

## Rural Health Inquiry Submission

Dementia Friendly Tasmania Inc held an Ageing Wonderfully Well Expo at Kettering on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2021, the second of three within Kingborough area, the first being pre COVID in August 2019 at Kingston Hub. 76 people attended the expo seeking information from stall holders on services and supports available to assist them to continue to live independently as they age.

Incidental conversations with attendees raised a number of issues of concern for many people within the lower channel community, such as:

- Difficulty accessing sufficient support to assist them to live independently, wait times
- Difficulty making appointments with GP services - often 3-4 weeks
- Distances involved in accessing after hours medical care
- Wait times at RHH for essential surgery, hip replacement, colonoscopy etc
- Limited aged care placement options within their community
- Insufficient staff in aged care facilities to provide support for residents to remain engaged and active both physically and mentally

Dementia Friendly Tasmania is currently conducting the Inclusive Wellbeing Survey across Kingborough asking about barriers perceived for people living with dementia and asking for ideas/ opportunities to increase inclusion for people living with dementia, their families and carers. The most poignant and pertinent point we can gather from the survey so far is the lack of information, awareness and understanding about dementia within the community.

Generally people living with dementia are thought to be non-productive and unable to contribute to their community leading to isolation and hence a decline in self-esteem and mental health. People and families therefore, are reluctant to identify as having dementia as they fear discrimination, rejection and isolation.

These issues are of great concern to our volunteer committee who, through Expos, talks with other community groups and community meetings, are attempting to increase awareness and knowledge of dementia and pathways of support within our community

Kath Shearer  
President  
Dementia Friendly Tasmania