

MEDIA RELEASE



6 October 2020

Extra funding offers support to unpaid carers

The Treasurer's announcement tonight to provide two separate \$250 support payments to those on the Carer Payment and Carer Allowance goes some way to providing some much-needed recognition of the work undertaken by unpaid carers during COVID-19.

"This is a positive step in recognising the incredible efforts of unpaid carers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, however the payments do not go far enough to compensate carers for the increased household expenditure associated with the additional need to protect the most vulnerable at home," Carers Australia CEO, Ms Liz Callaghan said.

Carers Australia also welcomes the investment of \$1.6 billion to provide 23,000 more Home Care Packages in response to the clear preference of many senior Australians to stay in their own home.

"We would like to see aged care support packages place equal importance on the needs of carers as well as people who are receiving the packages. Carers Australia is ready to work with the government on behalf of carers in the further research and consultation that has been signalled in the Budget tonight to ensure the best solution is delivered for older Australians," said Ms Callaghan.

Carers Australia also welcomes other carer-related initiatives, including:

- Increased investment in support for carers of people experiencing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia through increased psycho-social support services across health and aged care sectors;
- Continued investment in the National Pandemic Mental Health plan with support for carers with or at risk of mental illness;
- Private Health insurers being able to increase the age of dependents – from 24 to 31 years – to encourage continuity of cover, and will also allow people with disability to remain on their family policy from 1 April 2021;
- Support to stop younger people with disability going into aged care through the introduction of system co-ordinators to connect young people with disability to more age-appropriate facilities;



- Investment in postvention support for families and carers who have been bereaved by suicide; and
- A further \$3.9 billion investment in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

“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 Ms Callaghan.

A [recent report](#) commissioned by Carers Australia found the estimated annual replacement value of all unpaid care in Australia has risen to \$77.9 billion.

Next week is National Carers Week, an opportunity for all Australians to recognise and celebrate the incredible efforts of Australia’s unpaid carers. Carers Australia asks the Federal Government to use this occasion to further invest in and recognise the unpaid carers who have supported Australia during this once in a lifetime pandemic.

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

For media enquiries please contact Samara McCann on (02) 6122 9917 or 0428 948 415