Phil Saunders has held the position of policy officer at Alzheimer’s Australia SA since late 2011.

He has over thirty years’ experience in the non-government community services sector. He began his career as part of a community development and cooperatives team in Christchurch, New Zealand. On returning to Adelaide, his work has involved consumer engagement, policy advocacy, project and campaign management, magazine editorial and micro-organisation set up and management in South Australia and New South Wales for state-based and national organisations.

His role at Alzheimer’s Australia SA follows ten years as policy project officer with Carers SA. Prior to that he worked across a range of disciplines, including unemployment, employment development, rural student accommodation, physical disability, mental health and volunteering.

The core to Phil’s work at Alzheimer’s Australia SA is consumer engagement as part of a three-step policy and advocacy strategic context across consumer engagement, organisational policy capacity and influencing change.

Phil has been responsible for policy submissions, papers and reports and undertaken presentations at state and national levels during his career. A ‘hobby’ is preparing book reviews for SACOSS News.

In his work Phil has taken a keen interest in the rural sector, regularly undertaking and reporting on consultations on the needs and views of people living in country regions. The Living with Dementia in Country SA project and associated Cost of Dementia questionnaire that Phil is reporting on in his presentation at this National Rural Health Conference is based on a similar exercise, Caring for Carers, undertaken from 2009 to 2011 for Carers SA.