

# MEDIA RELEASE



20 August 2020

## Carers Australia calls for additional carer payments

Carers Australia has urged the Federal Government to consider providing an additional \$750 stimulus payment to carers after the Government announced yesterday that pension payments would not rise in September as a result of the indexation formula going down.

“Carers continue to experience negative financial impacts as a result of the pandemic, and many carers in receipt of Carer Payments who were in employment have lost their jobs or have had to cut back their hours,” Carers Australia CEO, Ms Liz Callaghan said.

“Against this background, and in consideration of the news yesterday regarding pensions not rising in September, the Government should seriously consider adding a third \$750 lump sum payment to support people on the Carer Payment.”

Carers require additional fiscal support to help address the increased costs being incurred from their increased caring responsibilities during the pandemic. Recent research released by [Carers NSW](#) reveals that during the pandemic, many carers, like other members of their communities, have experienced reduced employment and income, with some being stood down or losing work, especially young people and women in lower paid, casualised sectors.

“The main challenges experienced by carers during COVID-19 have been described fairly consistently across Australia. The impacts of COVID-19 on employment have had obvious flow on effects to carers’ finances” Ms Callaghan said.

In both Australia and overseas, evidence reflects difficulty accessing essential items, including groceries and medication, and an overall increase in basic living expenses. Carers also report difficulty accessing adequate income support, which increases the financial hardship many carers are experiencing.

The research identifies that the main additional costs experienced by carers, other than increased daily living expenses, were the costs associated with acquiring and setting up IT equipment and an adequate



internet connection to successfully access services, maintain social contacts and undertake work and study commitments. Due to the lack of recreational activities outside of the home that were accessible during the period under review, some evidence pointed to additional costs for remote or digital activities to keep care recipients occupied and maintain carer health and wellbeing.

“A further one-off payment of \$750 to all unpaid carers receiving carer payments across Australia would go some way to providing the support they need to continue caring during the ongoing uncertainty that the COVID-19 pandemic brings” 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