

One Small Town at a Time

Dementia Alliance International (DAI) hosts a webinar to celebrate Kaima, New South Wales, Australia in becoming dementia friendly by Amanda Bulgarelli, COO

I recently had the opportunity to join a webinar hosted by Dementia Alliance International (DAI) that celebrated a small group of Australians who are making a big difference in their community. Not all towns can claim something as bold as being dementia friendly; however, a small town in New South Wales has achieved this status in many areas. Residents living with dementia in the area have created a Dementia Alliance and a Dementia Advisory group that meets regularly and works extremely hard to lessen the stigma of dementia and to create a friendlier community. This group has set their sights on making changes at a local, national, and global level. They have found strong partnerships with the Kaima Community College, University of Wollongong, and a few other groups that have helped to shape the vision.

Through project awareness presentations, dementia awareness days, and even garnering business commitments, this group has had a major impact on the community. While not all ideas have gone as planned, and not all pieces have been effective, this movement is growing and living with the alliance advisory group to incorporate toolkits, meet-ups, virtual meetings, and more to spread the word and continue to build the friendly nature of Kaima. Of course, the fight to end the stigma is not over yet, and one day, it would be great to simply have *Livable* communities rather than having to specify that some are dementia friendly, but for now Kaima is making great strides to become inclusive and positive for ALL residents.

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