



Ground-breaking model of dementia care launches in Australia

A ground-breaking and controversial model of dementia care developed in the United Kingdom more than 20 years ago will be implemented and launched in three Australian aged care homes in July 2016.

The three pilot homes are Barunga Village located in Port Broughton, South Australia, and The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus Centres in Chapel Hill, Queensland, and Narrabundah, ACT.

In 1995, Dr David Sheard founded Dementia Care Matters, now a global dementia care culture change and training organisation, and established the Butterfly Household Model of Care.

Dr Sheard said the controversial model sees a total transformation in the way people with dementia are cared for, with a focus on their emotions.

“Dementia care has a history of being task orientated and institutionalised,” he said. “The detached management styles and a focus on process belong to the malignant social psychology of the past.”

Dr Sheard said the controversial aspect of the Butterfly Care Model is that carers are trained to join the people with dementia in their reality and engage with their memories, rather than constantly trying to bring them back into the present.

“You can’t pump knowledge, reason and information back into people with dementia, it is a complete waste of time. Instead by joining them in their reality you are satisfying their emotional needs, which in turn reduces their anxiety and stress levels to improve their wellbeing,” he said.

There are currently 44 Butterfly Care Homes in the UK, three in Ireland, three in Canada.

Results in established Butterfly Care Homes have shown care homes use of anti-psychotic medications has decreased to almost 5%, compared to the national norms that are around 20% to 40% in the UK and Australia, and a 44% decrease in the number of falls. People have also had significant weight gain and fewer admissions to hospital.



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The implementation of the model in the three Australian aged care homes will include a complete refurbishment of the interior spaces where people with dementia live, to ensure the rooms are colourful and highly engaging, alongside a new approach to staff training which focuses on staff developing their emotional intelligence.

Other key aspects of the model include:

- Removing institutional features such as staff wearing uniforms, medicine trolleys, and rigid task-based routines,
- Enabling greater freedom for people living in the home to do more for themselves and feel less restricted, and
- Developing small household living for people with dementia in a family-like environment.

Dr Sheard said the matched houses are a key to the effectiveness of the model.

“Through grouping people together in houses who are at similar levels of dementia give the people living there the best chance to thrive and have a sense of well being, whilst enabling staff to provide specialist skills to people in focused groups,” he said.

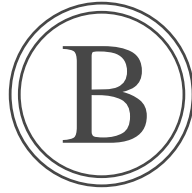
Dr Sheard and his team will arrive in Australia in July to begin implementing the one-year pilot of the Butterfly Care Model in the three aged care homes.

After the one-year pilot, the homes are graded and if a mark of 1-3 is achieved, it is classified a Butterfly Home. This mark is reviewed annually.

Director of Nursing at Barunga Village, Merrilyn Hewett, said the village is extremely proud to partner with Dementia Care Matters.

“Through our partnership, the staff training and changes to the physical environment we will transform the way we care for our people living with dementia,” Mrs Hewett.

“We truly want to connect emotionally with the people who live here so we can understand and meet their individual needs.



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“Our hope in the first 12 months is to inspire staff to value the Butterfly Household Model of Care through witnessing first-hand the increased contentment of people living here.”

The three homes were chosen after an expression of interest application for Australian partners was held, which received 45 inquiries.

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Interviews are available with Dr Sheard and Mrs Hewett.