



**Sharon Grierson MP  
Federal Member for Newcastle**

**Members' Statements  
House of Representatives**

**12 September 2007**

### **National Dementia Awareness Month**

**Ms GRIERSON** (Newcastle) (11.30 am)—Next Monday marks the beginning of National Dementia Awareness Month, which runs from 17 September to 17 October. The theme for this year is 'No time to lose'. Currently there are more than a thousand new cases of dementia in Australia presenting every week. The total number of Australians now living with dementia is 220,000. By 2050 this figure is anticipated to escalate to 730,000. So there really is 'no time to lose'.

Canadian Professor Ken Rockwood, a world-leading dementia researcher, clinician and author, will be this year's keynote speaker at Dementia Awareness Month events. Professor Rockwood pioneered the person centred model in the care and treatment of people with dementia. Art and dementia is a particular focus of his work and he has established artist-in-residence programs in dementia units with great success. I am delighted that Professor Rockwood will be addressing the launch of Dementia Awareness Month in my electorate of Newcastle next Monday and I look forward to co-hosting, with Senator Marise Payne, his visit to Parliament House next Tuesday when he addresses Parliamentary Friends of Dementia. I encourage all members and senators to attend his presentation.

For people living with dementia, for their families and carers and for those at risk the theme 'No time to lose' is a call for urgent action by government and communities everywhere to improve the quality of life for people with dementia, to increase funding for research and to engage in a brain-healthy lifestyle to reduce the risk of dementia in later years. Excellent work is being carried out across Australia. Alzheimer's Australia's Mind Your Mind risk reduction program and the development of the Kimberley Indigenous Cognitive Assessment Tool are just two examples. Importantly, the Kimberley Indigenous Cognitive Assessment Tool has enabled researchers to identify the prevalence of dementia amongst Indigenous people and the result is, of course, that it is significantly high.

But I want to draw the attention of the House to the work of the Hunter Network of Alzheimer's Australia NSW. In partnership with the local Rotary Group District 9670, the Hunter network raised more than \$260,000 towards the establishment of a dementia resource centre in Newcastle. Alzheimer's Australia NSW matched those funds, giving a

total of \$550,000 to purchase a residential property. That has been done, but now it is time to refurbish and fit-out that property as a dementia resource centre, which is estimated to cost a total of \$630,000. The New South Wales government has committed \$150,000 towards the cost and the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation has provided another \$60,000, but Commonwealth assistance is now needed to complete the project. I call on the government to match the efforts made by the community to enable the development of the Hunter dementia resource centre to be completed. The need is great. There really is no time to lose. (Time expired)