

Dementia cafe opens

A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY pop-up cafe is about to open its doors at Ulverstone.

People with dementia can find social settings uncomfortable or impossible, which leaves them and their carers isolated at home.

The stigma and misunderstanding associated with dementia can sometimes lead to loneliness for both the person living with dementia and their carers and they can feel they are no longer welcome in the community.

The cafe will provide a supportive place for people with dementia and their carers to come to socialise in the community.

Central Coast Council strategy and policy officer, Heidi Willard, said the Connect Cafe was being held every Tuesday for 10 weeks.

Mayor Jan Bonde will officially launch the cafe at an event on June 26.

It will operate in the Gnomon Room at the Wharf Precinct between 10am and 12pm.

Ms Willard said the new Connect Cafe is a form of memory cafe introduced in Australia in 2002.



CARING CAFE: Melissa Budgeon, Central Coast Council's community wellbeing officer is facilitating the new Connect Cafe and is with Heidi Willard, the council's strategy and policy officer. Picture: Matthew Powell.

The cafes elsewhere were shown to provide a major positive impact on the quality of life of people living with dementia.

Carers said after being at the memory cafe people with dementia talked more, were more alert and did more activities at home.

"It will provide an opportunity for people with dementia, carers and the community to interact, laugh and talk together," Ms Willard said.

In June last year the Central Coast Council became the first in the State to adopt a framework to become a dementia-friendly community.

A working group was formed to design and prioritise an action plan to implement with the council as a whole of community approach.

State Government funding has enabled the group to develop the Connect Cafe memory cafe to be run with volunteers.

Some other aspects of the dementia-friendly community framework include dementia-friendly shops,

slow shopping, accompanied walks, intergenerational learning, men's sheds, urban planning and design, dementia awareness in schools, volunteer respite and dementia-friendly finance.

The dementia framework is available at <http://www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au/dementia-friendly-central-coast/>