**Caring Communities Program - Project Overview**

**Organisation:** Alzheimer's Australia ACT

**Name of Project:** Shared Understandings: Improving Palliative Care for People with Dementia

**Length of Project:** Two years

**Project Summary:**

Providing palliative care to people with dementia presents some unique challenges. The objective of the project is to bring together professionals from a range of disciplines who work in different settings with a view to creating a shared understanding about the nature of those issues and working out how those issues can be addressed in professional practice. Practical steps for improving existing practice will be tried out in different settings through the life of the project.

By utilising a learning circle model and focussing on sharing skills between a variety of professionals the project aims to improve the quality of palliative care services offered to people with dementia in the ACT and Southern NSW. In addition, the project will also produce an education resource for workers on issues surrounding palliative care and dementia.

**Project Objectives:**

- To improve the quality of palliative care services offered to people with dementia in the ACT and Southern NSW.
- To produce an education resource for workers on issues surrounding palliative care and dementia.
- To develop an improved professional relationship between dementia care workers and other aged care workers and palliative care specialists in the ACT and Southern NSW.

**Project Activities:**

The project has 3 main components:

**Stage 1:** Utilise a learning circle approach to develop a shared understanding between palliative care and dementia care specialists on ways to improve palliative care for people with dementia. The process will be as follows:

I. Identification of key areas for action
II. Discussion on ways of addressing key issues
III. Implementation of new ideas/approaches backed by targeted training,
IV. Reflection on lessons learned and refinement of original ideas.
V. Either move on to address new issue or trial alternative ways of addressing first set of issues

**Stage 2:** Train Aged care and palliative care workers on methods developed in the first stage and to implement changes in practice in the wider group of organisations. Implementation of changes will be monitored to determine how successfully ideas from Stage 1 can be implemented.

**Stage 3**: Develop an education resource to capture ideas generated and lessons learned in first two Stages of the program. The object is to provide a practical resource that is useful to aged care and palliative care workers in a range of settings.