This help sheet provides information on how technology and the environment may be used to support carers of people living with dementia.

**Person Centred Response**
Caring for a person with dementia can change your life, whether you live with the person or some distance away. Adapting your environment and using some assistive technology may help you achieve more peace of mind and confidence.

Every carer will experience their own journey and will have different and changing needs over time. It’s important to remember that not every option will suit every person, so consider what your needs are and how they can best be met.

**Environmental Suggestions**
For carers having some time to themselves, privacy and a space to retreat to can provide opportunities to relax and re-charge. Some carers report they have achieved this by dedicating a spare room in their home just for their own use, or by remodeling their existing home and building on new rooms for this purpose. Some examples are:

- Ensuite bathroom off bedroom;
- Spare living area or second entertainment area that can be closed off (rumpus room); and
- Self contained dwelling on the grounds of the family home (granny flat).

**Carer Support**

- **Carer support kits**, including kits for young carers and indigenous carers, together with kits in multiple languages are available from the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre in your state or territory. The type of kit may vary between states and territories. Kits can be obtained by dialling the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres on 1800 052 222.

Difficulties around continence can pose extra strains for carers. Carer continence kits are also available from the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre. The National Continence Helpline is a free telephone service that provides information from trained continence nurses who can refer you to local sources of help and offer personal advice and counselling. Contact the National Continence Helpline on 1800 330 066.

- **Day Centres and Respite Services**. Sometimes carers need more of a break, and local care and support service information can be obtained from the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres on 1800 052 222.

**Simple Technology Suggestions**

- **Music, Relaxation or Meditation Compact Discs (CDs)** are available for loan from most local libraries and Alzheimer’s

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*Sound and Movement Monitor is a system that can be used by the carer to alert them to activity in another area of the house*
Australia lending libraries in your state or territory. These CDs can also be purchased from most music outlets and department stores or purchased online. A number of CDs have been specifically designed with busy carers in mind and provide relaxation for short periods of time. Alzheimer’s Australia librarians may have more information.

• The **Sound and Movement Unit** retails as a baby monitor and is part of a monitoring system that is linked to another monitor in the bedroom. This system can be used by the carer to alert them of activity in another area of the house and provide an opportunity for the carer to retreat for privacy while still maintaining contact with the person with dementia. The ethical and dignified use of this monitor can support independence of a person with dementia and peace of mind for their carer.

• **Personal Emergency Response Alarms** are lightweight, waterproof and usually worn around the neck, or on a person’s wrist. If the person falls and needs assistance, they press a button on their pendant activating a speaker unit which dials a 24 hour support call centre. This system is useful for a person in the early stages of dementia where the wearer is able to recognize their need for help and activate the pendant. If, as a carer, you are concerned about how to get help for yourself and the person with dementia should something happen to you, you may consider a personal emergency response alarm for yourself.

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**Advanced Technologies**

• **Mobile Phones** can provide support for carers. Features will vary with the model of phone and can range from the simple to complicated, including one touch dialing, call blocking, bigger buttons and larger screens, calendars with reminders, recording and playback capacity. Other features can include Global Positioning System (GPS) for finding locations or real time tracing. Real time tracing provides a street location of the person holding the phone. This information can be obtained by the carer, either by text message, or by logging onto a web site and obtaining the details.

• **Computers** – carers who have a home computer can set their computer to simplify the process of logging on to a computer and moving to a screen where the options and internet sites are relevant to the person’s interests. The size of the text and the number of sites that can be visited can be modified.

• **Communication** – Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) works on most computers which are connected to the internet. The VOIP system allows the computer user to talk to, hear, and see family or friends via their computers using the computer and web camera. There are many providers who supply the software and services that support this activity. This may allow you, for example to share mealtime with a distant relative or Alzheimer’s Australia at www.alzheimers.org.au.

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**Finding Products**

For information about specific products and where to get them, see www.dementiatechnology.org.au. Professional assessment is advised before any changes are made or products purchased. To find the best solution for your needs and to avoid unnecessary expense, contact the Independent Living Centre.

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**Further Information**

Technology and the way individuals relate to it are constantly changing. For further information, a dementia friendly home checklist and to view other Help Sheets about how the environment, technology and you can help, please see www.dementiatechnology.org.au or call 1300 275 227 (1300 ASK BCS).

For further information and to discuss your individual needs and:

• assistive technology or home modifications, contact the Independent Living Centre at www.ilcaustralia.org or 1300 885 886;

• dementia, contact The National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500, or Alzheimer’s Australia at www.alzheimers.org.au.

For information about local care and support services, including respite for carers, phone Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres on freecall 1800 052 222*. For emergency respite support outside business hours, phone freecall 1800 059 059* (*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates).