

MEDIA RELEASE



Carers Australia Welcomes Government's Revised Conditions to the Carer Payment.

Today Carers Australia welcomes the Government's decision to remove barriers to employment for the nation's unpaid carers.

Carers Australia, the national peak body representing 2.65 million unpaid carers, has been calling for a review of the 25-hour rule for over 10 years.

Carers have repeatedly stated the rules around the Carer Payment have contributed to ongoing disadvantage. The Albanese Labor Government's announcement to relax the rules and allow more flexibility in the hours that carers work, study or volunteer over a four-week period, is a significant step towards mitigating the disadvantage.

Annabel Reid, chief executive officer of Carers Australia, said: "These changes will enable carers to work more flexibly and progress their study while keeping their Carer Payment and we applaud the government for their investment.

"We frequently hear from carers who are unable to balance study and caring responsibilities and are left with no choice but to choose between caring and studying. Or from carers who are working fewer hours than they want to. These circumstances have untold consequences on their life chances.

"The changes announced today will allow carers to retain a connection to the workforce and take up more work should they want to. We thank The Hon Minister Rishworth MP, Minister for Social Services, for the investment and for removing the barriers many carers face."

Under the proposed changes, Carer Payment recipients will be able to work 100 hours over a four-week period rather than the 25-hour per week current limit. This provides greater flexibility to structure their work commitments around their caring role before losing their payment, and accommodates unpredictable and fluctuating care.

Additionally, travel time, education and volunteering activities will no longer be counted in the participation limit. The travel time change will particularly assist carers who live in regional and remote areas and are more likely to need to travel further for work.

This will help carers across the country better balance work, study, volunteering and caring.

Replacing the 25-hour rule has been a recommendation of Carers Australia for many years and was included in our most recent [Budget submission to Treasury](#). And the final report of

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the productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health recommended increased flexibility in relation to employment and the Carer Payment by 'replacing the 25-hour per week restriction on work, study and volunteering with a 100-hour per month restriction on work only.'

Carers Australia understands the changes will commence next year, subject to the passage of legislation, and are estimated to cost \$18.6 million over five years.

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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

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 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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