

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Funding to support carers of people with mental illness during the pandemic appreciated

“The Government’s announcement on Friday that \$3.5 million will be available to support family and friend mental health carers under the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan is most welcome,” said Mary Reid, Interim CEO of Carers Australia.

“While the coronavirus and the steps needed to contain it have affected many family and friend carers, carers of people with challenging behaviours and cognitive disorders frequently face additional challenges,” said Ms Reid.

“As social isolation causes people with mental illness to become disconnected from the services which support them, and mental health is also impacted by isolation from friends and community, family and friend carers have had to fill in the gaps.

“Not only are they dealing with an actual or anticipated decline in the condition of those they care for, but their anxieties are likely to be increased against projections of a major increase in suicides.

“Even in normal times, carers of people with long term mental health conditions often spend extensive time with the person they care for; providing emotional support, reassurance and, in some cases, behaviour management.

“Indeed, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, carers of people with mental and behavioural disorders on average often spend many more hours caring than carers of people with other conditions. This can be because of the need for constant vigilance.

“They are likely to need more support now than ever before, which is why an injection of funding to provide such support is particularly welcome,” said Ms Reid.

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