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ANNUAL
REPORT



About this annual report

This report highlights Carers Australia's progress and achievements throughout 2020-21. This report, the Carers Australia financial statements and previous years' reports for are available online at www.carersaustralia.com.au.

We welcome your feedback on this report and any of the activity reported:

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Carers Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the traditional custodians of the land we work on and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. As an inclusive organisation we also celebrate people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

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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. We advocate on a wide range of issues that affect carers, and work in collaboration with carers, the National Carer Network, government and peak bodies to develop policy, advocacy, programs and events to improve the lives of Australia's 2.65 million carers.

Collectively with our Members – the National Carer Network - we believe all carers, regardless of their cultural and linguistic differences, age, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identification and geographical location should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians. They should be able to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing and participate in family, social and community life, employment and education.

Our purpose is to influence national policy, community and government's understanding and support of carer issues.

Our vision is an Australia that values and supports all carers.

Our Patron His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.



Who is a Carer?

During our lifetime many of us will provide care to a family member or friend or will need care ourselves. Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue, or who are frail aged.

This includes carers:

- » Who have their own care needs
- » Who are in multiple care relationships
- » Who have employment and/or education commitments
- » Aged under 25 years (young carers)
- » Aged over 65 years, including 'grandparent carers'
- » From culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- » Who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- » Who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI+)
- » Who are living in rural and remote Australia, and
- » That are no longer in a caring role (former carers).



19%

OF CARERS CAN EASILY **ORGANISE FAMILY OR FRIEND SUPPORT**



35%

OF CARERS OFTEN OR ALWAYS **FEEL LONELY**



52%

OF CARERS HAVE VERY POOR **HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL WELLBEING**



66%

OF CARERS REGULARLY EXPERIENCE FEAR FOR THE **FUTURE OF THE PERSON THEY CARE FOR**



CARERS ARE

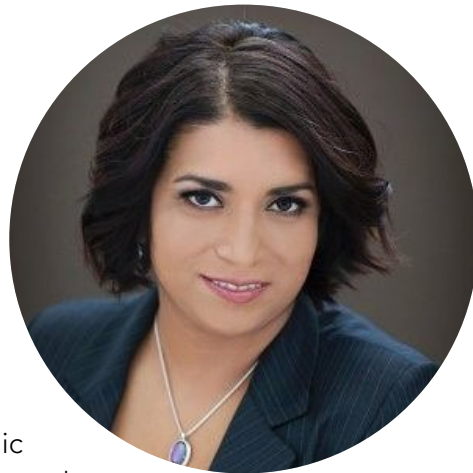
2.5x

MORE LIKELY TO HAVE **LOW WELLBEING** AND MUCH HIGHER **PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS**, COMPARED TO THE **AVERAGE AUSTRALIAN**

Data from National Carer Wellbeing Survey



FROM THE CHAIR



Building on a year of significant change in 2019-20, Carers Australia has continued to adapt to changing circumstances and strive to be an effective, efficient and sustainable organisation in 2020-21. In the past 12 months the Board worked to develop a new Strategic Plan and goals that underpin the organisation's work towards the vision of an Australia that values and supports all carers.

To achieve this, we also continued to work with the National Carer Network - the state and territory Carers Associations, and supported them to facilitate the best possible outcomes for Australia's 2.65 million carers.

In addition to responding to the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, Carers Australia strengthened relationships with government across portfolios, securing renewal of funding as the Australian carer peak to the Department of Social Services, as well as continued delivery of the Young Carer Bursary Program and facilitation of the Young Carer Network. This period also saw funding received from the Department of Health, through the COVID-19 Emergency Mental Health Support - National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, as well as planning for an exciting new project under the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Women's Leadership and Development Program.

We also released 'The value of informal care 2020' commissioned through Deloitte Access Economics, which estimated that a total of nearly 2.2 billion hours of care were provided in 2020, with a replacement cost of \$77.9 billion.

What is important to highlight is that if the Government were to pay for all of the informal care provided by Australia's unpaid carers, the bill would come in at just under \$1.5 billion per week. This highlights the remarkable contribution that unpaid carers make not just to our communities, but also to the national economy.

It was pleasing to see the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, state in support of National Carers Week 2020 that carers are "making an enormous difference. Even if sometimes you may feel that that's not the case and may doubt – don't. Your efforts, your sacrifice are an expression of a great love." This is why we do what we do - working in partnership with the Australian Government to build a better future for all unpaid carers by recognising and investing in them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonia".

Sonia Rutnam
Chair, Carers Australia



FROM THE CEO



I commented in last year's Annual Report after having been in the role for only a few weeks, that as we move into 2020-21 we will work in partnership with the Australian government to increase the recognition of the role of carers, facilitate the delivery of services and supports, and communicate both the needs of carers to government, and the intentions of government to carers.

I am pleased to say that over this past year we have remained focused on these areas, and have put in place an organisation structure that positions us to reflect our new Strategic Plan.

Underpinning our work is our purpose to influence national policy, community and government's understanding and support of carer issues. We have strongly engaged on behalf of carers across the health, aged care, mental health, disability, social services and other sectors, through our responses to Royal Commissions, numerous parliamentary inquiries, government-led reviews and directly at ministerial and department level. This is made possible through the strong relationships with the National Carer Network – the state and territory Carers Associations – so that collectively we can ensure the needs of carers are front-of-mind with those who can implement positive change.

