



THE DIBA

The official newsletter of The Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance



4 TIPS TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA ENJOY THE FESTIVE SEASON

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The festive season is fast approaching, and if you're organising celebrations with family or friends, you might be grappling with a seemingly endless to-do list. But as you make these plans, it's important to consider how you can best include any friends or loved ones living with dementia.

While no two people experience dementia in the exact same way, dementia often affects the way people process and respond to their environment. Too much stimulation - like a lot of noise and activity at a Christmas party - can be overwhelming and may cause confusion or agitation.

Finding ways to create a safe environment at home for your loved one with dementia will help maximise the chances everyone has a good time.

1. Plan ahead, but be flexible

Planning celebrations can be overwhelming for everyone involved, and having excessive expectations can raise stress levels. Try to keep expectations realistic and in line with the current needs of your friend or loved one living with dementia.



THE DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE BALLINA ALLIANCE IS AN INCORPORATED NOT FOR PROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANISATION. WE STRIVE TO WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CARERS.

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DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE BALLINA ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE LIVE AND CARE AND PAYS RESPECT TO THE ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING



IN THIS EDITION

FEATURE ARTICLE - 4 TIPS TO HELP YOUR LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA ENJOY THE FESTIVE SEASON

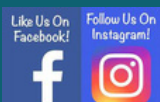
UPCOMING EVENTS - 2024

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITY GROUP
10:30AM - 12:30PM THE BALLINA AEROCLUB

DEMENTIA CAFE
10AM-12PM CAFE SEBASTIAN 2ND MONDAY MONTH

DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING & YOUNGER ONSET PROGRAM
ENROLLING NOW

SENIORS MUSIC MUSTER
WEDNESDAY 13TH MARCH 10AM - \$10
BALLINA RSL



For example, people with dementia may experience changes in their appetite or food preferences, or difficulties chewing and swallowing. These changes might make some of the things on your festive menu unappetising or difficult to eat. Be guided by the needs and preferences of the person with dementia and keep options limited to one or two special foods if larger banquets are likely to be overwhelming.

Things can change quickly for people living with dementia and their abilities will likely vary from day to day. Try to be flexible and have a backup plan in place. For special events, plan to record speeches or ceremonies to share when things are quieter.

If you're planning a large event, consider having a smaller gathering with your loved one with dementia and just a few special people.

2. Stick to the familiar

The sudden appearance of lots of decorations may be overwhelming for a person with dementia and trigger a negative sensory reaction or distress. Ensure decorations are safe and familiar and put them up slowly over a period of a few days.

Try to also stick to familiar traditions and routines. Daily routines are an important way of supporting people with dementia and sudden changes may result in agitation and distress. Stick to routine eating, bathing, and rest times where possible throughout the holiday period.

For many people with dementia, long-term memories are less affected than more recent memories. Familiar family traditions can therefore be a good way to reminisce. Family keepsakes or memory books can also help connect with stories from past celebrations.



Many families will celebrate the festive season with a relative who has dementia.
[DisobeyArt/Shutterstock](#)

3. Have a quiet space

Try to have a quiet place where the person living with dementia can go if things become overwhelming. Designating a support person who can stay with them throughout the day and take them to a separate room or area away from the action can help to keep things calm.

Having some familiar objects or quiet music in the space can be a good way to block out the noise of activities and reduce agitation.

4. Make sure everyone has a part

Everyone wants to feel a part of the activities on a special day, including people living with dementia. Ensuring everyone has a role to play may mean modifying tasks to suit the abilities of the person with dementia.

For example, if you're hosting an event at home, try to get your friend or relative with dementia involved in the kitchen by tossing the salad or helping to set the table.

People with dementia are still the same person, even if their abilities have changed or they can no longer communicate their needs and feelings like they used to. It's important to treat everyone with dignity and try to include your friends and loved ones with dementia in celebrations whenever possible.



Think about how you can include your loved one in the day's preparations. [fizkes/Shutterstock](https://www.fizkes.com/Shutterstock)

CHAIR - Anne Moehead



Merry Christmas to all our members for the festive season and good health for 2024 from the Dementia Inclusive Ballina Committee. I believe I can speak for all members of the committee that we have had a successful year with us consolidating our information resources, facilitating a number of activities including the Wednesday Aero club group and delivering a two-day symposium, to name a few. We have been successful in achieving several grants which Sabrina will provide an overview on.

