



SCIENCE AND  
INDUSTRY  
ENDOWMENT  
FUND



# STEM Community Partnerships Program

## Camden local scenario

### Ageing population and rise in dementia

Camden's ageing population will be an asset, providing a wealth of skills, knowledge, wisdom and mentorship. However, this also presents challenges, such as a widening retirement savings gap and rapidly escalating healthcare expenditure.

In Camden, the last census (2016) reported that 15.9% of the population is aged 50 – 85 years. From 2011 to 2016, Camden's population increased by 21,510 people (37.9%) with the greatest change in the group aged 50 to 59, the older workers and pre-retirees. This increasing trend is expected to continue.<sup>1</sup>

Dementia is a disease that can happen to anybody with risk increasing with age. It is a disorder that causes a permanent decline in brain function, affecting a person's ability to think, remember and can lead to personality changes. Each person responds differently to the disease, but common symptoms include emotional over-reaction, hoarding and repetitive behaviour. This confusion may lead them to wandering and getting lost, being anxious and displaying depression. It can be difficult for family and friends to support and care for those with dementia.

This will change people's lifestyles, the services they demand and the structure of the labour force. For people with dementia, the path to retirement can be quite different and this needs to be considered for future planning. People with dementia are also more likely to have physical illnesses left untreated and therefore put a greater stress on the local health care system. Camden Council and Community organisations have the challenge to ensure they provide the relevant services and activities to cater for this aging population.



*Photo courtesy of Camden Council*

## Your task

Your task is to use the information above and resources provided below as a start to identify a local problem and design a STEM-focussed solution.

(Question, Design, Explore, Communicate)

<sup>1</sup> Camden Council website, [www.camden.nsw.gov.au/community/support/older-people/](http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/community/support/older-people/)

## Resources

### CSIRO research

- Living at home longer: <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/health-medical/Smarter-safer-homes>
- Monitoring chronic disease: <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/health-medical/diagnostics/home-monitoring>
- Rehab app for better recovery: <https://www.csiro.au/en/News/News-releases/2017/Knee-replacement-rehab-app>

### Reports

- Camden Council:  
<https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/community/support/older-people/>  
<https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/Uploads/Directory-Jan-2018.pdf>  
<https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/community/support/older-people/active-ageing-strategy/survey-and-consultation-results/>

### Articles

- NSW Aging Strategy 2016-2020:  
[https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/382829/NSW\\_Ageing\\_Strategy\\_2016-2020.pdf](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/382829/NSW_Ageing_Strategy_2016-2020.pdf)
- Australian Government Productivity Commission On Ageing Australia: Preparing for the Future:  
<https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/ageing-australia>
- Daily Telegraph, Macarthur region faces dementia epidemic - Camden to be worst hit:  
<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/macarthur/macarthur-region-faces-dementia-epidemic--camden-to-be-hit-the-worst/news-story/0cc13c36170c55a226abfd2857614027>
- Dementia fact sheet: <https://www.dementia.org.au/resources/help-sheets>
- Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare:  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/2012/2012-nov/people-with-dementia-in-nsw-more-than-twice-as-lik>
- The Age, The economics of an ageing population:  
<https://www.theage.com.au/education/the-economics-of-an-ageing-population-20150316-1m0g4a.html>
- The Sydney Morning Herald, February 13, 2016: <https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/australia-at-24-million-high-points-and-hazards-in-the-demographic-data-20160212-gmszk2.html>