$4M TO FUEL AI PLATFORM FOR HEALTHY AGEING

NZ-based Elli Cares to drive development of smart ageing platform

DUNEDIN, OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND, July 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A landmark international initiative has been awarded a $4 million Catalyst: Strategic grant from New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), matched by co-funding from Singapore's National Research Foundation, to develop a world-first AI-powered mobile platform that helps older adults monitor and strengthen their cognitive health.

Angela Edwards, Founder, Elli Cares

The three-year research and development program brings together Elli Cares, an award-winning AgeTech company, with Dementia NZ, Victoria University of Wellington, University of Auckland, and University of Otago, and Singapore's A*STAR Institute of High Performance Computing, National Neuroscience Institute, and Lions Befrienders.

> We're building tools that not only detect cognitive change - but empower people to take action early, stay independent, and age well"
> *Angela Edwards, Founder, Elli Cares*

"We're thrilled to be building a next-generation tool that brings world-class AI research directly into the lives of older adults and their families," said Angela Edwards, Founder of Elli Cares. "This is about empowering people to live well for longer - and making advanced cognitive support accessible and engaging at scale."

Reimagining Cognitive Health - From Diagnosis to Daily Resilience

The project will deliver a mobile-first, AI-augmented platform that combines real-time speech analysis and gamified cognitive tasks to detect early signs of cognitive decline, provide personalised training, and generate actionable insights for care partners and clinicians. It marks

a shift from passive diagnosis to proactive cognitive resilience.

Key platform capabilities:

• Speech and game-based tasks to assess memory, decision-making, and verbal fluency
• Adaptive AI algorithms that tailor activities to each user's performance
• Real-time alerts and summaries for families and clinicians when changes arise
• Integration with care models for use at home, in the community, or in aged care

The tool will be embedded within Elli Cares' existing senior support platform - currently used in over 40 countries - making it immediately deployable and highly scalable.

AI and Ethics, Hand in Hand

The platform's core AI models are being developed under the leadership of Dr. Binh Nguyen (Victoria University of Wellington), an expert in machine learning for health. The project also includes a pioneering integrated ethics programme led by Dr. Tania Moerenhout (Bioethics Centre, University of Otago), ensuring that user values, autonomy, and privacy are prioritised from the earliest design stages.

"Older adults may prioritise autonomy and meaningful living, while families focus on safety. AI tools must reflect those nuances," said Dr. Moerenhout. "Embedding ethics across the design process is key to building trust and ensuring the technology truly supports the lives people want to lead."

This values-driven approach ensures the platform is not only clinically effective - but socially and ethically grounded.

Global-Scale Trials, Real-World Impact

The platform will be trialled in both New Zealand and Singapore, with pilot sites including Dementia NZ, Elli Cares, the National Neuroscience Institute, and Lions Befrienders. By validating performance across culturally and clinically diverse populations, the research team aims to ensure broad applicability and global relevance.

The project runs from August 2025 to July 2028 and is expected to result in:

• A validated, deployable platform ready for aged care, clinical, and home settings
• Scalable cognitive health monitoring tools for GPs and aged care providers
• New insights into how digital training impacts long-term cognitive function

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About Elli Cares

Elli Cares is an award-winning mobile platform helping older adults live independently,

confidently, and with greater control over their health. Originally designed to support people living with dementia, the app now supports a broader vision - empowering seniors to understand and manage their own health and wellbeing through simple, proactive digital tools. As the platform evolves, Elli Cares is pioneering new ways to use AI for early detection, cognitive resilience, and accessible health support - making ageing in place safer, smarter, and more connected than ever. Founded in New Zealand, Elli Cares will expand to the United States in early 2026 to further its mission of supporting healthy ageing on a global scale.

Learn more at www.elliapp.co

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