

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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Removal of educational subsidies will hurt people on the Carer Payment

Carers Australia is disappointed that the abolition of the Pensioner Education Supplement (which provides between \$31.20 and \$61.40 per week to assist full or part-time study in a secondary or tertiary course) and the Education Entry Payment of \$208 remain part of the Government's Social Services Legislation Amendment (Budget Repair) Bill.

"Is reducing small but essential educational subsidies to people on Carer Payment, the Disability Support Pension and other social security benefits really required for Budget repair?" asks Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

"These payments have allowed many people surviving week-to-week on very low incomes to improve their job prospects by participating in education and training," said Ms Cresswell.

"In addition to providing coverage for such essentials as textbooks, transport and online connections, the Pensioner Education Supplement allows participants to lease or purchase essential items, including computers, printers and other equipment required for particular courses, which are out of scope in a number of alternative Government programs which offer educational support.

"While there are some other fee help programs, they are confined to a relatively small sub-set of educational providers.

"The measure seems at odds with the Government's intention to provide incentives for people dependent on social security to engage in education and training.

"Carers Australia acknowledges and applauds the introduction of a Young Carer Bursary Programme to assist carers under the age of 25 to remain in education.

"However, there are a large number of older carers who seek to improve their prospects of employment once their caring role has diminished or ceased. Many have been caring full-time for family and friends for a number of years and have lost marketable skills. The opportunity to retrain while they are caring, or after they have ceased caring, is key to helping them avoid continuing dependence on social security."

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