

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Increased funding for respite and support services for carers welcomed

The Treasurer's announcement tonight of an additional \$798.3 million to support carers of the aged has been welcomed by the national peak body for Australia's 2.65 million unpaid carers.

"It is pleasing to see the extent to which Ministers have embedded carers into aged care reform. The role of carers is interwoven in the health, disability, mental health and aged care sectors. They provide 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care every year and this funding is a step in the right direction for supporting them to continue with their incredible work," Carers Australia CEO, Ms Liz Callaghan said.

The fundamental value of carers was reflected in the \$441.4 million in funding for residential respite.

"The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety 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. Carers are a critical element of enabling this and they can only maintain their role if they are supported with readily available respite," said Ms Callaghan.

Aged care providers will be offered additional respite subsidies to create incentives for residential aged care facilities to provide respite. It is estimated this respite accommodation will benefit up to 67,000 families each year.

"Increasing funding to respite options for older Australians is a step toward redressing the current gaps in the system for both carers and those they care for. Carers will be able to take a break knowing that their loved one is looked after," said Ms Callaghan.

Within the additional funding for carers were also a number of measures to improve their wellbeing, including:

- \$134.9 million to boost the Commonwealth Home Support Programme respite services to an additional 8,400 carers.
- \$60.1 million to improve respite for dementia carers, and training for residential facilities to implement respite care plans for dementia care respite models.
- \$53 million to improve early intervention assistance for people newly diagnosed with dementia and their carers. This will include more support for the National Dementia Helpline and National Dementia Support Program.



“Access to planned and emergency respite assists sustainability of the caring role. Respite also supports the objectives of the Carer Recognition Act which outlines that carers should be supported to enjoy optimum health and social wellbeing to participate in family, social and community life,” said Ms Callaghan.

Additionally, Carers Australia was pleased to see \$103.4 million in funding for early referrals to Carer Gateway by aged care assessors to support carers with counselling, coaching, support and skills training.

Carers Australia also welcomed the \$2 billion investment over four years for the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan. This includes \$111.4 million in funding to support group therapy sessions and participation for families and carers, and \$46.6 million for parenting education and support to parents and carers of children with emerging emotional difficulties.

However, while funding for aged and mental health carers has been showcased in this Budget, Carers Australia have yet to identify any additional funding for National Disability Insurance Scheme participants and their families.

#### **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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