

MEDIA RELEASE



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\$20 million investment in respite services for senior Australians from diverse backgrounds welcomed

Carers Australia and the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) have welcomed the Government's announcement of the \$20 million in grants to be made available to deliver centre-based day programs tailored to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse seniors.

'As testimony to the Aged Care Royal Commission has highlighted, mainstream aged care services do not always cater well to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who need services which are compatible with their own linguistic and cultural norms,' said Mary Patetsos, Chair of FECCA.

'As people age and often revert to their first language, their need to engage with others who speak the same language can become acute – particularly if they are suffering with dementia. In the absence of such services, older people become socially isolated and deprived of meaningful social, recreational and therapeutic activities, with severe consequences for their emotional, mental and even physical wellbeing.'

CEO of Carers Australia, Liz Callaghan, added, 'An additional bonus of such programs is that they provide opportunities for family and friend carers to take a break from caring. These unpaid carers would otherwise be providing continuous care in the home for many hours every day; a circumstance which can leave them housebound, socially isolated and, in some cases, unemployed.'

'It is estimated that between 25 and 30% of all unpaid carers in Australia are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and a very large proportion of these will be carers of the aged.'

The pressing need to improve respite opportunities for informal carers of the aged – whether through replacement care in the home, through day centres, or for a number of days - has also been a major theme throughout the Aged Care Royal Commission.



'These grants are a step toward redressing current gaps in the system for both carers and those they care for. It is also an important step toward recognising and honouring our commitment to a multicultural Australia which values, respects and supports the diversity of our population,' said Ms Callaghan.

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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