

MEDIA RELEASE



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Two thirds of young carers say they have lost part of their childhood

Almost two thirds of Australia's young carers feel they have missed out on some of their childhood because of their caring role a data drop from this year's Carers Wellbeing Survey* reveals.

The early data release from the annual survey of caring experiences provides insights into the impact caring is having on the almost 400,000 young Australian carers.

Of those surveyed, 65 per cent said they feel they have missed out on some of their childhood. This is up from 54 per cent in 2025. In addition, 46 per cent of young carers in secondary or tertiary education said they feel behind in their education because of their caring role, up from 42 per cent the previous year.

Half of the young carers also reported that they were unable to work as much as they would like to because of their caring role, up from 41 per cent in 2025.

Carers Australia CEO Joanna Cave said the findings demonstrate why young carers need greater recognition, support and opportunities to participate fully in education and work, failing to do so could have significant impacts on the rest of their lives.

"This National Carers Week we're asking Australians to Care for a carer: making carers visible. We need to do more within our education and health systems to recognise, listen to, and support young carers to thrive alongside their caring roles.

"Young carers are often forced to take on many more responsibilities within their families than their peers. They might be attending medical appointments, managing family finances or administration or taking on the mental load of managing siblings activities and school needs. All this while also tending to their own learning and social activities.

"We know that for many caring is an isolating experience. For our young carers it can impact their ability to make and keep friends, attend school and university resulting in poorer education outcomes, putting them at risk of long-term income support dependency.



Ms Cave said the survey results also point to young carers not being seen or considered as they undertake their caring roles.

“Fewer young carers tell us they feel included in planning and decisions about the person they care for - 53 per cent compared with 67 per cent in 2025 and fewer than half reported they are treated with respect as a young carer (44 per cent) or that their opinions and concerns are heard and acknowledged (46 per cent).

Ms Cave said young carers can access financial supports like the Australian Government funded Young Carer Bursary and access support and information through the Young Carer Network. There are also some supports available to young carers through Carer Gateway like counselling, coaching, peer support and referral to respite.

“These are all helpful initiatives, but we would like to see more.”

Access to peer supports is also in decline, only 18 per cent reported being able to connect with other young carers through peer support groups, down from 30 per cent in 2025. On a positive note, more than half of our young carers (54 per cent) said they could easily make friends with other young people who are not carers, Ms Cave said.

“Young carers should not be disadvantaged because they take on a caring role. By making young carers visible, we can ensure they get the support they need to balance education with caring, build strong social bonds and reach their full potential. Targeted supports the improve young carers’ education and employment outcomes will also benefit the Australian community,” she said.

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***This preliminary data release is subject to change.**

National Carers Week runs from 11 to 17 October 2026 and is an opportunity to recognise, support and raise awareness of the contribution Australia's unpaid carers make to families, communities and the economy.

The Carer Wellbeing Survey had responses from 7942 current carers and 1266 past carers. The Survey is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. It is prepared by the WellRes Unit, Health Research Institute, University of Canberra for Carers Australia.

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Case studies available on request.



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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.