- gain deep insights and practical knowledge to use in their daily practice



D-Esc sample



Our impact – D-Esc



Between 1 July 2025 – 23 March 2026



5,738 / 6,000 commencements



490+ courses delivered



400+ aged care services across the country



88% of participants would recommend the workshop to a colleague

Outcomes – D-Esc



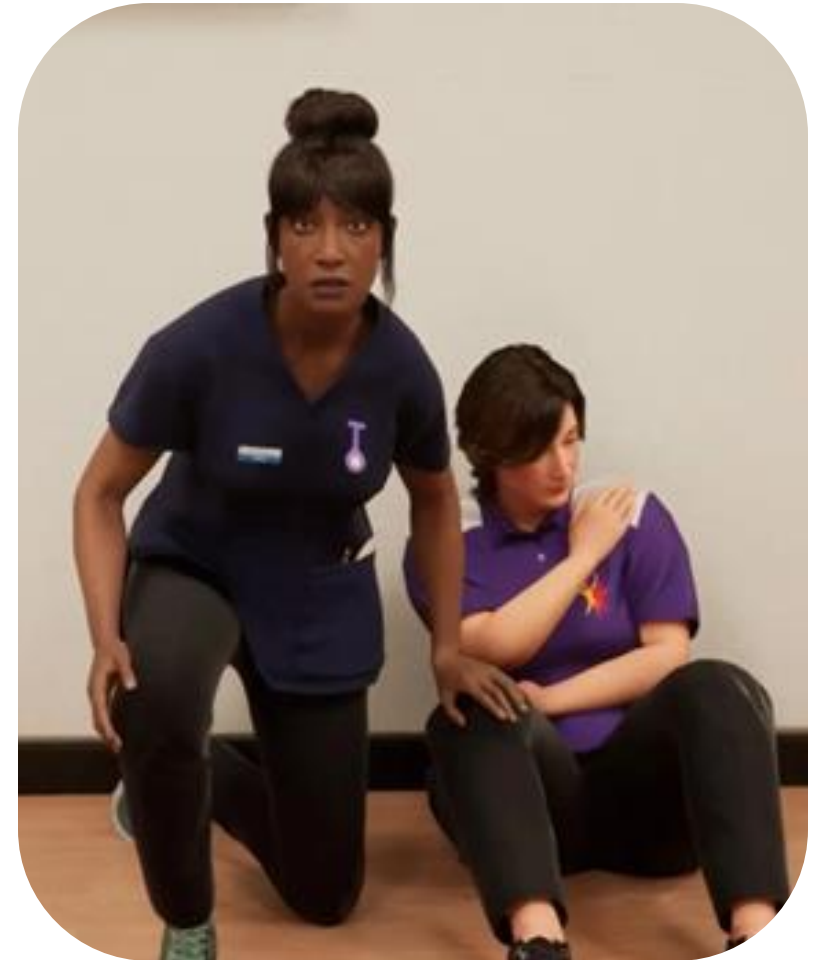
96% agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop would **improve their practice**



76% increase in knowledge to changed behaviours in a person living with dementia



72% increase in confidence to respond to changed behaviours in a person living with dementia



D-Esc feedback



Feedback from the aged care sector

- "Very worthwhile course. Has given me confidence to be able to provide care for people living with dementia."
- "Very inciteful. This should be compulsory for all my colleagues."
- "We need more of this type of training for care and interactions. Keep growing this, best immersive experience."
- "This type of program should be done every year and involve more participants."
- "I learned a lot of value ways to help de-escalate residents and have more confident in how I could approach the situation."

Talk with Ted

- For people living with dementia, it can become harder to express yourself and be understood by other people.
- Talk with Ted is a realistic AI dementia communication simulator that provides a safe and effective way for participants to practice dementia communication skills.



Why communication matters

Effective communication can:

- Reduce distress and frustration
- Support dignity and independence
- Strengthen relationships
- Improve wellbeing for everyone involved



The challenge is
to support Ted
to have a
shower



5 Conversation Milestones

1. Use Teds Name

2. Introduction and Orientation: Carer to introduce themselves with name and role

3. Listen to clues, emotional cues and validate emotions

4. Acknowledge personhood: Engage with Ted's life story

5. Support choices and decision making:
Offer Ted choice in decision to shower



Participant feedback

"I changed my approach and adapted what I learned..... similar to the interaction with Ted to a real-life client to get her in the shower.... It worked. Client was so happy."

"I feel empowered that I can make a difference to people's lives"

Evaluation of Ted Deakin University

1. Carers developed an emotional connection with Ted
2. Learnings retained after 8 weeks
3. Carers implemented the learnings in their practice
4. Changes in practice were well received by people living with dementia

Dine with Ted

Using VR and avatar technology, participants see the dining experience from two perspectives: as a care worker, and from the point of view of Ted, who is living with dementia.

Participants explore how food, environment and support can greatly influence the dining experience.

Visit dementia.org.au/technology for more information





PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

“The VR environment was realistic to the day-to-day work in providing a dining experience for residents.

