

Media Release



9 April 2013

Carers Australia is the peak national body representing Australia carers.
Our vision is an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.

Report highlights the need to address multiple disadvantages and challenges faced by young carers

A Federal Government commissioned report by Rob Bray of the Australian National University's Social Policy, Evaluation, Analysis and Research Centre provides multi-faceted and sometimes disturbing insights into the characteristics, experience and post-care outcomes for young carers receiving Carer Payments and Carer Allowances.

Young carers are children and young people up to the age of 25 who care for a relative, partner or friend who is frail aged or who has an illness, disability, mental health or alcohol or other drug issue. In Australia approximately 340,000 children and young people have caring responsibilities. Of these 20,363 receive financial assistance in the form of Carer Payments and Carer Allowances during the period covered by the survey.

"This report reminds us that many children and young people with caring responsibilities are living with great socioeconomic disadvantage" said Dr Tim Moore, President of Carers Australia.

"It is heartening to see that many are receiving financial assistance but most are not. Much more needs to be done to ensure that young carers are given the same opportunities as their peers to participate in education, to develop friendships, to work and to enjoy their youth".

Among the key findings are that:

- Levels of educational participation and attainment of young carers are generally very low. Many young carers' education is disrupted even before they go onto payment.
- Young carers aged 21 to 24 have a significantly lower level of workforce participation than their non-carer counterparts and there is evidence that the combined lack of work experience and education means that they have to rely on income support even after they cease being a carer.
- Young carers are nine times more likely to be living in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and in outer urban locations and small country towns than non-carers in the same age cohort.
- Young carers under the age of 20, who generally look after parents, are more likely to be caring for someone with depression and substance abuse and are more likely to suffer from depression themselves than older young carers, who predominantly look after their disabled or chronically ill children.

The full report can be found at:

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/02_2013/op47_text_print_ready.pdf

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