

# MEDIA RELEASE



16 May 2022

## **Carers are \$17,700 worse off every year in superannuation payments**

*Caring Costs Us: The economic impact on lifetime income and retirement savings of informal carers* recently released by Carers Australia found, on average, the superannuation balance at age 67 of a primary carer is reduced by about \$17,700 for every year they are in that caring role. Similarly, lifetime earnings are reduced by \$39,600 for every year they are a primary carer.

“In the final days before this week’s federal election, we are again highlighting the financial and economic insecurity in caring,” says new CEO of Carers Australia, Alison Brook.

“The focus of politics in the past few weeks has been on employment and superannuation, including the Coalition’s proposed Super Home Buyer scheme and the Labor Party’s now-retracted proposal to contribute superannuation on paid parental leave. What neither party is considering is the reality for so many of Australia’s carers<sup>1</sup> who are unlikely to have an ample superannuation balance to begin with.”

The 2018 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) reported that 1 in 10 Australians were carers and some 861,600 people (3.5% of the Australian population) were primary carers, the majority of whom were women (71.8%). Economically, carers are more likely to be in receipt of government pensions or allowances, and less likely to be engaged in secure employment.

“Being a carer impacts on superannuation. Add to this that there is no paid leave available for caring other than sick leave, the unpredictability of caring episodes for part-time caring needs, and stringent requirements on hours of work to be eligible for Commonwealth income support.”

“Carers have fewer opportunities to balance work and caring responsibilities, have higher representation in casual insecure employment, are in lower income households, and have far less superannuation. Having no income or retirement safety net prevents carers from participating in schemes such as those announced over the weekend,” said Ms Brook.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carers Australia uses the term ‘carer(s)’ as defined by the Commonwealth *Carer Recognition Act 2010*. The term should not be used broadly and without context to describe a paid care worker, volunteer, foster carer, or a family member or friend who is not a carer.



The *Caring Costs Us* report found that Australian carers, on average, forego \$392,500 in lost wages to age 67 and miss out on a further \$175,000 in superannuation. The report outlined two fiscal policy options for government to consider. A [Summary of the Key Findings](#) has been prepared by Carers Australia and is available on its [website](#) along with the full Report.

Ms Brook said, “Carers Australia had previously revealed in 2020 that the cost of replacing all informal care with commercial market services was valued at \$77.9 billion per annum, before the pandemic commenced. Coupled with the *Caring Costs Us* report findings, there is a strong argument for addressing the barriers and long-term impacts on carers’ financial and economic security.”

“In the end, everyone either knows a carer, or has been, is, and/or will be a carer at some stage in their lives. We have been asking ‘who cares for carers?’ in the lead up to this election with a disappointing response. We are looking forward to working with the next Australian Government to address the economic and other disadvantages experienced by Australia’s 2.65 million carers.”

The Carers Australia’s [2022 Federal Election Platform](#) calls for increased economic and financial security for carers, equitable access to respite, strengthened carer recognition and accountability in government, and advocacy and navigation support for carers.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **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, delivers a range of essential carer services across states and territories.

### **About carers**

An informal, unpaid carer is a family member or friend who cares for someone who has a disability, chronic or life-limiting illness, is frail aged, has a mental illness, alcohol or other drug related condition. 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 and friend carers perform their caring duties without remuneration.

**For media enquiries please contact Melanie Cantwell on 0428 948 415.**