



We work on, and enjoy the lands, waterways and skies which the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people have cared for and nurtured over the last several thousands of years.

We stand with Indigenous carers in saying always was, always will be.

'Recognise and Celebrate' (June 2022) by Marrawuy Journeys artist Sarah Richards

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# **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

I became the independent Chair of Carers Australia in December 2022, taking over from Steve Sant, and have led the work of the Board since then.

The Board has been focused on the work of the Carers Australia teams and has worked with them to identify priority areas of focus for this election cycle and the next. Further in the coming year, we will work to develop a new strategic plan for the organisation, taking its work forward to the end of 2026.

The 2022 Carer Wellbeing Survey gave us an annual reminder of the importance of our work in supporting the poor mental and physical health and advocating for additional financial support for Australia's carers.

We were pleased to have a carer on the lived experience panel at the Government's Jobs and Skills Summit in September 2022. Employment of carers was a key priority area in our work with the Government during the year. We made submissions to the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care, took on a new Commonwealth funded initiative encouraging employers to attract more carers to their staffing profiles, made submissions to the Australian Productivity Commission on Leave for Unpaid Carers, and held a roundtable on Carers and Employment in June 2023. We also continued our work with the Office for Women on encouraging female carers to join or return to the workforce.

Aged care reform continues to consume a great deal of our thought. Carers Australia continues to advocate for recognition of carers throughout the aged care systems. Staff sit on several advisory boards and committees, make submissions, and give evidence before Committees.

The NDIS Review has also been a key area of focus in the past year. Around one third of Australian carers care for a person with disability. Many of those carers themselves live with one or more disabilities. We worked with the NDIS Review in several ways during the year to deepen their knowledge of the key part that carers play in supporting people living with disabilities.

The Board itself worked closely with the CEO and senior executive team to support Carers Australia's work. We expanded the Board by filling two independent member vacancies during the year. By year end, all positions had been filled, and the Board is functioning the way a not-for-profit Board should – focused on key strategic areas, supporting the CEO to lead the work of the organisation, and ensuring that the organisation contributes to the social fabric of this country.







# **CEO'S REPORT**

We've had another busy year advocating for the interests of Australia's unpaid carers. With a reform-driven Government at the federal level, there have been major initiatives that are all welcome, but that have stretched our resources on many occasions.

The Young Carer Bursary Program continues to support carers aged between 12 and 25 years to remain in education and training. In early May this year, the Minister for Social Services announced the Commonwealth would henceforth double their investment in the bursary program with nearly 1,600 young people now eligible each year, with an annual contribution of \$3,768 for each bursary. Carers Australia was delighted to hear this news, and to be able to work with more carers every year to enable them to complete their education.

In our Women Who Care program, the Australian Office for Women from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet funded us for a range of initiatives encouraging female carers to enter or re-enter the workforce. This year, we recorded and released our third season of the podcast series The Secret Life of Carers. Also in the year, we were delighted to be able to place more than one hundred female carers in a development program hosted by Future Women's Jobs Academy under the same program.

Employment of carers has been a common theme running through a range of programs and initiatives this year. The Minister for Social Services announced at the time of the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit a new program to encourage organisations to consider the employment of carers, and to ensure their workplace conditions met the needs of carers. The project will be launched in National Carers Week 2023.

In June 2023 Carers Australia hosted a Carers Employment Roundtable – a discussion with a range of government and non-government leaders as well as a number of carers. Presentations were made by representatives of Women in Super, The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Care Economy Task Force, Australian Treasury and the Productivity Commission. Carers' stories punctuated each presentation with lived experience of Commonwealth policy.

Other programs include a range of digital health literacy initiatives funded by the Australian Digital Health Association, and an awareness campaign with a dedicated podcast series for Defence and veteran carers, funded by the Australian Defence Force.

We saw the release of our 2022 Carer Wellbeing Survey in October, that demonstrated again the extraordinary personal cost (physical, emotional and financial) that caring has on those who look after the needs of family and friends in an unpaid capacity.

