

Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister
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Ms Emma Davidson MLA
Minister for Veterans and Seniors
Davidson@act.gov.au

Dear Chief Minister Barr and Minister Davidson

Building on the success of Canberra's first dementia friendly film event *A Day at the Movies* in October 2022, the Dementia Friendly Screening (DFS) Team plan to produce a program of 4 screenings over the coming year, in an ongoing partnership with the ACT Government Office for Seniors and Veterans (OSV). Working in collaboration with community stakeholders and venue partner the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), this partnership aims to build a dementia friendly screening community, using the Canberra series as a model for best practice in creating a sustainable and inclusive accessible screen culture that actively welcomes and involves people living with dementia and their care partners.

BACKGROUND AND TEAM

Dementia friendly communities, and the dementia friendly spaces and environments that serve and enable these communities, welcome and support people living with dementia and their families so that they can participate more fully in social and leisure activities and the local community.

Dementia friendly film screenings can play a valuable role in creating these communities and supporting wellbeing through the sensory and social pleasures of going to the movies. However, people living with dementia (whether older or younger onset) have limited access to this familiar leisure activity. In Australia, people living with dementia have been largely overlooked in cinema programming by both our exhibitors and our media access organizations (such as Media Access Australia), which have prioritized technology-based accessibility needs and/or seniors more broadly.

Dementia friendly screenings prioritize principles of inclusivity and accessibility and recognise that cinema-going can be a valuable way for people living with dementia to experience meaningful connections with companions and carers, with the community more broadly, and with self. They achieve this by actively catering to and welcoming those living with dementia and their families through the design of the space (lighting, sound, signage, access), appropriate film choice and scheduling, and having responsive dementia-aware staff on hand.

These screenings de-stigmatise dementia by building awareness, skills, and capacity in cultural organizations and in screen culture more broadly and create connections

between stakeholders, organisations, and community groups to help build a more inclusive screen culture.

The DFS Team consists of 3 Australian film experts. Dr Jodi Brooks (Project Lead, University of New South Wales) is a film scholar with expertise in ageing, accessibility and screen culture; Dr Fincina Hopgood (Project Partner, University of New England) is a film and media scholar with expertise in mental health and screen media; and Karina Libbey (Screen Culture Specialist) has extensive experience in audience engagement, designing and delivering public programs and film festivals for diverse communities. Bringing together wide-ranging film knowledge, research specialisations in cinema, ageing and mental health, and substantial experience in film programming and collaborations with various screen organisations, the DFS Team have a combined 60 plus years experience, making them uniquely placed to drive this important initiative.

A DAY AT THE MOVIES PILOT EVENT: APPROACH AND FINDINGS

The pilot event in October 2022 was the ACT's first ever dementia friendly screening. Designed and delivered by the DFS Team, the pilot drew on research and international best practice in dementia friendly screenings and arts and health programs for people living with dementia, which the Team adapted for an Australian audience and context, the local Canberra community, and the venue – the Arc Cinema at the NFSA.

The event design was also informed through a consultation process and on-site workshop with key stakeholders in the community. This co-design process was critical to ensure the event would deliver to the community's needs. From the choice of film (the First Nations musical *The Sapphires*) to event scheduling, creating appropriate wayfinding signage and providing a quiet break-out space and NFSA staff training with Dementia Australia, to event add-ons to encourage social interaction (such as morning tea, costumes on display, and souvenir programs and polaroids), the entire event was tailored to the needs of people living with dementia, their family and friends.

Partners of the pilot event, in addition to OSV (who provided funding to cover out-of-pocket costs), included the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA), Carers ACT, Dementia Australia and Council on the Ageing (COTA). Each contributed their expertise in a variety of ways, and we intend to continue collaborating with these partners, as well as developing new partnerships in the future. For some of the collaborating organisations and stakeholders, the pilot event was the first opportunity for these groups to partner on an event, share expertise and build capacity and connection.

2023-24 SCREENING SERIES + LONG TERM GOALS

Following the success of the pilot event and in response to feedback from the community and stakeholders, the DFS Team are motivated to develop a series of regular quarterly dementia friendly screenings at the NFSA. This screening program will focus on community ownership, participation in community, building capacity, and sustainable impact and deliverability.

There has been substantial institutional investment to date in developing the dementia friendly screenings project, including both financial and in-kind support from UNSW, UNE, and NFSA. The support for the pilot through modest financial investment and shared expertise from both OSV and MACA was integral to its success. Now is the time to build on that investment and develop a sustainable program of events and a screen culture for people living with dementia and other forms of memory loss in the Canberra community.

Our proposal is based on three key principles that our research has identified as important for building sustainable, accessible and meaningful screen culture events for people living with dementia.¹ Together, these three principles will build sustainability through consolidation of skills and resources, capacity building, greater community and stakeholder engagement, and enhanced socio-spatial experiences.

