

# Media Release



Carers Australia is the national peak body for 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.

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## Economic contribution of Australia's family and friend carers dwarfs the amount spent on income support

"A SkyNews interview with the new Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter, in which he suggests that growth in income support for unpaid family and friend carers is unsustainable, is disturbing," said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

The Minister referred to a 14% growth in carer income support over a decade.

"Such growth is totally understandable as the ageing population grows and as people with chronic health conditions and disability live longer due to improved medical outcomes.

"Importantly, there has also been a large growth in carer-identification in recent years due to the efforts of organisations such as Carers Australia and the efforts of governments - including the current government - to publically recognise the value of unpaid family and friend carers.

"Indeed, the Government is investing \$33.7 million dollars over the next four years to build a Carer Gateway which will further promote such carer-identification and make more carers aware of the supports that are available to them," said Ms Creswell.

"For many carers, the intensity of the caring role means that they are unable to engage in work. In fact, 39% of primary carers (those who provide the majority of care to another individual) spend on average 40 hours or more caring every week – the equivalent of a full-time job," said Ms Cresswell.

"Even more to the point, a recent report by Deloitte Access Economics identified that the value of such unpaid care to the economy was \$60.3 billion, or 3.8% of GDP, in 2015 – over \$1 billion dollars per week. Not to mention the fact that aged care investment and the NDIS would be unaffordable without their contribution.

"It is a pity that in National Carers Week many family and friend carers may feel that their access to the social security safety net is under threat."

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