National Carers Week saw a superb morning ceremony at the residence of our Patron, the Governor General of Australia, with young carers, a carer who is a major Australian sporting star, a First Nations artist and others speaking about their experience and reflection on caring. We were delighted to have many carers attend and celebrate the day with us.

Carers Australia's policy team continued their ongoing contribution to developing research, knowledge and policy about the incredible contribution carers make to the social infrastructure of this country. They held a number of policy forums with a broad cross-section of participants with expertise in areas associated with carers and caring. They wrote many submissions (all available on the Carers Australia website), culminating in a range of contributions to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs' review of the Commonwealth Carer Recognition Act announced late in the year. Members of the policy team also appeared with the CEO before several Parliamentary Committees during the year.

Carers Australia's voluntary Board continues to actively support the work of the organisation and lead discussions on carer policy in this country. This year saw the careful development of Carers Australia's National Policy Platform, a framework of priority areas for a range of contributory work, including advocacy.



**Alison Brook** Carers Australia CEO



# **OUR BOARD**

Carers Australia is governed by a volunteer Board of directors, consisting of eight members nominated by the member state and territory carer organisations and up to two independent directors.

#### THIS YEAR OUR BOARD MEMBERS WERE:

Cathy O'Toole, Chairperson
Bruce Howle, Deputy Chairperson and FARM Committee Chairperson
Linda Wayman, Governance Committee Chairperson
Steve Sant
Nick Field
Sue Ham
Marie-Louise Pearson OAM
Lyn Woodforde OAM
David Quilty
Marzena Baker

# VISION AND VALUES

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.

Our vision is an Australia that values and supports the contribution carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole. Our values, listed below, reflect our commitment to prioritising the wellbeing and dignity of not only our staff but Australia's carers.



## 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.



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

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# STRATEGIC GOALS

Carers Australia's work has remained focused on achieving strategic goals set by the Board in 2021. These include advocacy, engagement and sustainability that aim to influence national policy, community and government's understanding and support of carer issues.



GOAL 1

## **Advocacy for Carers**

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



GOAL 2

# **Engagement and Community**

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



#### GOAL 3

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.



## GOAL 4

## **Sustainability of Carers Australia**

Carers Australia is an effective, efficient and sustainable organisation.

#### **OUR MEMBERS**

Our members are the carer organisations in each state and territory. Collectively we form the National Carer Network to collaborate in advocacy and support of carers across Australia.

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# **POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

As the national peak body representing Australia's 2.65 million carers, we have continued to advocate for better recognition of carers at a federal level.

A National Carers Strategy, review of the Carer Recognition Act 2010, economic and financial security and equitable access to respite were again the focus of the October 2022-23 Pre-budget submission.

Alongside these asks, we called for a Commissioner for Carers and the establishment of an office for carers within Government to lead a whole-of-government approach to carer recognition, inclusion and coordination of services.

The Inquiry into the recognition of Unpaid Carers was adopted by the Australian Government House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs in June. This Inquiry, which will focus on the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Carer Recognition Act 2010, is a promising step forward in the Albanese Labor Government's commitment to carers. As an organisation we plan to make a number of submissions and encourage carers to do the same.

Over the year we have engaged extensively with the Department of Health and Aged Care to support the establishment of a lived experience peak for family, carers and kin of people living with mental ill-health. This establishment of the family, carer and kin peak body seeks to work with Government, mental health service providers, and the wider community to inform and drive improvements to the mental health systems and services.

We have continued to provide representation for carers of people with a disability by engaging with the Disability Royal Commission and used our networks to encourage others to have their voices heard in this important piece of work. We look forward to reading the results when they are released in September this year.

Alongside this, Carers Australia remains an active member of the NDIA's National Disability and Carer Representative Organisation Forum, which brings together CEOs and senior representatives from key disability sector organisations to engage, discuss, collaborate and co-design on important areas of work. Engagement in this forum provides a direct line of communication enabling Carers Australia to advocate for a more inclusive delivery of the NDIS.

Furthermore, we participated in engagement and consultation for the Independent Review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, providing information from a carer lens and calling for consistent and accurate recognition of carers. We have ensured the carer voice is heard in the NDIS Review looking at the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS.