The three principles informing this project are:

- (1) **Venue partnerships:** Embed dementia friendly activities in the regular programs and agendas of relevant arts and cultural organisations (NFSA as venue partner) to assist audience members with planning; enable venue familiarity and a sense of inclusion; build capacity and drive change in cultural organisations to better reach community stakeholders; and help de-stigmatise dementia in the broader community through inclusion of dementia friendly practices and dementia awareness in regular business.
- (2) **Co-design principles:** Build co-design principles into the project by actively involving dementia advocates in the design and delivery of the program, which will strengthen and enhance opportunities for social inclusion, skill-sharing, and capacity building through developing community skills and networks.
- (3) **Diversity and inclusion opportunities:** Link dementia friendly screening events to other ACT annual events (e.g. Floriade, Reconciliation Day, International Women's Day, Enlighten, Pride, Canberra National Multicultural Festival) to better reach and involve people living with dementia in diverse communities that might not otherwise feel welcome or included.

¹ See the following key reports: (i) Milligan, C & Mossabir, C 2018, *ALMO Final Evaluation Report* (2018), Christine Milligan & Rahena Mossabir, Lancaster University Centre for Ageing Research; (ii) Stevenson, D, Barns, S, Clements, J, Cmielewski, C & Mar, P 2019, *The social impact of NSW arts, screen and culture programs: Final report*. Institute of Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, Sydney, NSW.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20210407144920/https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1750349/Social_Impact_of_the_Arts_report.pdf>; (iii) Adams, M & Cotter, N, Audience Focus, Inc. 2011, *The Impact of the Development of Museum Programs for People Affected by Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia*, The Museum of Modern Art MoMA Meet Me Final Report; and (iv) Gordon-Nesbitt, R, 2020, *Older and wiser? Creative ageing in the UK 2010-19*, Kings College London
<https://baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/older-and-wiser-creative-ageing-in-the-uk-2010-19/>

In making these three principles the foundations of this project, this initiative offers a new model for dementia friendly screenings. In this respect the project not only draws on international best practice and evaluations of related initiatives in the UK and across Europe but it introduces new approaches to the design and delivery of dementia friendly screenings. The proposed 4 screening events will allow the DFS Team to develop a “Canberra model” for a sustainable accessible cinema culture that welcomes and actively includes community members living with dementia, care partners and dementia advocates as both audience members and as co-designers.

The Canberra dementia friendly screening project aligns with many of the principles informing the ACT Government’s Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024 and its focus areas. Our co-design approach supports the focus area of “involved, connected and valued,” while our targeted diversity and inclusion engagement priorities support the focus area of services that support and embrace diversity, and our venue partnership will both enable and model all four of the ACT’s Age-Friendly City plan focus areas.

Canberra is well placed to house and drive this initiative because of its Age-Friendly City Plan and because it is the nation’s capital and home of our most significant cultural organizations including the National Film and Sound Archive, the project’s venue partner. On completion of this 4 screening event project, we plan to use the Canberra model as a benchmark and resource for other cities and towns – and communities – across the country to use to create their own dementia friendly cinema culture. This project lays important groundwork for addressing issues of disability, accessibility and intersectionality in Australian screen culture, ensuring everyone in the community can share the joy of going to the movies.

BUDGET:

For the delivery of 4 x quarterly dementia friendly screening events, held at the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra, the budget request is **\$35,988 ex GST**.

This amount covers the hard costs involved in producing and delivering the event, including film hire, catering, travel for the DFS Team as well as some staff costs. The budget also includes substantial in-kind contributions from the DFS Team, the NFSA and other partners.

Please see the detailed budget below.

Key deliverables include:

- 4 dementia friendly screening events (multimodal half-day events at the Arc cinema NFSA Canberra) and associated promotional and marketing materials, audience take-home souvenir program and memento;
- DFS-Team authored article on the project for *The Conversation* or equivalent;

- Foundations for a Canberra-based dementia friendly film society, to be led by dementia advocates and supported by DFS Team;
- Detailed report for ACT Government
- ARC Linkage Grant application to support further development of the initiative and to assess broader nation-wide applicability of the “Canberra model” for sustainable dementia friendly screen culture.

Following the initial investment from the Community Services Directorate in the pilot program for dementia friendly screenings, we hope to build a long-term, sustainable and inclusive model for the future of Canberrans living with dementia, their families and companions. Thank you for your consideration.

Dr Jodi Brooks (project lead) | UNSW | j.brooks@unsw.edu.au

Dr Fincina Hopgood | UNE | fhopgood@une.edu.au

Karina Libbey | hello@karinalibbey.com.au

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Letter of support

Please find below a letter of support from the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (received via email 31/5/2023)

It is with tremendous support that the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA) advocates and stresses the importance of the ACT Government’s ongoing provision of funding support for the dementia-friendly film screening application. Currently there are an estimated 6,600 people living with dementia in the Australia Capital Territory, and the number of people living with dementia is expected to increase to an estimated 18,900 people by 2058. With this acceleration of dementia and early onset dementia diagnosis across our population now and into the future, providing such friendly community-based recreational spaces is as important as providing 'mums and bub's movie sessions' currently available in mainstream cinemas. Provision of this funding would position the ACT Government as a leader in supporting such age-friendly environments.

