

MEDIA RELEASE



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Carers Australia supports Safer at Home campaign and calls for increased support for carers

Carers Australia has today supported COTA's Safer at Home campaign, which calls for next Tuesday's Federal Budget to ensure no older Australian waits more than 30 days for a home care package. This is in response to Government figures which show over 100,000 people are waiting for the correct level of care they need to stay safer at home, including 59,071 who have no home care package.

Carers Australia CEO Liz Callaghan said, "Integral to the Safer at Home campaign is the clear need to include unpaid carers as they support their loved ones. Despite families and friends providing an irreplaceable share of care, support such as respite care, training or paid care leave schemes remain limited and without compensation."

Carers Australia would like to see in next Tuesday's budget a clear investment in adequate respite care in the home.

"This is what carers are constantly calling our state and territory carer networks about. With the increased numbers of people waiting at home to get the care they need, there is a directly proportionate number of carers who will require adequate support as well," said Ms Callaghan.

"As COTA has highlighted, 20% of people in residential aged care are there because there was not enough home care and community support services. In order to ensure unpaid family and friend caring roles remain sustainable, there must be flexible and properly funded opportunities to take a break from caring, and for older people residing in the community to take a break from self-care. This is critical to enabling people to remain in their homes.

"Providing care to family members or friends often comes at personal cost. It can be a rewarding yet demanding and socially isolating experience, where carers have among the lowest levels of wellbeing of any group of Australians, all of which has been amplified during COVID-19. Australia needs to prepare for the growth in demand for informal carers - from around 1.25 million in 2020 to 1.54 million in 2030, a 23% increase."

Ms Callaghan also highlights the recent [COVID-19 aged care policy brief](#) by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which notes the impact on residential care options due to COVID-19, leaving many unpaid carers with increased responsibilities and without their usual support structures.



“These failures are echoed in the Aged Care Royal Commission’s COVID-19 report with regards to some residential aged care providers not providing adequate care and quality of life for older Australians during the pandemic.

“If an older person is within residential aged care, family and friend carers still need to be able to get to the person with care needs, have access to information, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing, and be supported in developing contingency plans. This issue was highlighted in yesterday’s [Aged Care Royal Commission’s COVID-19 report](#), with the Royal Commission’s second recommendation calling for funding to ensure there are adequate staff available to allow continued visits to people living in residential aged care by their families and friends.

“Ultimately, most older people want to remain in the home as they age. They’re happier in their own home and should be adequately supported to stay safe there. This support must take account of the needs of family and friend carers as well.”

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