In August, the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care was appointed to inquire into the impact combining work and care responsibilities has on the wellbeing of workers, carers and those they care for. Carers Australia and the National Carer Network remained engaged throughout the Inquiry and welcomed the final report and its recommendations in March 2023.

One of these recommendations was to review the accessibility, availability, and flexibility of respite care with a view to improving respite care options available to working carers and those they care for. Respite has remained on our advocacy agenda this year and has been included in many of our submissions, so we welcomed this recommendation and urge the Government to act quickly on it.

At last year's Jobs and Skills Summit, held in September, we highlighted the adverse impact caring has on economic and financial security and were thrilled with the ensuing priority action to improve carer inclusiveness in the workplace. Read more about this in the program section!

Following this summit, we held a Carers and Employment Roundtable, where we welcomed stakeholders from the community sector, lived experience carers and representatives from multiple government agencies. The day encouraged cross-sector dialogue exploring the barriers carers face to employment, and investigated measures targeted at improving employment outcomes for carers.

Extended unpaid carers leave was the focus of two submissions this year as we called for the entitlement to be available to all employees who are carers as defined by the Carer Recognition Act 2010. These submissions, made to the Productivity Commission Carer Leave Inquiry, called for the entitlement to be available to all carers, regardless of the age of the person being cared for. We await the results of the Productivity Commission's findings.

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# **CARER WELLBEING SURVEY**

This survey aims to better understand the needs and challenges of carers and is conducted by the University of Canberra, in collaboration with the Australian Department of Social Services. 2022 was the second year the Carer Wellbeing Survey was commissioned and saw 5,992 Australian carers aged 13 or older participate.

Data revealed carers were experiencing greater distress, loneliness and lower levels of wellbeing than Australian's without caring responsibilities.

# **ACCORDING TO THIS YEAR'S SURVEY**

55% of carers have

OUT OF 1 O carers often feel lonely.



of carers had experienced at least one significant financial stress event in the previous 12 months. only

14%
of carers actively
decided to take on a caring
role, the remainder felt they
had little or no choice.

We would like to thank all those carers who took the time to complete the survey, and our stakeholders for supporting communication through their channels. Carers Australia has used the results throughout its advocacy and policy work to improve outcomes for carers across the country.







# **NATIONAL CARERS WEEK 2022: A YEAR TO REMEMBER**

We are delighted to reflect on the success of National Carers Week 2022 and the celebration of carers across Australia. This year's festivities marked a significant milestone as the week celebrated its 30th year and saw a continuation of the theme 'Millions of reasons to care'.

The highlight of National Carers Week was undoubtedly the event held at the Governor General's residence in Canberra. The event brought together carers from diverse backgrounds and provided a platform for them to share their experiences, challenges and accomplishments. It was a morning of heartfelt stories, connections and creativity culminating in an emotive performance from Faith Kayrooz, a young singer songwriter

To signify the 30th anniversary, Carers Australia commissioned an artwork by local artist Sarah Richards. 'Recognise and Celebrate' (as seen on page 2) represents the journey carers go on and highlights the needs carers have for support and recognition.

In both traditional and digital media, carers bravely contributed to a national awareness campaign by speaking frankly about their lived experiences. These stories resonated with a wide audience and gave carers a sense of unity in what can be a lonely role.

Through compelling stories, informative content, and engaging campaigns we generated more than seven million online impressions and a significant uptick in online engagement.

Evaluation of National Carers Week shows awareness levels of the week remain steady and community sentiment towards the issue is positive.

We would like to thank our carer ambassadors, the National Carer Network and stakeholders who shared our promotional materials, organised events and participated in the week.

Pictures from our event at Government House, Canberra.

















VIEW OUR LAUNCH EVENT VIDEO

# **PROGRAMS**

Carers Australia delivers several programs designed to provide comprehensive support, resources, and a sense of community to unpaid carers. Below is a summary of program highlights during 2022 and 2023.

#### **CARER INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE**

The Carer-Inclusive Workplace Initiative (CIWI) was developed following the Jobs and Skills Summit in 2022 where carers highlighted the barriers they face in entering and retaining flexible work that accommodates their caring roles.

Partnering with Carers Australia, the Government committed \$2 million over three years to 2024-25 to deliver the Carer-Inclusive Workplace Initiative. The Initiative helps employers develop and adopt practices and policies that support employees with caring responsibilities, making their workplaces more inclusive for carers.

Employers who participate can be recognised as committed to carer inclusivity and receive a government-endorsed brandmark to display at their place of business and in their marketing materials. The initiative will be launched by the Minister for Social Services during National Carers Week 2023.

CIWI serves as a useful connection to the Carers NSW Carers + Employers program for those employers wishing to seek formal accreditation as an Accredited Carer Employer.



#### **DEFENCE AND VETERAN CARERS NETWORK**

In August 2022 Carers Australia signed a grant agreement with the Department of Defence Family Support Funding Program. The funding intended to develop a web hub and series of activities to support carers in the defence and veteran community.

The hub, named the Defence and Veteran Carers Network, aims to improve access to, and awareness of, carer support services relevant to Defence families.

The project developed a communication toolkit for stakeholders and networks to promote and support awareness of defence and veteran carers in the community. It also saw season 4 of The Secret Life of Carers podcast telling the stories of carers in the defence and veteran community over 6 episodes. Season 4 of The Secret Life of Carers will be released in November 2023.

This project has once again highlighted the unique and complex needs of veteran and defence carers and suggested further support is needed. Carers Australia will seek additional funding to continue with this important work.

## **DIGITAL HEALTH LITERACY**

We continued to work with the Australian Digital Health Agency to provide information and expert insights into the barriers carers face when using Digital Health technologies. This information has in turn been used to help shape more accessible technologies for carers.

The program this year was focused on Advance Care Planning documents and carers uploading these to My Health Record. In addition to the already established website and communications activities, Carers Australia hosted a webinar in conjunction with the Agency and Advanced Care Planning Australia (ACPA) on the importance of and process for carers to upload advanced care plans into the My Health Record.

Carers Australia worked with the Agency to script and record an Audiogram that was produced and released for Advance Care Planning week, highlighting key points on advance care planning and My Health Record.



#### **WOMEN WHO CARE**

Work continued on a communication and capacity building project for both carers who are women and employers, and we further developed the online hub of information, resources and connections.

The hub's aim is to support workforce participation and increase awareness of the strengths and value of employing carers and supporting them to maintain employment alongside their caring responsibilities.

In addition to the hub, the project saw a specific carer cohort onboarded to the Future Women's Jobs Academy. 105 women who are carers will begin the program in July 2023. Job's Academy is a year-long, virtual program that equips women with the knowledge and connections to return to work and ensure they are in the right workplace for their unique circumstance.

The project, funded by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Women's Leadership and Development Program, is underpinned by research into the needs of female carers, and the barriers and enablers to gaining and maintaining employment.

### **YOUNG CARERS NETWORK**

The Young Carers Network (YCN) is a national resource for carers up to the age of 25. It aims to raise awareness of young carers, provide information and direct carers to appropriate pathways for support.

Carers Australia continued to deliver the YCN on behalf of the Australian Department of Social Services and this year continued the Young Carers Connect initiative. This safe, online community is for young carers to find support, listen and engage with each other. They are organised and facilitated by Relationships Australia.

This year a total of 46 sessions with 122 carers were held. Six carers identified as Indigenous and three were from culturally diverse backgrounds.

#### YOUNG CARERS BURSARY PROGRAM

This year's bursary program was a resounding success, delivering more money to even more young people.

The Young Carer Bursary Program (YCBP) is a component of the Young Carer Network and supports young carers with a bursary to either continue, or return to, their education. It is administered by Carers Australia on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

The program offers 1,592 bursaries each year and in April 2023 the Government announced an increase in funding for the YCBP of nearly \$10 million. Thanks to this boost, Carers Australia was able to increase the amount of each bursary by nearly 25% from \$3,000 to an annual total of \$3,768. This means young carers can continue their education and reduce their need to undertake paid work at the same time as their study and caring duties.