My wish for every carer is that they have an opportunity to relax and put their feet up over the Christmas break and delegate caring duties to other family members- even for a short time. My wish for all our folk with dementia is that they can recall the magic of Christmas and embrace the important moments of family and loved ones. The festive season is a time for family, friends and gatherings, and there are simple ways you can make your celebrations dementia-friendly.

Simple is best

People with dementia can become disorientated and unsettled in unfamiliar environments so keep it simple. Plan the day ahead, stick to routines as much as possible, and be aware of the emotional triggers that may cause confusion or agitation.

Keep it calm

Having lots of people in your home and too many activities underway can become overwhelming to someone living with dementia. Excited guests, loud music and multiple conversations can be confusing and may cause anxiety. Aim for a mix of active and quiet activities throughout the day and have a 'quiet room' where someone with dementia can retreat if things become a bit much.

Share the caring

Create opportunities for family members and friends to share the caring role. They may assist by hosting an event in their home or go out as a group for a specific activity such as carols by candlelight.

Everyone needs to feel valued

Everyone needs to feel valued and this doesn't change when someone has dementia. Think about how someone with dementia used to contribute at Christmas time and find a way to help them do this. Hanging a bauble on a tree, writing Christmas cards together, setting the table or helping to prepare food are all small actions that can help a person with dementia feel included and give a sense of independence.

Seek support

The festive season is a time when both the person with dementia and family members may feel a sense of loss. This may impact more strongly upon those people without family members or those who may be away from their family. However, if you feel you need to reach out for support the National Dementia Helpline, 1800 100 500, is open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday except public holidays. Or you can visit dementia.org.au

Take care and on behalf the Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance committee we look forward to 2024 for bigger and brighter things to come.

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITY UPDATE - Meg Pickup



The Activity Group will have met 52 times in 2023 with 50 meetings at the aeroclub and informally for morning tea at Café Sebastian in the week after Christmas and the first week of the New Year. This is in recognition of the need to maintain a consistent routine for PLWD and their carers. Meeting after Christmas and the first week of the new year also provides an opportunity for people to have an outlet at a time that can be fraught as family and friends gather to celebrate the festive season. We are the only group for seniors in the local area that operates during December and January, when other groups are closed. Loneliness and boredom can be stressful experiences that our group avoids. PLWD and their carers can have enough challenges without adding loneliness and boredom to the mix.

People who attend the group certainly benefit from the opportunity to mix with others and participate in a variety of activities. The gentle exercises, choir singing and morning tea continue to be well received as are the variety of activities held after morning tea.

I'm always moved by the easy manner with which the people who join us interact with each other and join in our activities, your knowledge of life in less complicated times, sense of humour and willingness to laugh at lame jokes, faux pas, and shaggy dog stories. It goes without saying that I'm grateful to the volunteers who assist each week. The group would not happen without your commitment.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. May 2024 be rich with possibilities.

ADVISORY GROUP CHAIR - Gwen Mapstone



It's always a pleasure to write about our Activities at Wednesday DIB group.

Judy Latta organised the engaging craft activity of mosaicking ceramic pots. The pots looked excellent when seedlings were potted up. Peter and Joan's entertainment included singing by a couple of our members who are always delighted to be part of the musical program. Drumming sessions challenge us to produce a beat and coordination of sound to entertain and relax. It is an opportunity to exercise without realising that this is what we are doing.

An enjoyable BBQ was held at Missingham Park. We appreciate the volunteers from the Rotary club for their cooking skills and entertainment.

The AGM for the Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance was held 25th November 2023. Readers will be interested in the information provided about the Wednesday Activity Group:

Since recording weekly attendances in October 2022, the average number of people in attendance each week was 20. The most number who attended was 36 for the Xmas lunch, with 30 being the most number who attended on a 'usual' Wednesday. The least number who attended on any day was 12. On nine occasions we had 21 people in attendance with 22 people in attendance on six occasions. There were 18 people in attendance on five occasions, 19 on five occasions and 25 also on five occasions. These figures do not include those who volunteer most weeks. During this time 33 people have ceased attending because they were a PLWD who had moved into residential aged care or were either the non-paid or paid carer of a PLWD. The group is certainly meeting the needs of those who attend.

We welcome new members regularly. Hopefully more people living with dementia and their carers will join us in 2024.

