

Case study

Silver Memories

Details

What

Silver Memories is a special radio service developed by 4MBS Classic FM designed to address social isolation and depression in aged care. *Silver Memories* broadcasts gentle, cheerful music from the 1920s to the 1950s. Delivered 24 hours a day by satellite to aged care homes and retirement villages, the program also includes sing-alongs, birthday calls, old radio serials, comedy spots and requests, all enhancing the community engagement.

Silver Memories provides a non-pharmacological tool for the management of dementia and related issues and has been endorsed by the Australian Medical Association (Qld) and Alzheimers Australia (Qld) who use it in their Dementia Behaviour Management Service.

4MBS is currently rolling out the service nationally, via satellite delivery.

Innovation

4MBS' business model innovation enables social and community benefits through *Silver Memories*. By using satellite technology, the service can reach regional and remote aged-care homes, without broadband internet. This builds on 4MBS' existing broadcast content, reaches new markets and creates a new income stream via a subscription fee.

When

May 2015 to 2017

Arts Queensland contribution

\$100,000 allocated from Arts Business Innovation Fund (ABIF)* made up of a \$50,000 grant, \$50,000 zero interest loan.



Where

2015 installations include: Pinalba, Bundaberg, Emerald, Toowoomba, reaching 570 residents.

2016 planned installations include: Charters Towers, Townsville, Bundaberg, Stanthorpe, Milmerran, Hervey Bay, Trebonne and Kingaroy. 15 installations planned for 2016 (to approx. 1600 residents)

Contact for further information

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Links

Radio National report on *Silver Memories*:
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/silver-memories-and-golden-oldies/6751074>

2009 UQ evaluation of *Silver Memories*:
http://4mbs.com.au/sites/default/files/silver_memories_evaluation_report.pdf

2012 Churchill Fellowship report by Gary Thorpe:
http://4mbs.com.au/sites/default/files/winston_churchill_memorial_trust_final_report_0.pdf

* Both the Queensland Government and the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation have contributed \$500,000 to the Arts Business Innovation Fund.

Outcomes

- Aged care homes are now incorporating the *Silver Memories* service into their daily activity and relaxation schedules reporting that the broadcasting signal is clear and consistent, the equipment is easy to use and the programs are well received by both residents and staff.
- *Silver Memories* was a finalist in the 2015 International Dementia Awards held in the UK.
- *Silver Memories* has been installed in five aged care homes so far with ABIF funding. A further five will be installed by early 2016 and 10 over the following 3-4 months in regional areas of Queensland.
- The Australian Centre on Ageing at the University of Queensland worked with 4MBS to evaluate the benefit of *Silver Memories* to residents of aged care facilities. Funding for a two-year research project was made available by the Wicking Trust.
- Other financial support for *Silver Memories* has been secured from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, the Viertel Charitable Foundation and the Brisbane City Council.



Learnings and reflections

4MBS General Manager, Gary Thorpe reflected on the development of *Silver Memories* and ambitions for the future of the program:

Silver Memories was devised as a strategy to help relieve social isolation in nursing homes, based on the knowledge that elderly people respond positively to the music of their youth.

I undertook a Churchill Fellowship, researching music therapy principles from leading academics in the UK, Europe and the US and discovered Silver Memories to be unique in the world as a form of Reminiscence Therapy for people living with dementia.

Silver Memories programming has been altered to implement the findings of the Churchill Fellowship. This includes a change in the style of music played in the afternoons – playing calming music to address the Sundown Effect. This helps relieve patients of the distress they can feel at meal times, bath times or change of carer at the end of a shift.

Silver Memories Activities Kits are provided to staff at each site and evaluation surveys are conducted to ascertain the impact of the service on residents in terms of reduction in levels of agitation and wandering behaviour.

Silver Memories aims to reach 300 aged care facilities or 3000 elderly people after three years, generating a sustainable income stream for 4MBS.