

Forgetting sickness, embracing health

A business plan for Australia's first dementia village

Dementia – a brain disorder with no cure

Most commonly, dementia affects people over the age of 65, although people in their 40s and 50s can be affected. Some medications reduce symptoms but there is no prevention or cure for most forms of dementia.

Dementia is the single greatest cause of disability in older Australians. It affects the brain but is not one specific disease. It affects thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday tasks.

More than 353,800 Australians live with dementia and this number is expected to increase to 400,000 in less than five years. For every one person with dementia, it is estimated 10 people – family, children and friends – live with the disease as carers.

With no medical breakthrough, it is expected almost 1 million people will be living with dementia by 2050 and a further 9 million will be caring for them.

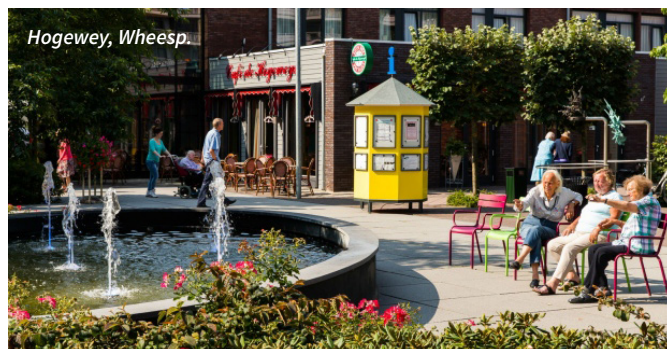
A unique solution and an Australian first

Australia needs a state-of-the-art dementia village to maximise the quality of life of sufferers in a safe and stimulating environment. The village would also serve as a research centre into medical breakthroughs to prevent future generations suffering from the disease.

It would be the first of its kind in the southern hemisphere and based on the Dutch model in the town of Wheesp. Heathcote, located in central Victoria, is the ideal location to develop the village, due to the town's proximity to natural and built attractions and ideal climate.

A business proposal is required to further investigate the development of a dementia village and the type of care required. This would ensure the project was 'shovel ready' when funding became available.

The 150-place dementia village will focus on developing models of care that meet consumer needs and are cost effective. It will seek to close service gaps in dementia care and, importantly, ensure care is affordable. It will be designed as a teaching/research/workforce development centre and employ 260 staff.





Located on approximately five acres, it will have a number of tailored accommodation settings and separate amenities blocks. It would be set up like a small village, where residents can shop at a supermarket, visit the hairdresser, the theatre, and eat out at a pub or café, and be based on a Green Care Program.

Residents will experience the traditional healthcare system but also access to care farming (agriculture), healing gardens (gardening), nature conservation (eco-therapy) and caring for animals. The benefit to this type of care is that many industries would benefit economically from supporting this type of care model.

The village will also be a benchmark for best practice and reduce the risk for paid and unpaid carers of people with dementia. Based on existing examples, it is estimated it will



cost \$60M to build with scope to add additional facilities as required. A further \$25M would be spent on research and teaching facilities.

Unlock Heathcote’s potential

Heathcote is a growing township that is looking for new economic drivers. The development of a dementia village in Heathcote would generate new employment opportunities during the construction phase and ongoing operation. It is expected to inject \$15M per annum in the local economy.

Heathcote’s renowned wineries, café culture and local art scene can cater for those visiting friends or relatives in the

village. More visitors to the township would further support the local supply chain, potentially encouraging businesses to expand or employ more people to meet demand.

The Green Care approach will also provide new opportunities for central Victoria’s rural/farming businesses to expand or diversify.

How can you help?

The proposal has the support of the Local, State and Commonwealth Governments. This will be a facility for all of Australia. A business proposal costs \$300,000 and a crowd funding campaign has been launched.

Susan Alberti (*pictured right*), Australian business woman and philanthropist, has agreed to be the ambassador for the campaign.