December is full of Christmas Activities. The last two weeks have consisted of decorating pinecones for table decorations and making delicious Christmas delights - caramilk chocolate balls, apricot balls, and rocky road - which were bagged up for people to take home. The final activity for the year at the aeroclub will be the Christmas lunch. The group will meet informally at Café Sebastian, Ballina Fair on December 27, and January 3, 2024, from 10am. We will start back at the aeroclub on January 10.

Wishing everyone a Merry, Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

Findings: Does the “Activity Group’ meet participant needs?

The comments written by people in the Comment Book strongly support that this is the case.

DIBA’s goal is to promote the acceptance and inclusion of people living with dementia and their carers within the local community so that they can enjoy the best quality of life possible.

Analysis by DIBA member, Dr Robert Lingard highlights that our goal is being achieved:

1. The comments reflect a sense of welcome, friendship and non-judgmental inclusion for people living with dementia, and for their carers.
2. The overwhelming focus on positive experiences and affirming outcomes provides evidence that the Wednesday Activities are supporting the enjoyment and quality of experience that are valued by people living with dementia, and by their carers.

Most comments expressed gratitude including general expressions of thanks and acknowledgement of the commitment of the organisers, volunteers, and presenters. Valuing friendship, laughter and being made to feel welcome were frequently acknowledged as were comments showing a general appreciation and enjoyment of the weekly activities. The singing and music were also popular activities. Some participants identified that the activity group was the highlight of the week for them, that the activities lifted their spirits and really helped with their lives from day to day.



AGM Wrap Up

The DIBA Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 25th November, 2023 at Crowley Care. We would like to thank Dr Robert Lingard and Sue Hetherington for the contributions that they have made to the committee and who, in stepping down, have made way for new committee members to make a contribution. We take the opportunity to welcome Kylie Strom, Susan Burgess and Shannon Bourke to the committee.

Kylie Strom

Kylie is registered Occupational Therapist with over 20 year's of experience in both corporate management roles and private practice. Kylie's passion is working with adults with varying physical and cognitive needs, particularly in the fields of disability and aged care. Kylie likes working with just the right balance of compassion and humour and her focus is to enable people with disabilities and their carers to live their best lives. Kylie runs an OT specific evidence based program called COPE (Care of People with Dementia in their Environments) which is designed to support the carer to manage the person with dementia at home.



Susan Burgess

Susan is a retired Registered Nurse who has 40+ years of nursing which includes General, Paediatric and Emergency Nursing, Community Nursing, Nurse Education and management of Aged Care Facilities including commissioning Dementia Specific areas. From recently completing BA qualifications, Susan in 2024 will commence further Post Graduate Training in Dementia Care. Susan has retained a passion for improving the care provided to those who live with dementia both in residential and community settings as well as ensuring that both carers and the person they care for, are able to stay connected to the community in which they live.



Shannon Bourke

Shannon is a Social Worker who is currently working for The Dementia Outreach Service with the Northern NSW Local Health District where she provides education and support to people living with dementia and their carers. Shannon is an experienced clinician who has a specialist knowledge in navigating dementia care in the Northern Rivers. Shannon has also worked as a Union Organiser improving and maintaining worker's rights. Shannon has a passion for social justice and equality with a background in advocacy, campaigning, counselling and groupwork. Shannon loves being able to support people to make the choices that are right for them and navigate complex systems, connecting with people and seeing them overcome challenges they never thought possible.



**WEDNESDAY ACTIVITY
CALENDAR
2024**

January to April 2024

January

- 3rd:** Morning tea at Café Sebastian 10am
10th: Music by Joan and Peter
17th: Reminiscing and discussion
24th: Pre-Australia Day (dress up, trivia, Aussie tucker)

February

- 7th:** Chinese Lunar New Year (History and information event)
14th: Valentine's Day - Baking
21st: Drumming
28th: Music with Joan and Peter

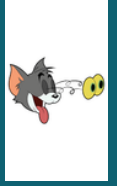
March

- 6th:** Mural/craft/games
13th: Seniors Music Muster - Ballina RSL, 10am, tickets \$10
20th: St Patrick's Day Celebration - 'Green Fun' with jokes, tales, trivia
27th: Easter Hat Parade and Egg Hunt

April

- 3rd:** Mural painting/craft/games
10th: Music with Joan and Peter
17th: World Heritage Day celebration - discussion of heritage sites, share photos
24th: Anzac Day Event - baking, trivia, discussion

WATCH THIS SPACE



**Digital Literacy Training
Enrolling Now!**

For those who are interested in learning new or more skills about using mobile phones and computers, including cyber security, telehealth and much, much more.

We will offer free sessions in the months ahead.

All levels are welcome.

Phone Dr Sabrina Pit 0429 455 720

**Younger Onset Dementia
Program**

Please get in contact if you are a professional that would like to get involved, a person living with Younger Onset Dementia, a carer or a interested member of the community who would like to volunteer.

Phone Dr Sabrina Pit 0429 455 720

2024 DIBA Calendars

Featuring artworks produced by local people living with dementia.

Cost:

DIB Members - \$15

Non- Members - \$20

Seniors Music Muster

When: Wed 13th March

Where: Ballina RSL Club

Time: 10am - 1:30pm

Cost: \$10 per ticket



BALLINA AND SURROUNDS SUPPORT FOR CARERS & PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

Every Monday of school term 10am - 11:30am	BEATING HEARTS OF LISMORE A SOCIAL GATHERING FOR OLDER PEOPLE LISMORE HEIGHTS SPORTS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CLUB HIGH STREET, LISMORE HEIGHTS <i>No need to register Not run on public holidays</i>	
2nd Monday of month 10am - 12pm	DEMENTIA CAFE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND CARERS CAFE SEBASTIAN, BALLINA FAIR <i>No need to register Not run on public holidays</i>	
3rd Monday of month 2pm - 3pm	ONLINE CARER SUPPORT GROUP FOR CARERS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA ONLINE CLICK HERE TO JOIN MEETING	
Every Tuesday of school term 1:30pm - 2:30pm	RALLY4EVER FREE & FUN TENNIS FOR CARERS BALLINA TENNIS CLUB, 69 BURNET STREET, BALLINA CLICK HERE TO REGISTER	
2nd Tuesday of month 10am - 12pm	CARER SUPPORT GROUP FOR CARERS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA LISMORE WORKERS AND SPORTS CLUB, 202 OLIVER AVE, GOONELLABAH <i>No need to register</i>	
3rd Tuesday of month 10am - 12pm	CASINO LIBRARY ACTIVITY FOR CARERS AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA CASINO LIBRARY, 4 GRAHAM PLACE, CASINO <i>No need to register</i>	
Every Wednesday 10:30am - 12:30pm	DIG ACTIVITY GROUP FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND CARERS BALLINA AEROCUB, GA ACCESS ROAD, SOUTHERN CROSS DRIVE, BALLINA <i>No need to register</i> VISIT WEBSITE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	
3rd Wednesday of month 10am - 12pm	THE CARERS COFFEE CLUB FOR CARERS HOTEL BRUNSWICK HEADS, 4 MULLUMBIMBI STREET, BRUNSWICK HEADS <i>Contact Emma White Phone: 66551523</i>	
Last Wednesday of month 10am - 11:30am	BALLINA F2F PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR CARERS CHERRY STREET SPORTS CLUB, 68 CHERRY STREET, BALLINA <i>Contact Chris de Brouck Phone: 6497170443</i>	

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shannon.bourke@health.nsw.gov.au

6620 6274 ☎

BEATING HEARTS OF LISMORE
Is a FREE, volunteer led, weekly social gathering for older people living in the Lismore area.

JOIN US:

Where: Lismore Heights Sports, Recreation and Community Club
High Street, Lismore Heights (downstairs, enter from carpark)

When: Mondays (excluding school and public holidays)

Time: 10-11.30am

Cost: FREE



NEED SUPPORT

MY AGED CARE

Information and access to aged care services
1800 200 422
www.myagedcare.gov.au

THE CARER GATEWAY

Information about emergency respite and carer support
1800 422 737

THE DEMENTIA OUTREACH SERVICE

Dementia advice and support
Ballina Community Health
02 6620 6274

CARERS NSW

Information for carers
02 9280 4744

DEMENTIA AUSTRALIA

24 HOUR HELPLINE
1800 100 500
www.dementia.org.au

FORWARD WITH DEMENTIA

Information for people living with dementia, carers and health professionals
www.forwardwithdementia.au

NSW ELDER ABUSE

HELPLINE
1300 651 192
www.eapu.com.au

BYRON SHIRE RESPITE CARERS COFFEE CLUB

Support group for carers
Emma White - **02 6685 1629**