This need to maintain a voice for carers was no more evident than in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the roll-out of the vaccine across Australia. COVID-19 has added another level of complexity to the role of carers, often requiring them to be locked down with the person(s) they care for. Like many other Australians, carers have suffered unemployment, loss of income and increased financial strain, in addition to reduced respite options, difficulty accessing services, an increase in digital technology reliance and balancing caring, employment and home-learning. At the same time, carers have played a major role in flattening the curve of infection by sheltering at home and keeping vulnerable Australians safe.

Carers Australia succeeded in ensuring carers were included in the early stages of vaccine roll-out, under Phase 1b. Carers Australia also participated in a national webinar for carers with the Department of Health regarding the vaccine roll-out. At the time of writing, around half of Australia's population remains in lockdown. As an organisation we are acutely aware of the impact this has had on carers and have been taking every opportunity to advocate on carers behalf to governments.

We also undertook the large task of moving office locations after 17 years, and in the process commissioned a wonderful piece of artwork by a local indigenous artist that now sits proudly in the new reception area. Add to this an array of other activities as summarised within this report, and it has been another year to remember, including the launch of our updated website, delving into the world of podcast development, and organising the first National Carer Wellbeing Survey which attracted over 5800 responses from Australia's carers.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank each and every staff member of Carers Australia. These have been trying times, and you have all stood up and shown leadership in your own areas. Our shared values of leadership; excellence; integrity, innovation; inclusiveness and kindness have helped us in steering our course. You have, and continue to, work incredibly hard for carers. I would also like to thank the Board of Carers Australia for their leadership and guidance over this period, particularly Board Chair Sonia Rutnam and Vice-Chair Brett Walker who were never too busy to take my calls.



May the next 12 months see Carers Australia continue to meet the goals set by the Board and achieve our vision of an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.

Liz Callaghan
Chief Executive Officer

Shining light by Sarah Richards

The overall concept of 'Shining light' is that of a sunrise lighting up the landscape as it rises. Like the sun, Carers Australia, as the national peak body representing unpaid carers, shines a light and advocates on the behalf of unpaid carers to influence policies and services at a national level. Their vision is an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.

The centre, the sun, represents Carers Australia and surrounding them are the sun's rays in the form of a compass. With their four primary objectives and four strategic priorities depicted as the eight main points of the compass guiding them towards their vision and pointing outwards to the eight member associations. The eight member associations are each represented by an element that looks like a person with their hands up in the air reaching up. This represents how the member associations reach out to the community of carers. The sky being lit up by the sunrise represents the carers across Australia and those that they care for.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–23



Advocacy for Carers

Carers Australia has a national leadership role focussed on carer issues both current and emerging



Engagement with Community

There is strong community awareness and recognition of the diversity in carer roles and carers in diverse communities



Strengthen evidence base to shape national policy and dialogue on national carer issues

A research agenda that creates impact and change through identifying carer needs nationally



Sustainability of Carers Australia

Carers Australia is an effective, efficient and sustainable organisation





POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Carers Australia are strong advocates for carer inclusion in services delivered to those they care for – whether these be clinical services or other types of support services. This is at the heart of the concept of “partners in care” which is a central principle of the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*.

We work to ensure the invaluable role of the carer is recognised and celebrated, and that the diverse carer voice is evident in national policy. This is done through submissions to a wide range of inquiries and reviews across portfolios, representation on government committees, and collaboration with key stakeholders. Our policy is developed in partnership with the National Carer Network, underpinned by an evidence-base and informed by carers.

Responding to Government

Government Committees

- » Aged Care Complaints Commissioner Consultative Committee
- » Aged Care Sector Committee
- » Aged Care Services Reference Committee
- » My Aged Care ICT Reform & Investment Reference Group
- » Aged Care Funding Model Development Expert Panel
- » Residential Aged Care Funding Reform Working Group
- » Aged Care Funding (ACF) Single In-Home Care Assessment Working Group
- » Aged Care Workforce Industry Council
- » Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) Reference Group
- » Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Patient Safety Reporting Steering Committee
- » Services Australia Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation Civil Society Advisory Group
- » Integrated Carer Support Service Working Group
- » Disability and Health Sector Consultation Committee (DHSCC)
- » Disability Gateway Reference Group
- » Disability Support Services Committee
- » NDIS Independent Advisory Committee
- » NDIS CEO Forum and Independent Assessment sub-group
- » NDIA Mental Health Carers Pathway Project and Disability Sector Reference Group
- » Community Services Advisory Group
- » Medicine Shortages Communication Champions Group
- » Australian Digital Health Agency Aged Care Advisory Group

National Policy Advisory Group

The Carers Australia National Policy Advisory Group (NPAG) consists of representatives from each National Carer Network organisation, with the purpose to provide an efficient and transparent mechanism for collaboration across the National Carer Network on carer issues, policy, and accompanying advocacy. In 2020-21 NPAG met four times in addition to ongoing engagement in submission development, sharing of information and other processes between meetings.

CONSULTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

Department of Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pilot Disability Gateway Website » National Disability Strategy Position Paper » Reset of the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Approach » Carer Gateway Review
Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Private Health Insurance Reforms Second Wave Consultation Paper » 10-Year Primary Health Care Plan » Evaluation of Phase One of the Specialist Dementia Care Program » Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) tool » Research on Consumer Perspectives on Reform to In-Home Aged Care Arrangements » Enhancing Nursing Skills and Leadership Capability in Aged Care 20-21 Budget Measure
Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Response to Counsel Assisting's Final Recommendations » Submission: Carers Need a Place to Call Home in Aged Care » Response to Home Care Hearing Draft Propositions
Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Violence and Abuse of People with Disability at Home Issues Paper » Safeguards and Quality Issues Paper
National Disability Insurance Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access and Eligibility Policy with Independent Assessments Consultation Paper » Planning Policy for Personalised Budgets and Plan Flexibility Consultation Paper » Supporting Young Children and their Families Early to Reach their Full Potential Consultation Paper » Interventions for Children on The Autism Spectrum Consultation paper » LGBTIQ+ Strategy » National Disability Employment Strategy
Parliamentary Inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 » Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme inquiry: Independent Assessments » Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention » Senate Select Committee on Job Security
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2021-22 and released 'Budget 2021-22: What it means for Carers' » Regulated Restrictive Practices with Children and Young People with Disability: Consultation Draft - NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission » Response to Final Report on the Inquiry into the role of improving mental health to support economic participation and enhancing productivity and economic growth - Productivity Commission » Second review of the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 - Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resource » Reforms to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport – Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications » National Digital Health Strategy Engagement Framework – Australian Digital Health Agency

COVID-19

Carers Australia continued to research and publish the most valuable information for carers during this pandemic, while ensuring that the government remain aware of the special circumstances and challenges faced by carers, particularly given the effects of lockdown and isolation, and the need for inclusion of carer groups within the vaccine roll-out. In 2020-21 we participated in numerous roundtables and meetings with government, Members of Parliament and stakeholders, resulting in a number of opportunities for ongoing advocacy, including an appearance before the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 at the Public Hearing on 1 July 2020, Membership to the Department of Health Disability Vaccine roll out Advisory Group, and in June 2021 an invitation to join the Australian Government's Operation COVID Shield.

Notable achievements include:

- » extra payments to carers on Carer Payments,
- » having carers included (to an extent) in phase 1b and recognition of caring responsibility within the online eligibility checker, and
- » delivery of a 'COVID-19 response update for Carers' webinar on 23 March 2021, organised in collaboration with the Department of Health, with the CEO of Carers Australia as a panellist alongside the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Department of Social Services representatives.

Aged Care Reform

Carers Australia remain active in the ongoing reform of aged care. We participated on a number of formal and informal processes with government, continued as a Sponsor member of the National Aged Care Alliance, and worked with stakeholders, including the release of two joint positions statements:

- » 'Joint Position Statement on the needs of the aged care system' with FECCA, COTA, OPAN, Dementia Australia and National Seniors Australia, and
- » A 'Joint Statement by 12 Aged Care Consumer Organisations on Actions to be taken following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report: Care Dignity and Respect'.

As acknowledged in the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the unpaid contribution of carers underpins the sustainability of the aged care sector. They make a vital contribution to the capacity of many older people to age at home – often at a cost to their own livelihood and wellbeing. Carers Australia continued to engage with the Royal Commission via submissions and provision of information on request. We were pleased that in its formal response to the Commission's 147 recommendations, the government endorsed all of recommendations relating to informal carers, however there is now still much to be done to incorporate carers' rights to support, and design of systems that are carer-inclusive, accessible and contribute to the sustainability of the aged care system.

For an outline of the Commission's recommendations, the government response (including Federal Budget), and Carers Australia's further comments, refer to our 'Analysis of the Australia Government response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect' on our website.



Disability Reform

Disability reform has been a key focus area throughout 2020-21 with development of the National Disability Strategy, launch of the Disability Gateway, many consultations processes by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Parliament of Australia Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and the continued work of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Carers Australia has been engaged in all of these processes, and it should be noted that over one-third of primary carers themselves live with disability. Carers should be supported to understand their role and build capacity as advocates, as well as the knowledge and ability to uphold and promote the rights of people with disability. We worked with stakeholders across the disability sector, including as a member of the National Disability and Carer Alliance and Every Australian Counts, to successfully stop the proposal for independent assessment. We also collaborated in the release of a 'Joint Media Release and Terms of Engagement' for NDIS Minister Reynolds from the disability community.

Mental Health Reform

Carers Australia continues to highlight that carers need support for their own mental health, where mental health services often focus on the needs of the consumer without considering that the person providing care may also require mental health support, and in fact may also be a consumer of mental health services. We have also been drawing attention to the specific effects of COVID-19, the need for mentally health workplaces requiring carer-inclusion, and young carers as a highly vulnerable group, who are at risk of disengagement or who have disengaged from school or education opportunities due to caring responsibilities.

Our advocacy can be seen in responses to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the role of improving mental health to support economic participation and enhancing productivity and economic growth, and the Parliament of Australia Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, as well as working in partnership as members of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum and the Monash Health Intellectual Disabilities Digital Hub Initiative Steering Committee. We also continue to collaborate with a number of mental health organisations on projects that supports the mental health of carers.

Parliamentary Friends of Carers

The Parliamentary Friends of Carers (PFoC) group is open to all Members and Senators who are invited to form a non-partisan forum to meet and interact with Carers Australia and relevant stakeholders on matters relating to unpaid carers. The PFoC of the 46th Parliament has 29 members and is co-chaired by Craig Kelly MP, Emma McBride MP and Senator Rachel Siewert. There were no events held with the PFoC in this period due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

Carer Policy Forum

The Carer Policy Forum was established in this period to provide an advisory function to the Australian Government Department of Social Services for cross-sector dialogue, to enable exploration of issues and longer-term enhancements on carer-related policy that cuts across different government portfolios. The inaugural meeting was held 15 June 2020 in Canberra and via Zoom given COVID-19 restrictions, with the Forum committing to meet four times each financial year to contribute to evidence-based and linked public policy across the different portfolio areas impacting carers and the groups of people they care for.

Membership of the Carer Policy Forum is Carers Australia (Chair), Carers South Australia (as a Carer Gateway Service Providers), Carers Queensland, Mental Health Australia, Mental Health Carers Australia, Older Persons Advocacy Network, Wellways (as a Carer Gateway Service Providers), Palliative Care Australia, Children and Young People with Disability Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Australia, Family and Relationship Services Australia.

Research

There is a need to increase the body of knowledge and evidence-base about carers and the caring role, across sectors, settings and services to inform policy and practice development. Carers Australia actively collaborated on research and data-focused activities in partnership with many organisations, including assistance in the recruitment of carers for co-design or research participation, communication of research opportunities and results, and in governance of specific projects as formal members of research committees.

In addition, Carers Australia commissioned and released the following reports in 2020-21:

- » 'The Value of Informal Care Report 2020' commissioned through Deloitte Access Economics
- » 'Sleep Deficits in Australian Carers Research Report' commissioned through the Sleep Health Foundation
- » 'Young carers and their engagement with education - An analysis of applications to the Carers Australia bursary program 2017-2018' through Monash University and the Australian Centre for Child Protection University of South Australia.

Who we have worked with

As the peak body for carers in Australia, our knowledge and expertise are shared via many modes, including through presenting at conferences and meetings, contributing to policy and resource development of stakeholder organisations and providing input through representation on committees. This includes the Flinders University Care Search Advisory Group, Centre for Palliative Care Carer Help Advisory Group, ACOSS Community Services Network, the Continuity of Care Collaboration and NPS MedicineWise's Stakeholder Reference Group.

We also realise that the success of Carers Australia's work relies on our extensive formal and informal relationship and collaborative activities with government, stakeholders and many organisations.

We are grateful for our ongoing relationships with stakeholders.

International focus

Carers Australia is a member of the International Alliance of Carer Organisations (IACO). Meeting quarterly, IACO have worked to release the Global State of Caring Report. The 2021 Global State of Caring profiles the carer policies and practices in 18 countries. This interactive tool features carer initiatives addressing six universal carer priorities:

- » Recognition: Legislation and awareness campaigns
- » Financial support: Income support, pensions and benefits
- » Work and education: Carer-friendly workplaces and educational initiatives
- » Health and well-being: Health and social supports
- » Information and knowledge: Resources and education
- » Evidence-informed practices: Innovative policies and practices

In addition, IACO have worked to promote the [Global Carer Well-Being Index](#) where in 2021 this was 'Who Cares for Carers? Perspectives on COVID-19 Pressures and Lack of Support.'

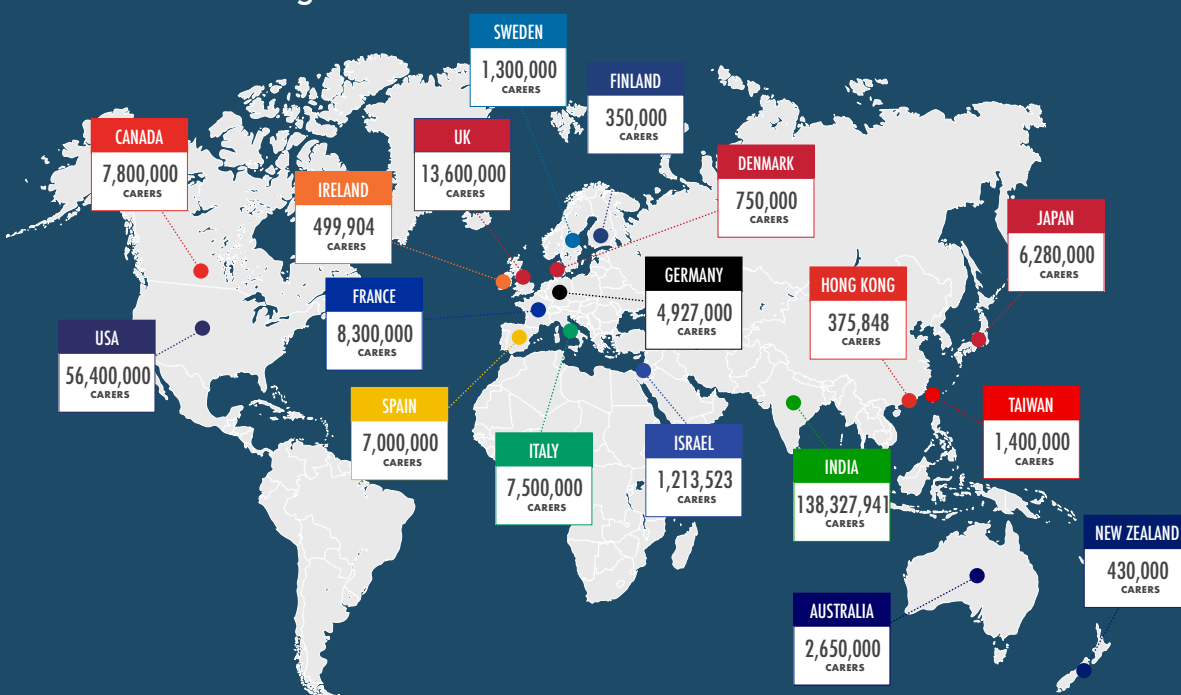
Other international activities have included liaison with the lead for carers for the National Social Prescribing Network in England and trustee of Carers UK, representing Australia and presenting at World Carers Conversation virtual summit on caregiving during COVID-19.

Carer Wellbeing Survey

April 2021 saw the release of the first Carer Wellbeing Survey, where we engaged the University of Canberra, in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Social Services, to design and develop a survey that aimed to better understand how many people are providing different forms of care across Australia, the needs of carers, and if the Australian government's Carer Gateway is appropriately reaching carers.

Following ethics approval, the survey was available 9 April – 9 May 2021 online and in paper-format at request, and was also translated online into simplified Chinese, Arabic, Italian and Vietnamese. A total of 5,808 valid responses to the survey were achieved in this first year, which we aim to build on in subsequent years to provide more evidence and data to inform policy and system design to meet the needs of carers. A report on the 2021 Carer Wellbeing Survey will be available in the second half of 2021, and we would like to thank all those carers who took the time to complete the survey.

Global State of Caring



NATIONAL CARERS WEEK

National Carers Week 2020 ran from 11–17 October and called upon unpaid carers to 'Tell Us Why You Care' which saw many personal stories submitted by carers across the country published on the official campaign website. These provided an authentic insight into unpaid caring in Australia and informed our advocacy work for the remainder of the year.

Due to the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, a flexible approach was taken to campaign activity. Many wide-ranging events, both physical and digital, were staged across Australia by the National Carer Network and other organisations, community groups and supporters. Most of these were listed on the National Carers Week website, which was a one-stop shop for information, engagement opportunities and methods, and promotional content.

To support these events and the 'Tell Us Why You Care' campaign, Carers Australia produced bags and hand sanitiser which were distributed to the state and territory Carers Associations. Badges were also given to all Federal Parliamentarians, with a special mention to the Chief Whip's Office, where staff issued badges to all those entering the House of Representatives during Question Time.

We hosted a launch event at Government House on Wednesday 14 October with our patron, the Governor General his Excellency the Honourable David Hurley. This was extremely well-attended by Carers Australia staff, members from the Department of Social Services, and local carers.

Carers Australia also took part in a number of events throughout the week:

- » The release of a Joint Position Statement with Dementia Australia on 'Carers of people living with dementia and discrimination' (Monday 12 October).
- » Facebook Live discussion on end-of-life care with Centre for Palliative Care (Tuesday 13 October).



- » The release of the report 'Sleep deficits in Australian carers' produced with Sleep Health Foundation and CQUniversity Australia (Wednesday 14 October).
- » Facebook Live discussion on 'The lived experience of young carers', hosted by Jan Fran and accompanied by the release of the report "No space in my brain to learn" – Young carers and their engagement with education', produced for Carers Australia by University of South Australia and Monash University (Thursday 15 October).
- » Carers Australia CEO, Liz Callaghan, gave a presentation on unpaid carers and National Carers Week at the Disability Trust's online conference, 'Your Voice Your Choice' (Friday 16 October).
- » Carers Australia CEO, Liz Callaghan, participated in a Podcast with Parents at Work on 'Carers Week 2020 Focus - with Liz Callaghan' focusing on carer friendly workplaces.

National Carers Week 2020 maintained an overall level of awareness, consistent with the stabilised long-term trend of recent years, at 39%. Results have maintained a uniformity over the last 3-4 years, reflecting consolidation in a crowded marketplace.

We had a strong online presence during National Carers Week, with our campaign videos gaining a cumulative 4,772 hours of viewership.

Social media also generated significant results across all platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Overall, total reach across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram was over 2.35 million with 122,971 unique engagements with campaign content, representing a 99.95% increase on the 2019 campaign.

Facebook

Posts directly related to National Carers Week generated a reach of just under 2.3 million, 2.8 million impressions and over 118,900 unique engagements.

Twitter

Over 73,600 impressions in the month of October with over 850 unique profile visits throughout the month.

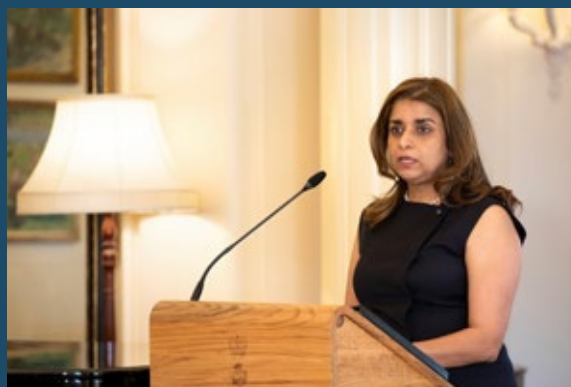
Our various ambassadors conducted 40 radio interviews through the week itself (66% more than in 2019), being broadcast on a total of 807 stations/markets across Australia (over 100 more than 2019). We were also able to work with our colleagues at Carers Victoria to secure an interview on Network TEN's The Project with our 2019 Ambassador, Moana Hope, and her sister, Vinny, which was broadcast as a standalone feature story and shared on The Project's social media channels.



Lisa and Jess Origliasso, The Veronicas



His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)



Sonia Rutnam, Chair of Carers Australia



Mandy Hose and Kate Jones, hosts of Too Peas in a Podcast



Liz Callaghan, CEO of Carers Australia (second left), speaking with the Governor-General

NEWS AND MEDIA

We maintained a strong public presence during 2020-21 through media interviews, media releases, a regular online newsletter and social media postings. Throughout the financial year, Carers Australia developed and rolled-out a new communications strategy for external communications which will continue to be implemented in the next financial year.

Carers Australia website

The Carers Australia website was relaunched on 20 Aug 2020 after a review of accessibility and a consolidation of pages and information to improve navigation. The website is our 'reception to the world', acting as a repository for all our work, submissions, media releases and position statements. Over the financial year, the website attracted over 174,00 users across 201,000 sessions, generating 414,000 page views. The top 5 webpages were:

- ① Support for Carers>Centrelink payments for carers
- ② Carers Australia homepage
- ③ About carers>Who is a carer
- ④ Support for carers>Carer Gateway
- ⑤ NDIS and carers>support for families and carers

Carers National News e-Newsletter

Issued weekly to an average readership of 4,110 people, Carers National News (CNN) provides a breakdown of our work, as well as reporting on relevant national and international news items of interest to or affecting unpaid carers, and the activities of other organisations. All editions are available on the Carers Australia website for future reference.

In the News

Carers Australia continued to grow a strong media presence throughout the financial year, undertaking media interviews and facilitating news stories about issues of concern to carers. The organisation was in the media as a result of a number of campaigns undertaken during the financial year, including the Young Carer Bursary Program, the opioid and pain management project, and National Carers Week. Carers Australia organised for carers to share their stories with the media to promote services which support carers and bring attention to the difficulties facing carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some notable headlines from the financial year include:

- » Your Voice Your Choice conference with the Disability Trust (featuring Liz Callaghan) – October 2020, Illawarra Mercury
- » Coronavirus has meant extra pressure for carers but they've also found some unexpected silver linings – October 2020, Life Matters (ABC)
- » Our hero carers celebrated – October 2020, Geelong Advertiser
- » Pro Australian tennis player Alison Bai faces her biggest challenge off court – February 2021, ABC News
- » What it's like to be a young carer – March 2021, ABC News
- » Aged care system will 'break' without reform – April 2021, Australian Ageing Agenda

MEDIA RELEASES	
24 July 2020	Further support needed for unpaid carers during COVID-19 pandemic
31 July 2020	Replacement value of unpaid care in Australia rises to \$77.9 billion per year
20 August 2020	Carers Australia calls for additional carer payments
25 August 2020	Pre-Budget submission: 'Invisible army' of unpaid carers need improved recognition and support
4 September 2020	Inclusion of carers in Targeted Call for Research into End of Life Care welcomed
21 September 2020	Carers Australia supports call for a dementia-friendly nation
23 September 2020	Consumer groups outline 10 key points for the future of aged care in Australia
2 October 2020	Carers Australia supports Safer At Home campaigns and calls for increased support for carers
6 October 2020	Extra funding offers support to unpaid carers
11 October 2020	Prime Minister thanks unpaid carers at the beginning of National Carers Week
14 October 2020	Poor sleep health of unpaid carers adversely affecting wellbeing
18 November 2020	Productivity Commission acknowledges the need for more recognition and support for mental health family and friend carers
3 December 2020	International Day of People with Disability 2020: Building Back Better
14 December 2020	\$20 million investment in respite services for senior Australians from diverse backgrounds welcomed
21 January 2021	Carers Australia calls for greater support carers within community services as satisfaction decreases
2 March 2021	Recognition of the importance of informal carers an important step to improving home care
17 March 2021	Additional investment in respite services for older Australians from diverse backgrounds welcomed
30 March 2021	Carers must remain a priority
20 April 2021	Carers must be recognised by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
11 May 2021	Increased funding for respite and support services for carers welcomed
25 May 2021	Women carers to be better supported in the workplace under a new program

Social Media

Social media engagement has grown significantly and remains a key channel for engagement across the sector and into the community.



Twitter

238

new followers

448

tweets

289,293

impressions

10,938

views

457

mentions

5,662

engagements



Facebook

Carers Australia

2,061

new 'likes'

395

posts

9,135,364

reach

440,208

engagements

Young Carers Network*

236

new 'likes'

89

posts

61,634

reach

1,536

engagements



Instagram

Carers Australia*

569

new followers

28

posts

15,740

impressions

1,331

engagements

Young Carers Network

853

new followers

78

posts

496,461

impressions

36,001

engagements

*Note: this page was retired in January 2021.



PROJECTS

Support to Carers during transition to Carer Gateway Services

Carers Australia continued to support the transition to Carer Gateway services by undertaking two communications campaigns in 2020-21.

In the first, we developed a suite of documentary-style videos to promote the Carer Gateway and support the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers across Australia. These unscripted videos involved the carer reflecting on their carer journey and how Carer Gateway had supported them in providing care to their loved one, ending in a call to action to encourage the audience to connect with Carer Gateway to seek supports and services such as respite, counselling and peer support. Carers Australia worked with its National Carer Network to secure five carers around Australia who represented some of the diversity of the carer experience. These videos were well received on social media, achieving 1,654,557 impressions, a reach of 1,043,383 and 69,112 unique engagements, as well as being viewed for a total of 159,162 minutes.



Australian Government



In the second campaign, we developed a threefold approach to help upskill carers by providing information and practical tips on how they can improve their wellbeing and coping skills through engaging with Carer Gateway resources. This included development of a 'COVID-19 factsheet' with specific advice for carers, an animated video detailing the financial supports and supplements available to carers; and a promotional campaign aimed at amplifying the uptake of Carer Gateway education modules. The campaign was well received across social media, achieving 3,094,256 impressions, a reach of 1,743,030 and 97,391 unique engagements.

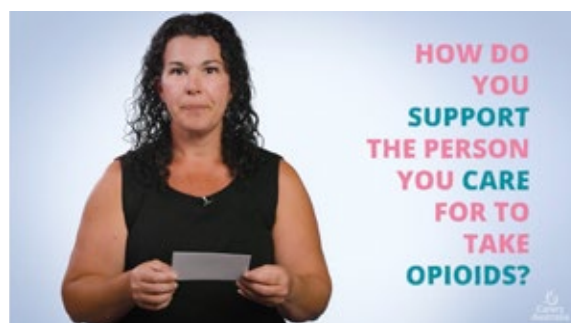


Prescription opioids and pain management awareness campaign

Carers Australia was engaged by the Department of Health Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for a communications campaign to empower Australians to manage their pain through safe and effective use of prescription opioids. The campaign was aimed at combatting the low 'opioid literacy' amongst carers, who will then support information provision to the person they are caring for and within their wider social circles. We developed and launched a number of resources including:

- » A webpage on the Carers Australia website to provide a platform to access resources and information.
- » A series of myth busting fact sheets on pain management and opioid use. The fact sheets are downloadable on the Carers Australia website and were made available as webpages.
- » A checklist for carers to facilitate discussions with health professionals.
- » Three videos featuring carers and health professionals talking about their own experiences and safe and effective use of prescription opioids from a carer's perspective and the carers role. The videos were introduced by television host, Grant Denyer, who himself had experience with opioids for pain management.
- » Two articles on opioids and pain management which were submitted to two industry publications.

The campaign was extremely well received by carers and the broader community, supported by Grant Denyer, who was particularly touched by his personal connection to caring through his wife, and shared our content on his own social media channels. On social media, the resources achieved 1,930,265 impressions, a reach of 1,378,575 and 118,858 unique impressions. The videos were viewed for a total of 245,796 minutes.



Better Start for Children with a Disability Initiative

Carers Australia and the National Carer Network finalised providing Registration and Information Services, under the Australian Government Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) Initiative in 2020-21, with full roll out of the NDIS. The focus was on supporting children aged under 7 years old diagnosed with an eligible disability and their carers to commence NDIS eligibility processes, transition to the NDIS, or consider other support arrangements.

We also continued to facilitate the provision of 'Moving Forward' workshops for families and carers throughout Australia to help them understand early childhood supports, as well as 'NDIS Information Sessions' to assist families that have a new NDIS plan to understand and find out more about how to get the most from their plans.



Young Carers Network

The Young Carers Network (YCN) remains a nationally coordinated resource to raise young carer awareness, provide information, direct young carers to appropriate pathways for support and work towards improving the services and supports available for young carers. The initiative enables young carers to engage with each other through a range of opportunities to share and connect.

The YCN is also the platform to access the Young Carer Bursary Program (YCBP), and in 2020-21 Carers Australia piloted Young Carers Connect (YCC), a safe online space for young carers to find support, share, listen and engage with each other. The sessions were professionally monitored and included activities, discussions and information about available programs and services.

The Young Carers Bursary Program

The Young Carer Bursary Program (YCBP) supports young carers to either continue, or return to, their education. The program offers 1,000 bursaries a year, and each one is worth \$3,000. Since 2014 the YCBP has supported almost 8,000 young carers to stay engaged or reconnect to education.

We know that young carers are already more susceptible to social isolation, financial and educational disadvantage, as well as potential impacts to their own health. Our 2020 survey of bursary recipients demonstrated this with:

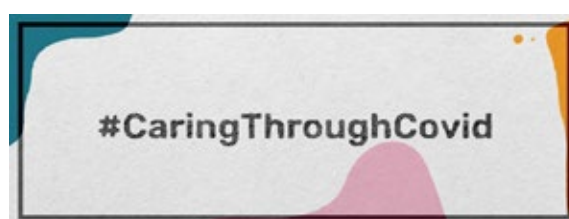
- » 17% of young carers receiving the bursary have reported living with their own disability.
- » 35% of young carers receiving the bursary have reported continuing with further education.
- » 50% of young carers receiving the bursary have reported experiencing mental health issues.

