

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Let's use this election to improve the lives of family and friend carers

In releasing its pre-election document, *Carer supports: addressing collateral damage*, Carers Australia is focusing its "asks" on a set of proposals that will improve the effectiveness and address gaps in current support services for carers.

"Of particular focus are carers with high needs," Carers Australia CEO, Ara Cresswell said today.

"For many years now, Carers Australia has been advocating for an adequately funded, integrated plan for carer support services that offer a range of services regardless of the nature of the condition or the age of the person or people they are caring for. And in the meantime, there must be a commitment to fund existing carers support programs.

"We also have concerns about carer respite funding being transitioned into the NDIS, as carers have no guarantee to access such services under the scheme.

"Carers need planned respite for their own health and wellbeing. Just like paid workers who have access to weekends and other leave entitlements, carers who provide a substantial amount of care need a break from time to time.

"Also on our wish list is continued support for Australia's young carers, through the Young Carer Bursary Programme, beyond 2017 and additional funding for targeted outreach activities to identify and help young carers.

"These young carers are some of the most disadvantaged people in Australia, often charged with the immense responsibility of caring for a parent or other family member and providing support for siblings.

"Complex needs require multiple solutions, which is why we are asking for a program that will incorporate family-oriented case management, with a focus on early intervention and wrap-around support services.

"Finally we would like to see improvements in the level of employment and income support offered to current and former carers, and carer-friendly workplaces that enable carers to combine work and care.

"Twelve percent of Australians are unpaid carers – let's give them a break!"

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