

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nation must respond to looming dementia crisis

Catholic Health Australia is joining the call for a greater focus on prevention, research and treatment to fight the country's looming health crisis: Dementia.

Representatives from the Catholic Health Australia network were among more than 500 people who marched on Parliament this morning to demand funding to address Australia's dementia epidemic.

The march, organised by Alzheimer's Australia, coincided with the release of a report from Deloitte Access Economics that warned the number of Australians with dementia will reach 1 million by 2050 – up from the current total of 267,000 – unless there is a significant medical breakthrough.

In order to achieve that breakthrough, new funding is needed over the next five years, politicians were told at the march. Alzheimer's Australia chief executive Glenn Rees said that money would help raise awareness around the condition, achieve timely diagnosis, allow for quality dementia care, help Australians reduce their risk of dementia and fund dementia research.

Catholic Health Australia chief executive Martin Laverty has endorsed the efforts of Alzheimer's Australia to raise awareness of the growing area of concern.

“The increasing number of people with dementia – estimated to reach 385,000 by the end of this decade – poses a serious challenge for providers of care, in both residential and community care settings,” he said.

“We support Alzheimer's Australia in its effort to have dementia receive the attention it needs as part of broader aged-care reform.

“Unless we as a nation deal appropriately with dementia, it will be an enormously costly burden on future taxpayers.

“We were delighted to join today's protest – something we don't often do.

“We want to work with government as it shapes aged-care reform to prioritise the needs of people living with dementia.”