The technology used can really transport people to capture different perspectives. It was eye opening.”

Rachel Mead, Regional Quality and Improvement Manager (South) at RegisAged Care experienced Dine with Ted (VR)

Ask Annie

- The free mobile app Ask Annie offers tips and advice to problem-solve and improve dementia skills on the go, with a coach in your pocket.
- *Download for free through the Apple App Store or Google Play.*



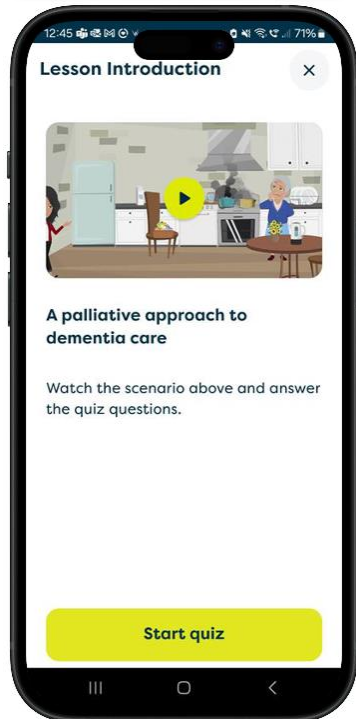
Ask Annie



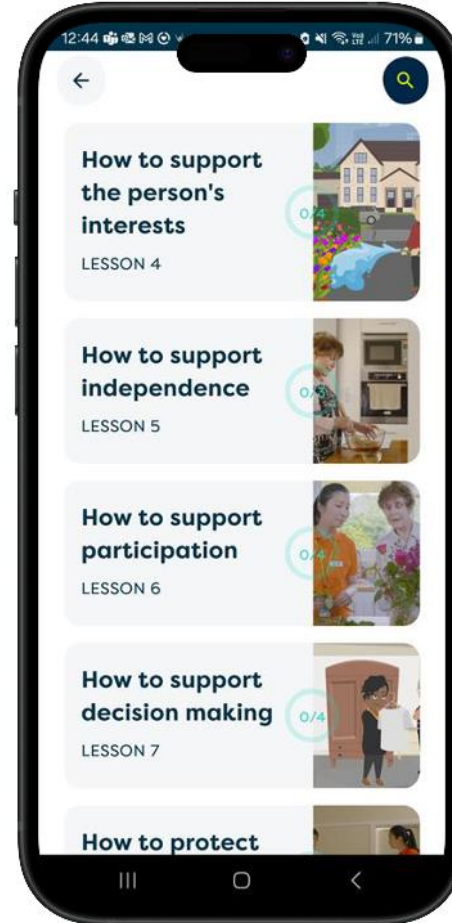
Ask Annie



138,823 lessons completed; approx. 694,115 minutes of learning or 11,568 hours



"After a quick refresher on Ask Annie, our carers would feel more equipped to support people in their care."
– Bridget Howes, General Manager, BlueCross



Free to download

Over 51,000 downloads

On-the-go dementia training designed for care workers. With short, practical and interactive modules

Workforce Planning and HR Management

- **Outcome 2.8:** focuses on workforce planning, requiring providers to identify the skills, qualifications, and competencies needed for each role and to engage suitably qualified workers.
- **Outcome 2.9:** addresses human resource management, emphasising competency-based training in core matters, including dementia care, and ongoing performance monitoring
- **Outcome 5.6:** The provider must ensure that individuals who experience cognitive impairment receive comprehensive funded aged care services that optimise clinical outcomes and are aligned with their needs, goals and preferences.

Tell Tina

- Tell TiNA is a Training Needs Analysis tool - developed for organisation's to better understand the strengths and capabilities of their dementia care workforce
- Results highlight knowledge, skills, confidence and attitudes of staff to better plan for targeted dementia training
- Addition to Ask Annie platform





**Dementia
Australia®**



New evidence requirements

Requirement	Previous standard	Strengthened standard
Training Needs Analysis	Not explicitly required	Mandatory, documented analysis
Training Matrix	Optional	Required for all roles
Dementia Care Training	General awareness	Competency-based, ongoing
Continuous Improvement	Broad expectation	Evidence of review and updates

What Auditors Will Look For

EVIDENCE TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Training Needs Analysis	Identifies gaps and priorities for staff development
Training Matrix	Maps roles to required competencies and training status
Monitoring Reports	Tracks implementation and compliance
Improvement Records	Shows changes adopted after reviews

Outcomes for people living with dementia



Improved
engagement and
connection



Reduced distress
and behavioural
escalation



Better quality of life



Stronger
relationships with
carers and staff

Building a supportive culture that prioritises wellbeing and for both carers and residents

- Organisational culture drives care quality
- Embed dementia capability across workforce
- Prioritise wellbeing of staff and residents
- Support continuous improvement and learning
- Strategic approach to training improves confidence, morale and reduces stress
- Enhances team communication and collaboration
- Reduces risk of incidents and burnout
- Creates safer, more responsive care environments

**Any
questions?**

Thank you