In 2022/23 the Young Carer Network webpages were updated to better inform young carers about the bursary program and other available resources. These updates, coupled with a powerful marketing strategy, delivered 2,201 successful applications, up from 1,848 the previous year.

Over the next year Carers Australia will develop a multi-channel engagement approach to increase awareness of the bursary scheme among young carers. We will also explore how to better engage with educators and health care workers to enable them to further understand the unique needs of young carers.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the YCBP Independent Assessment Panel for their valuable contribution to this program.





I am 13-years-old and being a young carer is who I am - I don't remember a time when I haven't been a carer.

When dad came home from hospital he had a tracheostomy and I remember standing by his bedside helping to clean it and fetching things for him as he couldn't really move. He later developed Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and I have always been the one to check he is OK, get him to bed and remind him to take his medication.

Money is always tight, but the bursary means everything I need for school is taken care of. I can get what I need, pay for the excursions and activities without worrying about mum and dad not having enough. It means I can study and succeed.

— Sarah\*

<sup>\*</sup> Name changed to protect Sarah's identity.



# **NEWS AND MEDIA / COMMUNICATIONS**

Carers Australia has continued to use the media as part of a broader engagement strategy with the general public. A number of press releases relating to our advocacy work and programs were distributed across broadcast and print outlets, with significant traction for stories relating to the Young Carer Bursary Program, National Carers Week and our Federal budget submission.

A special thanks to Jamila Rizvi, who not only hosted our podcast series 'A Secret Life of Carers' but wrote about her health challenges and the role her husband now plays as her primary carer. Personal stories like Jamila's are what help shine a light on carers and we are grateful to all our ambassadors who speak so eloquently and passionately about their experiences.

Carers Australia's website continues to be a point of contact and useful hub of information for carers and stakeholders. In the reporting period July 2022 to June 2023, the website had 645,000 page views, a significant increase from last year, with the highest visited page being carers seeking support.

Our social media platforms were used primarily for showcasing the organisation's work and promoting information and events of interest to carers. A review of these channels, their efficacy and audience, will be taking place in 2024.



22k Followers with a reach 4 million



7k Followers with a reach 1 million



Over 4,500 Impressions

# **FINANCES**

Revenue for the financial year 2022-2023 came primarily from Australian Government funding. Full financial statements can be found on the Carers Australia website (carersaustralia.com.au) separate to this annual report.

The table below is a five-year snapshot of revenue and expenditure.

Revenue	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Government funding	7,720,567	8,578,399	6,097,914	13,749,103	14,710,391
YCB Payments	5,210,500	5,944,500	2,717,026	1,751,250	1,002,000
Other Government funding	2,510,067	2,633,899	3,380,888	11,997,853	13,708,391
Other revenue	238,034	320,749	316,322	227,149	382,723

Expenses					
State/Territories funding	-5,223,267	-6,056,500	-3,744,027	-10,571,057	-12,065,143
Administration expenses	-113,768	-113,576	-186,077	-215,923	-216,360
Amortisation and depreciation	-85,504	-89,810	-67,441	-11,311	-8,743
Communication expenses	-140,007	-339,792	-389,920	-347,539	-262,700
Computer/Website expenses	-207,073	-105,200	-253,927	-298,862	-162,313
Consultants	-675,377	-808,139	-742,234	-328,865	-327,258
Employee expenses	-1,466,625	-1,300,411	-1,320,846	-1,806,831	-1,566,908
Travel & meetings expenses	-97,747	-16,103	-16,333	-117,192	-163,358
Gain/ (Loss) for the year	-50,766	69,617	-306,569	278,672	320,331

1,105	-3,709	-5,007	
1,105	-3,709	-5,007	
-49,660	65,908	-311,576	
	1,105	1,105 -3,709	1,105 -3,709 -5,007

This year our operations have again been independently audited by Bellchambers Barrett who have provided an unmodified audit report.

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Carers Australia is committed to transparency and accountability. This annual report covers all activities during financial year 2022/2023.



Carers Australia is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) with DGR status, meaning all Australian donations are fully tax deductible.