

MEDIA RELEASE



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National Disability Research Partnership Welcome but Needs to Include Carers

The National Carer Network and Carers Australia welcomes today's announcement of a National Disability Research Partnership.

The approach, put forward by Ministers Roberts and Ruston, highlights a new approach that progresses a research agenda, research capability roadmap, and practical guides for disability-inclusive research to strengthen the disability research sector.

Chief Executive Officer of Carers Australia, Ms Liz Callaghan says "This new approach will hopefully lead to translational outcomes for the sector."

Ms Callaghan also pointed out that the partnership should include, where relevant, family members and carers of people with disability within the scope of the research principles.

"With the expiration of the National Carers Strategy in 2014 there has been less focus on the needs of carers. One of the key priority areas for carers should be coordinated investment into research for and about carers. A focus on carer research could be based on this new model announced today" Ms Callaghan said.

An example of the value of carer research can be found in the current COVID-19 pandemic. The National Carer Network have reported that carers have carried many people through the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and continue to do so.

As a country, lockdown has been a frightening experience, but carers have contributed to the flattening of the curve by shielding and caring for vulnerable people, including people receiving the NDIS and older Australians.

"This reinforces why any research must specifically include carers, as they are a critical part of an NDIS participant's life" Ms Callaghan said. "The contribution of carers for family and friends with



disability during COVID-19 has seen an increased provision of care - especially as there has often been cancelled in-home services and closure of community-based services.”

“Furthermore, the national day of thanks to be held next year to honour the everyday Australian heroes who pulled our country through the COVID-19 pandemic must include the 2.65 million unpaid carers across Australia -who have risked their own well-being in order to support and protect their loved ones” Ms Callaghan added.

The National Carer Network and Carers Australia believe there is much that can be learnt from the pandemic, and that research is a powerful way to ensure carer experience is integral to future planning and policy development by governments.

“Without unpaid carers Australia would not be in the current situation of even thinking about the road out for COVID-19 and commencement of economic recovery. Sheltering at home will not stop for carers as the recovery begins, and it is vital that carers are continued to be supported in their roles. One way to do this is to ensure carer experiences are captured in research” Ms Callaghan said.

About Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia’s unpaid carers, advocating on their behalf to influence policies and services at a national level. Its member organisations, the Network of state and territory Carers Associations, deliver a range of essential carer services across states and territories.

About carers

An informal, unpaid carer is a family member or friend that cares for someone that has a disability, chronic or life-limiting illness, is frail aged, has a mental health illness, alcohol or other drug related issue. Informal carers are distinct from paid support workers who are colloquially also called carers but are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration.

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