

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Carers Australia calls for greater support for carers within community services as satisfaction decreases

Carers Australia is urging the Federal Government to provide greater support to carers after new [figures](#) released by the Productivity Commission show decreasing levels of satisfaction amongst primary carers.

The annual Report on Government Services (the Report) highlights that Australia's 861,600 primary carers across Australia are vital in enabling older people to remain in their homes, and support people with disability to remain in the community. The Report states the main aims of community services are to provide support to sustain and nurture the functioning of individuals, families and groups.

Carers Australia CEO Liz Callaghan said, "What is required for carers is more flexible and properly funded opportunities to not only take a break from caring through formal respite, but to also be supported to live their own lives to the full, and participate in family, social and community life."

Alarming, the Report found primary carers of people aged over 65 years are experiencing a decrease in satisfaction in the quality of services provided, and only 36.1% were satisfied with the range of organised services available to support them in their caring role.

The Report also noted older Australians needing high level home care packages are waiting more than two years to receive the care they have been approved for, and wait times to enter residential aged care has increased more than 200% to 148 days.

"With the increased numbers of older Australians waiting at home to get the care they need, there is a proportionate number of carers who will require adequate support as well to continue in their caring roles," said Ms Callaghan.

"The extended waiting times mean carers are providing more care to bridge the gap created by these timeframes. If carers are not adequately supported, both the carer and person they are caring for will be impacted."

The Report also noted that primary carers of people with disability aged 15 – 64 years experienced a decrease in satisfaction with the quality of services received, down to 66.6% in 2018 compared to 73.4% in 2015. Satisfaction with the range of services received also remains low at just 29.6%. Further, the Report



shows an average of 7 days to get a decision on NDIS eligibility, plus an average of 69 days for approval of the first plan.

“These figures are concerning as it is important services enable NDIS participants, and where appropriate, their carer, to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and in the planning and delivery of their supports,” said Ms Callaghan.

“What this Report is clearly saying in relation to Aged Care and the NDIS is that carers are not satisfied with the quality of services being provided to those they care for.”

“Whilst the Australian Government Carer Gateway provides a range of supports and services to carers through phone counselling, peer-support and carer specific services, more must be done to ensure Aged Care providers and NDIS providers promote the use of the Carer Gateway to carers, and there must be greater access to flexible respite options” Ms Callaghan said.

### **About Carers Australia**

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia’s carers, advocating 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