

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTINUITY OF CARER-SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE: A SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

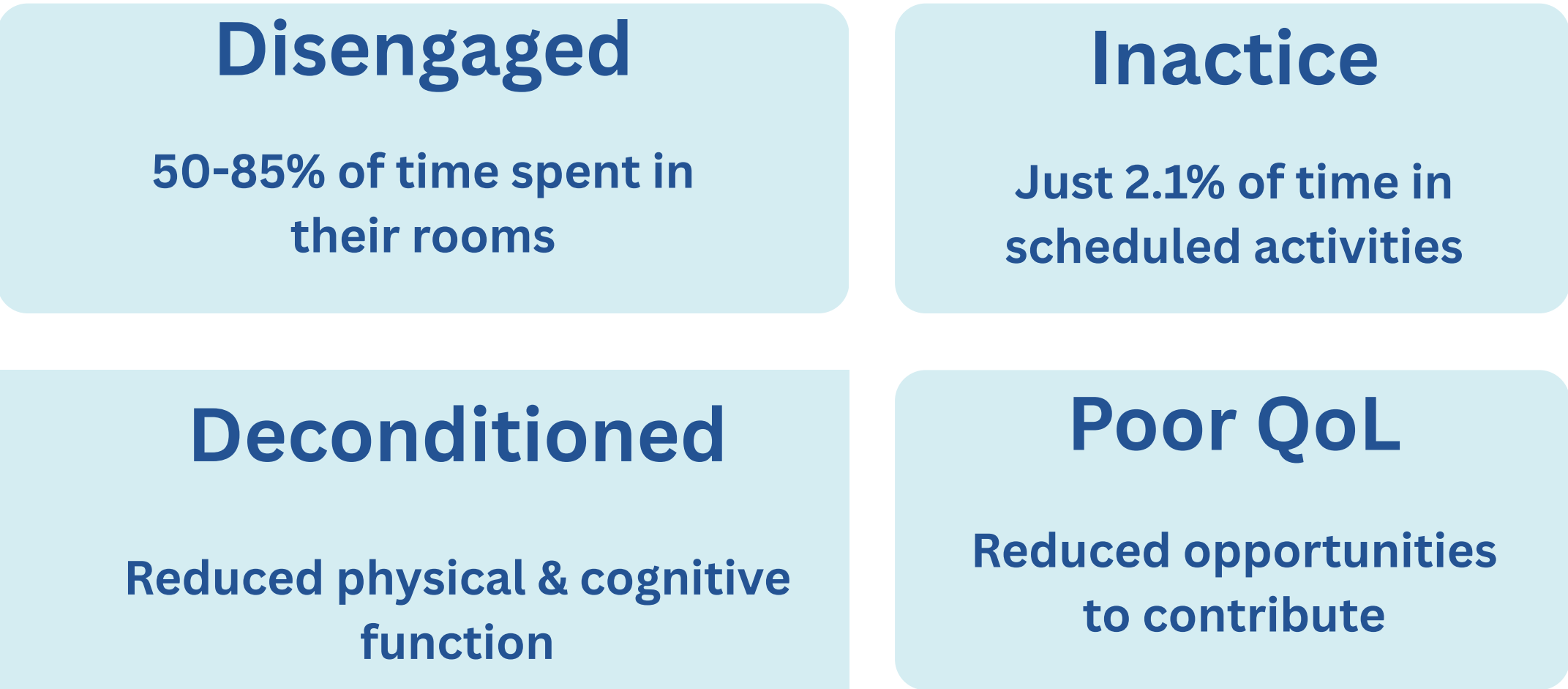
Marta Woolford, Helen Skouteris.
Health and Social Care Unit, School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.
Email: marta.woolford1@monash.edu

BACKGROUND

High-quality residential aged care (RAC) is underpinned by key principles of care such as person-centred strength-based care, meaningful participation, enabling environments, and dignity of risk.

Despite being mandated internationally, and supported by numerous interventions, these principles are inconsistently embedded in practice.

Residents living with & without dementia



RESEARCH AIMS

Co-develop an implementation plan for COC:SE Program components applying the socio-ecological model (SEM) and the early stages of implementation science (exploration and preparation).

Workforce capability is shaped by factors across the system. The implementation plan aimed to:

- Enable sustainable practice change
- Strengthen workforce capability
- Support national implementation (n=70+ homes)

METHODS

Mixed-methods comprising co-design consultation:

