

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **This National Carers Week, we are asking employers to provide inclusive workplaces for carers**

Anyone can become a carer. Did you know that [research](#) into carers' employment this year showed how challenging it is for carers to participate in the workforce? Carers are less likely to be employed than other Australians, and many spend fewer hours doing paid work than they would like. Only [58.8%](#) of primary carers aged 15-64 were employed, compared to 81.5% of people without care responsibilities.

This has a big impact on carers' mental and financial wellbeing. [70.8%](#) of carers who did less paid work than they would have liked in the last month reported having low wellbeing. In 2022, carers were 1.7 times more likely to experience at least one significant instance of financial stress such as being unable to pay bills on time, going without meals, or having to ask for financial assistance. Such instances affected 54.4% of carers.

Although carers are not paid for their contributions, caring itself is an important form of labour that saves the government [almost \\$80 billion](#) per year. Carers are already productive citizens. A significant barrier to their participation in paid work is inadequately supportive workplaces. Employers can remedy this by implementing:

- **Inclusive hiring policies** - Carers are a diverse group with highly diverse needs. [71%](#) of carers are female, and many carers belong to Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Carers are also [more likely](#) to have disabilities of their own and suffer from mental ill-health at a higher rate.
- **Flexible hours and work arrangements** – The nature of carers' roles often requires them to be available at home for the people they care for so that they can provide assistance where and when it is needed. By offering flexible hours, work-from-home arrangements, and hours scheduled in advance, employers can make it easier to manage caring and work responsibilities.
- **Supportive work environments** – [42.5%](#) of carers reported that their supervisors were very understanding of their caring role. This represents valuable progress for carers' employment, but it also shows that Australia has a long way to go in creating a workforce that supports the needs of carers. By [learning about carers](#), employers can give themselves the tools to care for their staff.

There are a million reasons to care, and a million reasons to employ carers. The majority of staff at Carers Australia, the majority of staff are carers. Carers Australia creates a work environment that supports carers by facilitating flexible work arrangements including working from home, encouraging



masks in the office, and fostering a culture that allows staff to bring their whole selves to work. This National Carers Week and beyond, we are calling for workplaces to be more care aware.

This National Carers Week, events will be held all over the country to support, celebrate and advocate for carers from Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 October 2022. There are millions of reasons to care about carers, and millions of ways to get involved in #nationalcarersweek. Find out more at [www.carersweek.com.au](http://www.carersweek.com.au)

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### **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**

Carers Australia uses the term 'carer(s)' as defined by the Commonwealth [Carer Recognition Act 2010](#). The term should not be used loosely and without context to describe a paid care worker, volunteer, foster carer, or a family member or friend who is not a carer.

An informal, unpaid carer is a family member or friend caring 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 under a contract of employment with remuneration and other benefits of employment. Conversely, family and friend carers perform their caring duties without remuneration.

**For media enquiries please contact Alison Brook, CEO of Carers Australia, on (02) 6122 9955.**