

# Hazel Hawke Alzheimer's Research & Care Fund

Media Release

**Embargo until 7.45pm, 2 November 2003**

## **Hazel Hawke - living with Alzheimer's**

Australia's much loved former 'first lady', Hazel Hawke, AO, has chosen to disclose that she has Alzheimer's disease. She tells her story on ABC TV's award winning *Australian Story* at 8 pm on Monday 3 November. Don't miss it, or the repeat on Saturday 8 November at 12.30 pm.

"I hope that, by speaking out about this very private issue, I can help to promote openness, awareness and support for all people living with dementia. No illness should carry a negative label. None of us is immune," said Hazel.

"Although I would obviously prefer not to have Alzheimer's, I continue to live a happy and healthy life, with the love and support of family and friends. I hope that, as a community, we can work towards this as a reality for all those similarly affected."

"Practically speaking, I hope to help raise much-needed funds by establishing the Hazel Hawke Alzheimer's Research and Care Fund. I have done this together with Alzheimer's Australia. We will use the money you donate to assist on-going research into the prevention and management of Alzheimer's disease, and to help provide crucial services to people and their carers living with dementia. I urge you all to contribute generously to this Fund."

Glenn Rees, Executive Director of Alzheimer's Australia, praised Hazel Hawke's courage in disclosing her dementia: "We are extremely grateful that Hazel and her family have decided to speak publicly and support the important work of Alzheimer's Australia."

"All Australians will be touched by Hazel Hawke's disclosure and her willingness to think of others at this challenging time in her own life," said Mr. Rees.

Alzheimer's Australia is the peak consumer body representing people living with dementia and their family carers. It provides free information, support and education services to people living with dementia and their families and carers.

Alzheimer's disease is the leading cause of dementia. It progressively affects people's ability to remember, make judgements and eventually to care for themselves. The dementia epidemic is mainly due to population ageing. In Australia over 165,000 people are affected, with maybe as many again in the early, pre-diagnostic stages. By 2040, it is expected that there will be 500,000 people diagnosed with dementia in Australia with millions more affected as loved ones and carers.

Please support the **Hazel Hawke Alzheimer's Research & Care Fund** by calling **1300 306 293** to make a tax deductible donation or visit our website at [www.hazelhawke.net.au](http://www.hazelhawke.net.au). It is in everybody's interests to do so. Dementia will touch all our lives directly or indirectly. It is one of the leading health issues confronting our community – personally, socially and economically.

Links to further information on Alzheimer's and dementia are available from [www.hazelhawke.net.au](http://www.hazelhawke.net.au).

Note: The media is requested to note Hazel will not be giving interviews: Hazel and her family and Alzheimer's Australia request her personal privacy is completely respected now and into the future.

**For all media enquiries and media comment please contact:**

**Before Mon 3 November 8.30pm** Julie Thomson ABC TV 0427 723 198 or Lesna Thomas 0407 287 320  
**After Mon 3 November, 8.30pm:**

Lewis Kaplan, Chief Executive, Alzheimer's Australia NSW, 0417 400 399

Glenn Rees, National Executive Director, Alzheimer's Australia, 0419 303 407

or Alzheimer's Australia offices in all States/Territory Capitals