

# Brisbane Airport named Australia's first dementia-friendly airport at guide launch

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The QUT-based Dementia Centre for Research Collaboration: Carers and Consumers (DCRC-CC) has been working with the airport since 2015 to improve the experience of air [travel](#) for people with [dementia](#).

[Ensuring a Smooth Journey: A Guide to Brisbane Airport for people living with Dementia and their Travel Companions](#) was created by a team led by Dr Maria O'Reilly, Professor Elizabeth Beattie, Professor Helen Edwards, Professor Jill Franz, Sandra Jeavons, Nicole Shepherd and Professor Lindy Willmott.

The step-by-step guide was prepared in partnership with dementia advocates and Brisbane Airport Corporation which, as a result, now has a dementia-friendly action plan and a resources kit prepared by the DCRC-CC.

"Close to 47 million people worldwide live with dementia, including more than 413,000 Australians, but many still travel. Until now, no guidelines for dealing with such passengers existed for airlines, airports or carers," said Professor Beattie, Director of the DCRC-CC.

"Air travel can be incredibly stressful for anyone but even more so for people with dementia and their carers.

"A previous DCRC-CC study found the most challenging part of [air travel](#) for people with dementia was managing at the airport. The new guide aims to make the experience of navigating through Brisbane Airport's Domestic and International Terminals as simple, stress free and enjoyable as possible." Some of the best advice comes from people who have dementia and those who travel with them. They suggest, for

example, that you find an airline and stick to them, keep hand luggage to a minimum, always be early and book flights at the quieter times."

According to the guide, thorough planning is essential to any proposed trip.

"Travel is simpler during early stages of dementia and we suggest that people, or their carers, talk to their GP about their plans and get advice that matches their individual circumstances," Professor Beattie said.

"Visit the airport beforehand to familiarise yourself with the layout. It can also be helpful to do a trial run with a short trips. Another good idea is to plan flexible stopovers to allow gradual adjustment to different time zones. Even the choice of seating can be helpful."

The guide identifies the international dementia friendly symbols and takes users through the different airport zones, outlining what to expect in the bag screening area, duty free regulations, customs, quarantine, transfers and immigration.

The project team were able to determine the 'dementia friendliness' of Brisbane Airport's Domestic and International Terminals by conducting an airport audit using the Dementia Friendly Communities Environmental Assessment Tool.

"Brisbane Airport scored well, especially with its signage which is really clear and concise from the carpark through the boarding gate, particularly in the international terminal," Professor Beattie said."

Brisbane Airport Corporation has been marvellous in its enthusiastic embrace of the project and, most importantly, of the need for new resources. We now hope the guide and staff training material can be adapted for use in other airports in Australia and worldwide, and in other

formats, such as a mobile phone app."

Julianne Alroe Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) CEO and Managing Director, said the resources kit would complement Brisbane Airport's existing Disability Access program and be integrated into customer service training for airline staff and other airport workers, including retailers, security, cleaners and volunteers."It really is just the beginning of further programs that will support travellers with a range of disabilities and make their visit to the [airport](#) less stressful and more enjoyable." Ms Alroe said.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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