

8 December 2023

Helping our community Live Well With Dementia

On 28 November, Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, held a Live Well With Dementia community event in the Blue Mountains. This event was an opportunity for people with dementia, their family and carers to learn about how those with dementia can live well in the community for many years, with the right support.

The event was made possible through funding from the Department of Health and Aged Care as part of the Aged Care reforms and catering was sponsored by Belong Blue Mountains. This Blue Mountains event was the third in the region this year, with the first two being held in the Hawkesbury and Penrith. A fourth event will be held in Lithgow in February 2024.

The Blue Mountains event was attended by 48 local residents and provided access to information from a range of local services. Over a cup of tea, residents learnt about the types of activities that they can do to keep their brains healthy and reduce the risk of dementia, as well as hearing about the various support, education, activities and strategies that are available to people living with dementia and their families.

During the session, Diane Cross from Anglicare outlined some of the activities people can do to keep their brains healthy and reduce the risk of dementia. Dr Anita Sharma and Hailey Carpen from Nepean Hospital Virtual Aged Care Service highlighted the support they provide to people living with dementia and their families.

Belong Blue Mountains introduced their new free service called DAWN – Dementia and Wellness Navigation. This program, dedicated to people with dementia and their carers, provides activity sessions, education and strategies to address caring challenges.

There was also a moving presentation from Michael Cole, who lives with dementia. His personal story provided insight into the daily challenges he faces, the support that helps him, and the steps he takes to ensure he continues to experience the highest quality of life possible.

Ms Lizz Reay, CEO of Wentworth Healthcare highlighted that events such as these are essential for our community.

“Healthy Ageing has been a focus for us over the past few years and we were pleased to receive dedicated Aged Care funding from the Department of Health and Aged Care, which has allowed us to work with services and provide initiatives like these Live Well With Dementia events,” said Ms Reay.

“We have gathered valuable feedback from our community at these events, which has identified a gap in support for those experiencing younger onset dementia. We will continue to work with the community to support improved education and access to services for those experiencing dementia,” she said.

“If people in our community are looking for more information or resources, you can go to our My Health Connector website at [MyHealthConnector.com.au](https://www.myhealthconnector.com.au). This free online directory provides information about local health and community services available to support people living in our region. There are specific services and supports for people with dementia that can be accessed via the Dementia icon on the homepage,” she added.