Caring through COVID Campaign supporting the mental health of carers

We also had the opportunity to launch the 'Caring through COVID' project in 2020-21, which encouraged carers of people living with mental illness and/or psychosocial disability to connect with other carers, assess and monitor their own wellbeing, and take part in and engage with online resources which promote self-care and wellbeing. This was developed in partnership with Mental Health Australia and Mental Health Carers Australia, and funded by the Department of Health through the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan. The project had four key elements:

1. #CaringThroughCOVID campaign aims to share ideas, strategies, and stories for carers by carers focused on wellbeing and resilience.
2. Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) assessment tool: the PWI tool allows individuals to self-assess satisfaction with their life.
3. The Mindfulness Course co-designed by Simply Mindful and mental health carers, and facilitated by a Mental Health Social Worker. The program was available live, on demand and was translated into Auslan.
4. The Secret Life of Carers podcast featuring the stories of mental health carers, highlighting their experiences and insights on supporting their loved ones living with mental illness and psychosocial disabilities, and the additional pressures that COVID has introduced.

We also maintained an ongoing partnership with SANE Australia to offer a free and anonymous 'SANE Forum' specifically for carers of people living with complex mental health issues. SANE Forums are moderated, online discussion space for Australians 18 years and over who are living with complex mental health issues, and their families and friends. The Forums are moderated 24/7 by health professionals employed by SANE Australia and partner organisations, and provide peer-to-peer support services.





HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATION

Our members – the National Carer Network

Carers Australia was established by its members, the National Carer Network, as the peak body for Australia's unpaid carers. The National Carer Network organisations are the carer organisations in each state and territory who we collaborate with in advocating for and supporting carers across Australia.



Our response to COVID-19

A COVID-19 Safety Plan was developed, implemented, and reviewed regularly and as circumstances changed. The impact of COVID-19 continued in 2020-21 and Carers Australia continued to adapt, with staff supported to work from home at various periods, scheduled events cancelled or moved online, projects revised to account for public health measures, and we all continued to use videoconferencing to stay connected.

Our Board

The AGM was held on 25 November 2020. Carers Australia is governed by a volunteer Board of directors, consisting of eight directors nominated by the National Carer Network and up to two independent directors. Additional directors may be co-opted on the basis of their skills and experience. Individual biographies for our Board of Directors can be accessed on our [website](#).

Dates outlined below are the date from which each director joined the Carers Australia Board:

Sonia Rutnam, *Chairperson* (from November 2019)

Brett Walker, *Deputy Chairperson* (from November 2019)

Bruce Howle, *Finance Audit and Risk Management Committee Chair* (from November 2019)

Richard Bialkowski (from April 2020 to 31 October 2020)

Jenny Davies (from February 2020)

Callum Ingram (from November 2019)

Cathy O'Toole (from August 2020)

Marie-Louise Pearson OAM (from July 2020)

Steve Sant (from October 2020)

Linda Wayman (from April 2020)

Staff

As a small organisation, we pride ourselves on encouraging a supportive, social and collaborative culture. Our values are:



Leadership

We lead national discussions, systemic advocacy and public policy on carer issues. We are authentic and build trust with each other and with our stakeholders.



Excellence

We are passionate and committed to excellence in everything we do. We strive for excellence because we believe in what we do and because our work impacts the lives of others.



Integrity

We conduct ourselves with integrity: we are honest, fair, ethical and transparent. We take responsibility: we do what we say and say what we do.



Innovative

We are innovative: we think creatively and look for new ways to do things. We look for gaps and problems but focus on better, smarter and simpler solutions. We are responsive to change.



Inclusive

We acknowledge and respect each other, and value diversity of experiences and perspectives. We are committed to upholding equality and dignity.



Kindness

We are kind to each other, demonstrating empathy, understanding and appreciation.

The Board and CEO recognise that Carers Australia's success depends on the experience and dedication of its team, and wish to acknowledge the staff in 2020-21 as the organisation adopted a new Strategic Plan and continued to operate during COVID-19:

Liz Callaghan	Chief Executive Officer
Kelly Gourlay	National Director – Policy & Strategy
Sue Elderton	Director – Aged Care Policy
Francis Healy	Director – Disability Policy (December 2020 – May 2021)
Corin Boughton	National Director – Programs & Operations (from August 2020)
Tammy Wolfs	NDIS Projects (to September 2020)
Manaia Peters	Young Carer Network Lead
Bronwyn Mackinder	Project Coordinator (from December 2020)
Edward Allpress	National Communication and Engagement Manager (to December 2020)
Samara McCann	National Media and Communications Coordinator (to December 2020) then National Director, Digital & Communications
Rafia Sami	Young Carers Network Coordinator (to December 2020) then Digital Projects Coordinator
Trisha Clarke	Governance Advisor
Liz Veikune	Finance Manager (from August 2020)
Jaz Veikune	Administration Officer (from February 2021)
Maddie Clarke	Administration Officer (from February 2021)



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