

Younger people with dementia tee off with ACH

ACH GROUP • A DAY AGO

South Australian care provider ACH Group has introduced a new approach to respite options for people with younger onset dementia.



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A new golf group at West Beach delivers respite to a number of ACH clients diagnosed with dementia through a weekly game of golf.

Each participant is living with younger onset dementia, a condition that occurs in people aged 65 years and under.

For this group traditional respite models in an aged care setting are not appropriate and often tough on both the person, their carer and families.

The ACH golf group, run by a golf professional from Adelaide Shores Golf Club, with support from an ACH Group support worker and volunteer is part of a new project that aims to transform the way services for people with younger onset dementia are delivered in South Australia.

The program is part of ACH Group's Tailor Made Project, which aims to develop a 'tailor made' respite model for younger people living with dementia, their families and carers.

Tailor Made explores the notion that other forms of respite care can provide better outcomes for both the person with dementia and their carer or family member.

Dementia Learning and Development Unit Senior Project Officer Kelly Quinlan says there is a lack of specific services to cater for this group, which numbers about 2,500 across the state.

According to Ms Quinlan most people with younger onset dementia encounter challenges in accessing services that are mostly provided through the aged care sector, and may not be appropriate for their age, level of fitness or interests.

"People often have younger children and mortgages and might still be working at the time of diagnosis," she says. "People also tell us that their social networks fall away because people just don't know how to deal with it – it's not easy."

She says being engaged in the community, being physically active and having opportunities to learn new things are all important.

Group member Ian Drummond, a former police officer who had to retire early due to his diagnosis, says the social and physical benefits of the golf group are invaluable.

"We help each other out where we can, and we have a bit of fun – we don't take things too seriously," he says. "It's great to get outside to have a go at golf and with others who know what you're going through."

The golf group kicked off late last year with help from an ACH Group Foundation grant and support from Alzheimer's Australia (SA) through the Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program.

To find out more about the golf group or the Tailor Made Project contact Kelly Quinlan on 08 8159 3462 or email kquinlan@ach.org.au

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