

media release

Tuesday, 15 March 2016

Seniors initiatives to help people living with dementia

Mosman Art Gallery is hosting a series of guided tours for people in the community living with dementia aimed at improving social participation, particularly in the arts.

The program is the first of three this year under the Living Active Lives project, which is part of Council's 'Mosman Connects' initiatives and the Northern Sydney Ageing Strategy to strengthen community connections and reduce social isolation in Mosman. Living Active Lives is run in collaboration with Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) Northern Sydney District, Alzheimer's Australia and Macquarie University.

"Social isolation is a major issue, particularly for some older people and carers who have reduced social contact and support," Gallery Director John Cheeseman said. "This program aims to broaden our audiences by building on the art and dementia tours that are currently offered by the gallery for people living in local nursing homes so we have been working with Mosman Council's Aged and Disability Services to connect with people living with dementia in their own homes."

This week's tour will include a group of older people who live in their own homes assisted by visiting volunteers. It follows previous successful tours, including seniors who attend a Council-organised monthly carers group who hadn't previously been to the gallery and a Council-organised respite group of carers and the person they care for. The fourth tour, which will coincide with the NSW Seniors Festival, will be an open invitation.

The NSW Seniors Festival, which is supported by FACS and runs from Friday 1 April to Sunday 10 April, is designed to celebrate and recognise seniors for the role they play and their community contributions.

To join the final tour on 7 April contact Public Programs Officer Anita Toft: a.toft@mosman.nsw.gov.au

Meanwhile on 7 March, Mosman business owners attended a workshop to increase their understanding when dealing with customers with dementia run by Mosman Council's Aged and Disability Services. Participants described the session, which covered topics including communication issues and ways to assist carers or family members, as "extremely valuable" and "full of useful information".

Attendees included staff from You Save Pharmacy, who said the workshop facilitated by Community Care Northern Beaches Northern Sydney Dementia Planner Lynn Silverstone, was "wonderful" and that the practical advice will help them feel more confident in future dealings with customers who have dementia.



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