

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Recognition of the importance of informal carers an important step to improving home care

Carers Australia and the National Carer Network are calling on the Government to address the systemic issues with home care and supports for informal carers following the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Commission).

Carers Australia is encouraged that the Commission has embraced many of the recommendations that were highlighted in our three submissions, two appearances before the Commission, and submissions from the National Carer Network members.

Carers Australia CEO Liz Callaghan said, "We welcome the recognition by the Commission that informal carers are a critical element of the care system for older Australians and stronger supports for them are long overdue."

In particular, we are heartened to see the Commission has considered informal carers within the proposed establishment of a new Act supporting older Australians receiving care, and includes the right of informal carers to reasonable access to supports in accordance with needs and to enable reasonable enjoyment of the right to social participation.

"The Commission has highlighted a clear common theme in what the community expects from the aged care system which includes the desire for a good quality of life and ageing at home. This can only be achieved if informal carers are supported in their role with readily available respite, training, and support services," said Ms Callaghan.

"What we are hearing from informal carers and their loved ones is that they are not able to receive quality respite care when needed and the extended wait times to access these services are leading to carer burnout. This is unacceptable, and something we have repeatedly called on the Government to address," said Ms Callaghan.

Carers Australia is therefore asking the Government to fund all outstanding home care packages for older Australians as a matter of urgency, as this will support informal carers and improve their own health and wellbeing.



“Many older Australians would prefer to remain at home for as long as possible and this is usually facilitated by informal carers. By funding home care packages, informal carers will know their loved one is being looked after and this will lessen the stress and anxiety they often experience.”

Another key recommendation from the Commission was establishing and funding a community-based Carers Hub network which will enable direct referral and information sharing for informal carers.

“We have long recognised the importance of informal carers accessing information and support from peers as part of a seamless service system where informal carers can access what they need from other informal carers and providers at the same time,” said Ms Callaghan.

“But without clarification from the Government regarding how this Carers Hub will function, we caution that any implementation of a new network must involve integration with Carer Gateway as those providers, which include much of the National Carer Network, have already undertaken important work in building relationships and trust with local informal carers.”

Carers Australia will monitor the implementation of these recommendations from the Commission in the coming months and stands ready to work alongside the Government and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations.

“We thank the Commissioners and all the informal carers who have played a crucial role in informing the recommendations of the Commission,” said Ms Callaghan.

“We will continue to support informal carers to have their voices heard and advocate for their needs and supports at a national level.”

#### **About Carers Australia and the National Carer Network**

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia’s carers, advocating to influence policies and services at a national level. The National Carer Network, which consists of Carers NSW, Carers ACT, Carers Victoria, Carers Tasmania, Carers SA, Carers WA, Carers NT, and Carers Queensland, 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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