

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.

12 May 2015

Carers Australia encouraged by plan for integrated carer supports

Tonight's Federal Budget announcement that the Government will be investing \$33.7m over 4 years in an Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services (IPCSS) for Australia's family and friend carers promises to bring with it a range of benefits to the 2.7 million Australians who provide care to one or more people with disability, a chronic health condition, a mental illness or disorder, a terminal illness, or who are frail aged.

The Minister and Assistant Minister for Social Services have also announced that an Expert Advisory Group has been established to assist in the development of the Plan.

\$10.9 million is to be devoted in the first year to the creation of a national carer gateway which will consist of a website and a national call centre. These will provide an initial point of contact for carers but will not replace advice and referral across a very diverse range of issues and services currently provided by specialists in carers and carer services.

"Importantly, it is an acknowledgment that carers both need and can have access to support in their own right; not just as a by-product of the support and services offered to those they care for", said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

"The Gateway will cater to carers regardless of the age or condition of the person they care for. Carers often have immense difficulty navigating the different paths and their entitlements through the aged care, disability support, social security and health condition-related systems. The Gateway will be able to refer them to specialist advisory services and service providers which can help them to do this.

"The Gateway is also likely to have the additional benefit of promoting carer self-identification.

"Many family and friend carers do not identify themselves as carers and are not aware of the assistance they can receive – whether that is counselling and emotional support, training in the caring role, access to respite, legal matters or financial assistance," said Ms Cresswell.

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