MACA Committee representatives were involved in the dementia friendly film screening pilot project late last year at the National Film and Sound Archives (NFSA). This screening saw academic experts and key community providers including NFSA, Dementia Australia and Carers ACT partner to enable those living with dementia to enjoy a tailored movie event with friends, families, carers and companions. This pilot highlighted that specifically designed changes to the environment assists people living with dementia to enjoy cinema experiences like other ACT community members.

These environmental changes included training ushers on dementia; providing low light within the cinema; having the sound at a lower volume; installing easy, well posted wayfinding and information signage for entry and exit sites, bathrooms, cafe etc. All these elements and more led the pilot to be a great success.

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing strongly recommends that the ACT Government considers supporting this important application in the light of the fast growing number of people impacted by dementia across the ACT. Support of this application also demonstrates ACT Government commitment to prioritising quality of life for older Canberrans as part of the Aged Friendly City Plan. Finally, this project will contribute to broadening community awareness of dementia as early onset dementia and the ageing population increases in the ACT.

We are happy to provide more information should you require it.

Yours sincerely,

Prue Power (Chair); Cathy Hope (Deputy Chair); Juliette Spurrett (member) on behalf of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing

Associate Professor Cathy Hope

She/her

Deputy Chair, Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing

Engagement and Impact Director

Lecturer, Communication

Coordinator, Play, Creativity and Wellbeing Project, Centre for Creative and Cultural Research

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Attachment 2: Budget

Income	Event #1	Event #2	Event #3	Event #4	TOTAL	Notes
Community Services Directorate Funding	\$8,997	\$8,997	\$8,997	\$8,997	\$35,988	
In-kind Staff (Project Lead: Film Researcher Accessibility & Ageing)	\$1,440	\$1,440	\$1,440	\$1,440	\$5,760	Dr Jodi Brooks, UNSW
In-kind Staff (Project Partner: Film Researcher, Mental Health & Screen Media)	\$720	\$720	\$720	\$720	\$2,880	Dr Fincina Hopgood, UNE
In-kind Travel (UNE)	\$800		\$800		\$1,600	
In-kind Staff (NFSA)	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$5,280	NFSA Program Manager, Visitor Services, Designer
In-kind Contribution NFSA	\$1,280	\$3,240	\$1,280	\$1,280	\$7,080	VSO event staff, venue hire, staff training hours for 1 x refresher with Dementia Australia + DA training costs
In-kind Marketing and Publicity	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$8,400	UNSW, UNE & NFSA
Ticket Sales	\$300	\$350	\$400	\$400	\$1,450	Based on \$10 each, free for companions (50% of tickets as free). Estimate 60/70/80/90 attendees over 4 events
TOTALS	\$16,957	\$18,167	\$17,057	\$16,257	\$68,438	TOTALS

Expenditure						Expenditure
DFS Team Staff Hours - Contractor: Screen Culture Specialist	\$1,890	\$1,890	\$1,890	\$1,890	\$7,560	Karina Libbey. Preparation work, on-site delivery and NFSA venue liaison
DFS Team Staff Hours - Contractor: Screen Culture Specialist		\$360		\$360	\$720	2 x 1/2 day workshop with advocates establishing DFS film society
Accessibility Research & Design (UNSW & UNE)	\$4,127	\$4,127	\$4,127	\$4,127	\$16,508	UNSW (Project Lead) \$11,100 + UNE (Project Partner) \$5,408
In-kind Staff (Project Lead: Film Researcher Accessibility & Ageing)	\$1,440	\$1,440	\$1,440	\$1,440	\$5,760	Event attendance and evaluation (4hrs x 4)
In-kind Staff (Project Partner: Film Researcher, Mental Health & Screen Media)	\$720	\$720	\$720	\$720	\$2,880	Event attendance and evaluation (4hrs x 2)
DFS Team Travel Costs - UNE	\$800		\$800		\$1,600	\$1,600 UNE in-kind
DFS Team Travel Costs - UNSW	\$675	\$675	\$675	\$675	\$2,700	
Marketing and Publicity	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$8,400	UNSW, UNE & NFSA in-kind
NFSA Staff	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$5,280	In-kind contributions, NFSA Program Manager, Visitor Services, Designer
NFSA VSO training hours with Dementia Australia		\$960			\$960	8 staff 3hr min shift x \$40p/h, in-kind contributions
NFSA refresher training with Dementia Australia		\$1,000			\$1,000	In-kind contributions
Venue Hire	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$3,200	In-kind contributions

VSO Event Staff	\$480	\$480	\$480	\$480	\$1,920	In-kind contributions
Ticket Sales Revenue	\$300	\$350	\$400	\$400	\$1,450	Retained by NFSA to subsidize in-kind contributions
Film Hire Fees	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$1,400	
Souvenir Program Printing	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$1,200	
Catering	\$900	\$1,050	\$1,200	\$1,350	\$4,500	Tea, coffee, muffins \$15pp
Event Misc.	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$1,400	Polaroid film, sign printing, posters
TOTALS	\$16,552	\$18,272	\$16,952	\$16,662	\$68,438	TOTALS

