



**Leslie WILLIAMS MP**  
Member for Port Macquarie



Thursday, 8 October 2020

Ms Lisa Hort  
4/48 Hill St  
PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444

Dear Lisa

*It was with great pleasure that I recently had the opportunity to officially recognise you in Parliament on behalf of Dementia Action Week 2020.*

*The Dementia Friendly Community Alliance members are marvellous advocates for raising awareness on the challenges faced by those living with dementia in our region.*

*I commend your dedication and commitment in targeting key objectives to improve the quality of life for people diagnosed with dementia while offering support and guidance to their carers who often encounter challenging situations along the way.*

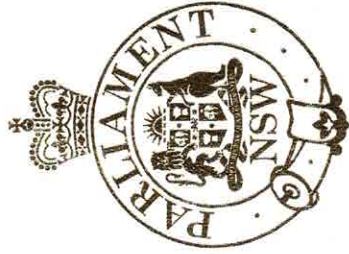
*Please find enclosed a copy of the Parliamentary Hansard record of the speech.*

*Congratulations again for volunteering your time and efforts to the Dementia Friendly Community Alliance organisation in Port Macquarie.*

*Yours sincerely*

*The Hon. Leslie Williams MP  
Member for Port Macquarie  
Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly*





PTO

## *Port Macquarie Dementia Friendly Community Alliance*

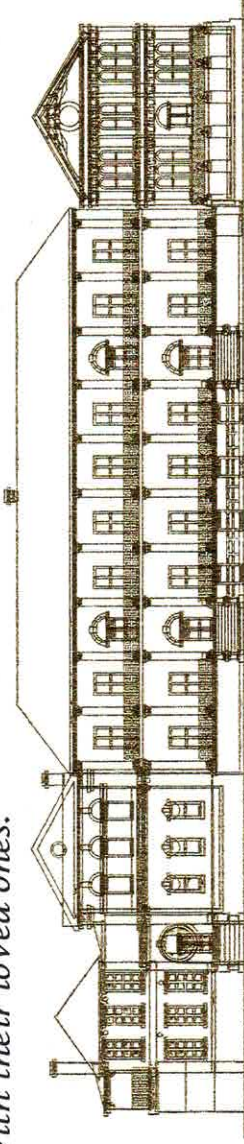
*Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:05:57):*

*This week we come together as a nation to recognise the thousands of people who sadly are diagnosed with some form of dementia each year. We also acknowledge their families, carers and service providers who work tirelessly to provide the best care and support available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to ensure their loved ones live meaningful and purpose-driven lives. Today in Parliament we offer them our thoughts and well wishes.*

*Dementia, or major neurocognitive disorder as it is known by health professionals, is the second leading cause of death among Australians and the leading cause of death in women, surpassing heart disease in 2016. In Australia, it is estimated that 459,000 people are currently living with dementia, which, when broken down, equates to 250 people joining the statistics each and every day.*

*In the electorate of Port Macquarie it is estimated that 1,857 people are presently living with some form of dementia. With an aging demographic, this is the third highest prevalence in New South Wales. It is imperative we ensure that the best quality services are available and that practical solutions are offered for people living with dementia and their carers.*

*When I became the member for Port Macquarie it was apparent to me that additional services were required in our community to offer help and advice to not just those living with dementia but also their carers, who are often unexpectedly conscripted to undertake a difficult journey with their loved ones.*







*The predicted statistics are also concerning, with a forecast increase in the prevalence of dementia growing to levels in some locations upwards of 350 per cent by 2050. Of course, the impact is not restricted to a dementia diagnosis—sadly extending to potentially poor outcomes and curbed lifestyle.*

*These statistics were so concerning to me that in October 2012 I convened a meeting with a staunch group of stakeholders, including local geriatrician Dr Matt Kinchington, the then Alzheimer's Australia regional manager in New South Wales, Gary Thomas, local advocate Margaret Allen, carer Kath Storey and Associate Professor Rick van der Zwan.*

*At our first meeting it was a unanimous decision that, given the data before us, there was no time to delay action to develop a dementia-friendly community. In December 2013 Port Macquarie's first dementia-friendly community steering committee was formed, aiming to raise awareness across our communities and recognising the challenges that people living with dementia face each and every day. The committee also sought to understand how we as a community could better support people living with dementia and their carers with a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.*

*Now called the Dementia Friendly Community Alliance, the group focuses on key objectives to educate, plan and consult with members of the community, including council, to shine a spotlight on the areas of inequality and injustice in an often physically challenging environment.*

*The alliance also hosts forums to provide guidance and understanding of dementia for carers and those living with this debilitating disease. I can honestly say that we, as a united and dedicated group, are achieving our goals but we know very well there is still more work to do to educate our community and ensure people living with dementia are getting the best out of life.*

*I applaud the members of the alliance who represent a cross-section of our community and particularly those living with dementia and their carers for their invaluable contribution: Margaret Allen, Graeme Atkins, Sarah Ashton, Kellon Beard, Karen Dubois, Kerry West, Lisa Hort, Bronwyn Chalker, Kaye Lilley, Jade Sinclair, Jenny Edmunds, Gai McPherson, Emma Walker, Vanessa Bushe, Julie Dunn, Barry Hacker, Sharen Marshall, Nicole Cornish, Mike Sheargold, Margaret-Ann Young, Kath Storey, Kara Nicholson, Ashley Davis, Emma Schofield, Hayley Owen, Kerry Wade and Anthony Parker.*

*I also commend the Dementia Action Week working group committee for their hard work and commitment before and during this week's celebrations from 21 to 27 September to recognise Dementia Action Week: Sarah Ashton, Graeme Atkins, Emma Walker, Bronwyn Chalker, Jenny Edmunds, Margaret Allen, Vanessa Bushe, Kellon Beard, Lisa Hort and Jade Sinclair.*

*I am proud to be a part of this proactive group in its efforts to make Port Macquarie a dementia-friendly community. I was extremely honoured to recently be invited to be their inaugural patron. I congratulate them on the amazing work that is being undertaken by our members right across so many different spaces. I look forward to working with them in the future because everyone, no matter your race, religion, age, sex or disability, deserves to be treated equally in an inclusive Australia.*

*The Hon. Leslie Williams MP  
Member for Port Macquarie*

*Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly*