

MEDIA RELEASE



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Impacts on unpaid carers not considered in NDIS changes

Carers Australia has warned the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) changes risk increasing caring responsibilities, reducing workforce participation and shifting costs onto unpaid carers, with impacts for families and the Australia's economy.

Appearing before the Senate inquiry examining the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Amendment Bill 2026, Carers Australia CEO Joanna Cave highlighted the critical role played by Australia's more than three million unpaid carers, many who support people with disability and ensure the sustainability of the NDIS.

"Unpaid carers provide about \$80 billion care to Australians annually, that's more than the savings expected from the proposed changes," she said.

"These carers are deeply embedded in the operation of the NDIS. Every day they provide personal care, transport, advocacy, system navigation and emotional support. Their contribution is often invisible, but critical to the lives of the people they care for.

"If the NDIS can be thought of as a tree, carers are the roots. They may be unseen, but they are fundamental to the health, stability and vitality of the Scheme."

But Ms Cave warned that many of Australia's carers were at a tipping point, exhausted and overwhelmed and the proposed legislation changes could prove too big a hurdle to overcome.

While Carers Australia supports improving the integrity and long-term sustainability of the NDIS, it does not believe the focus of the Bill is on the right parts of the Scheme.

"We don't believe that tightening eligibility and reducing participant plans are the only, or even the best, mechanisms available to control NDIS costs.

"There are other ways to improve the sustainability of the Scheme without reducing supports for people with disability and their families.

"Many carers report facing excessive pricing for goods and services that would cost a fraction of the amount outside the NDIS market," she said.

Ms Cave said there was an example from one unpaid carer with a disabled son who had a NDIS provider propose charging \$1300 for supplying and fitting a shower hose.



"Considering the costs too high, this gentleman went to Bunnings, purchased the identical fitting for \$60 and watched a You Tube video to install it himself."

"Stronger oversight, transparency and fairer pricing would deliver better value for taxpayers while helping to curb cost growth."

Ms Cave said it is important carers have a seat at the table as the reforms are discussed and any changes implemented.

"For the NDIS to be sustainable, it is essential that the impact on carers of proposed changes is considered. In the case of the NDIS, that includes unpaid carers who stand to feel the full force of the proposed changes at their kitchen tables.

"They cannot be forgotten or ignored as legislation is discussed," she said.

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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 and Carers Queensland, deliver a range of essential carer services across states and territories.