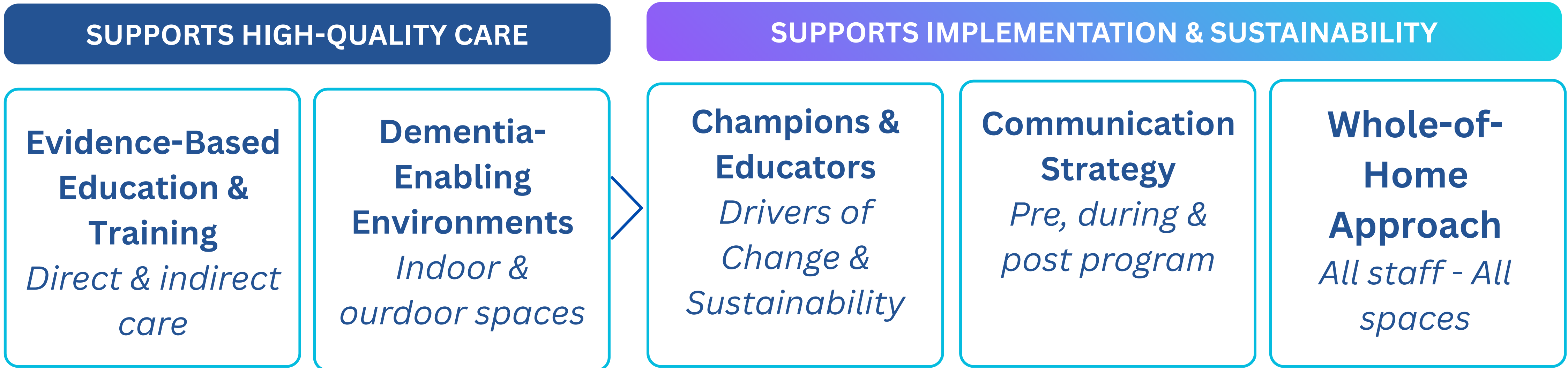
- Co-design workshops (n=8): regional/national staff
- Semi-structured interviews: staff (n=49 home/ regional/national level) & residents (n=15)
- Environmental evaluations using the Dementia Training Australia Assessment (n=10 homes)
- Review of current processes and resources: Education & Training, Lifestyle, and Communication.

CONTINUITY OF CARER-SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT (COC:SE) PROGRAM

An industry-led initiative by a large RAC provider (70 homes nationally), designed to strengthen key care principles and improve quality of care for residents living with and without dementia.

Applying a '**whole-of-home**' approach (all staff, all spaces), COC:SE supports practices and environments that:

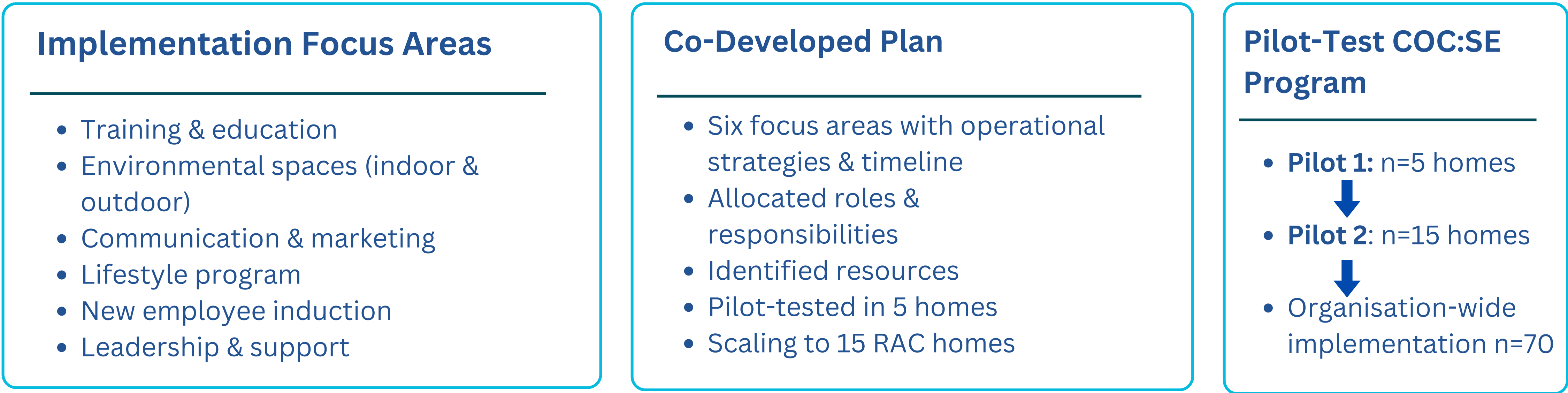
- Support memory loss and sensory impairment
- Promote physical and cognitive function
- Enable purposeful activity and foster social interaction
- Support meaningful participation at all touchpoints of care



Program development grounded in: literature review on key care principles; non-pharmaceutical evidence-based care approaches; co-design and consultations in aged care

RESULTS

Six focus areas for implementation and sustainability were identified: training/education; environment; communication/marketing; lifestyle program; employee induction; and leadership. Each focus area included operational strategies with allocated roles, responsibilities, and resource identification.



PILOT FINDINGS: The program was pilot-implemented as planned and well-accepted by staff. Challenges emerged at multiple SEM-levels within each focus area, prompting refinement of strategies to strengthen national implementation and long-term sustainability.

KEY INSIGHTS: Insights from the pilot are now informing a further 15-home trial and a national rollout strategy. This next phase will ensure the COC:SE Program is adaptable across diverse RAC contexts, strengthening implementation capability — supporting effective uptake, embedding, and long-term sustainability of key care principles in residential aged care.