

MEDIA RELEASE



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Pre-Budget submission: 'Invisible army' of unpaid carers need improved recognition and support

The support of Australia's 2.65 million unpaid carers needs to be reflected in the upcoming Federal Budget, both in policy and financial terms, according to Carers Australia's pre-Budget submission.

'The well-documented stresses involved in performing a caring role have only been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, and while we acknowledge the significant investment made by the Australian Government in response to COVID-19, if unpaid carers are to productively continue in their caring roles, they need to be adequately supported' said Carers Australia CEO, Ms Liz Callaghan.

'Supporting carers to look after their own health and wellbeing, and enabling them to engage in the workforce should they choose to do so, will have both social and economic benefits.'

Among the submission's seven recommendations is a call to develop a new National Carer Strategy in consultation with the community and all stakeholders, demonstrating a real commitment to the crucial role of carers.

'Such a strategy is essential if we are to adequately prepare for the projected growth in demand for informal carers, currently estimated to be a 23% increase in the next ten years', said Ms Callaghan.

The formation of a Ministerial Advisory Council on Carers would provide further impetus to the need for ongoing reform and enable such reforms to be implemented across portfolios.

'A National Carer Strategy would demonstrate a clear policy focus on the needs of unpaid carers, and for those needs to be addressed in their own right and not as add ons to supports for other members of our community. A cross-portfolio Ministerial Advisory Council on Carers would provide a direct voice for carers to government across Disability, Aged Care and Health,' said Ms Callaghan.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added another level of complexity to the role of unpaid carers, often requiring them to isolate with the person they care for. Like many other Australians, carers have suffered unemployment, loss of income and increased financial strain. In addition, reduced respite options due to



a reduction in services and an increase in digital delivery have made the task of balancing caring, employment and home-schooling harder.

‘Carers continue to experience the negative financial impacts of the ongoing pandemic and additional carer payments are required to assist them to provide care during this ongoing uncertainty,’ said Ms Callaghan.

‘We seek to work in partnership with the Australian Government to build a better future for all unpaid carers by recognising and investing in them. With improved supports and representation, carers will be better placed to look after their own wellbeing and enjoy the same benefits and opportunities as all Australians.’

Click [here](#) to download the Carers Australia Pre-Budget Submission 2020.

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

ⁱ Deloitte Access Economics (2020) ‘The Value of informal care in 2020’ for Carers Australia