

MEDIA RELEASE



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New residents waiting periods – impact on carers

“Carers Australia is very concerned that the new resident waiting period for carers and others who rely on Government income support will be extended from two to three years and – for the first time – will affect those applying for Carer Allowance as well,” said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

“Some carers may have come to Australia specifically to care for family members who are long term residents. Other carers are unable to find paid work or stay in their jobs when a relative or friend has a serious illness or disability.

“More than a third of Australia’s 860,000 primary carers spend 40 or more hours a week meeting the care needs of their family member or friend, often over 24 hour cycles. In these cases, carers rely on Carer Payment or other Government payments to help people stay in their own homes when they are aged, dying, chronically ill, or have a disability.

“The Carer Allowance is a small payment – currently only \$62.35 a week – to help carers with the additional costs of caring. Delaying access to this payment could have real health consequences in households where a person’s care includes the need to operate special equipment, keep their home at constant temperatures, or to constantly operate washing machines and dryers, for example where the person with care needs is affected by incontinence.”

“The Government should not rely on carers and other disadvantaged groups in its strategy to improve the budget position.”

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