

Caring for Carers: a new program to reach carers for people with dementia



The *Caring for Carers of People with Dementia Project* links carers of older people with dementia to other carers living in regional and rural Australia. The chat-based group program allows carers to chat with other carers in similar circumstances. Carers join a weekly group videoconference meeting from their home and connect with other carers in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Carers have the opportunity to share information, experience and skills. The program is available to primary carers of a person with dementia.

The information and chat meetings are led by an experienced facilitator, Dr Annie Banbury, and run for six weeks. Group programs have now started and will be offered through to mid 2019. Carers need to be connected to the internet. Most Carers have continued to meet online to provide one another with ongoing support after the research part of the project has concluded.

The program is free, apart from charges from the internet service provider for data usage in the videoconference sessions. Carers are encouraged to use their own desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone; the project can loan a tablet for the sessions, if needed. IT help is available for anyone who needs assistance with the technology used in the project. Carers do not need to stop any other programs or services that they are involved in. Carers will be offered \$50 voucher to cover internet charges at completion of their involvement the project. They will also go into the draw to win one of five tablets.

The Caring for Carers program is being offered by Central Queensland University's Caring for Carers of People with Dementia Project which has received Australian Government Dementia and Aged Care Services funding. The project will gather information about the response of isolated carers of older people with dementia to a videoconference based, outreach, information and peer support program. A summary of the information gathered from the project will be available for participants when the project is finished.

The project team is keen to hear from carers who would like to participate. To register or find out more, please contact the project by email carers@cqu.edu.au or phone **Karen Nixon** on 0427 812 156 or **Kristen Forster** on 0437 579 695.

You can also register your interest online at cqu.edu.au/caringforthecarers

 @vc.groups4carers

