

MEDIA RELEASE



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Little change in carer wellbeing new data shows

The wellbeing of Australia's three million unpaid carers has barely moved in the past 12 months, with fewer than 40 per cent of respondents to the 2026 Carer Wellbeing Survey* reporting healthy wellbeing, well below the Australian average of around 66 per cent.

Carers Australia CEO Joanna Cave said the positive news is that the decline in the proportion of carers reporting healthy wellbeing– which has been occurring since 2022 - appears to have abated.

“However, there are some concerning statistics about carer wellbeing when we consider the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) amendments and the Support at Home program. The survey suggests that increasing hours of unpaid caring contributes to poorer wellbeing outcomes, with those who spend 40 or more hours caring having only around a one-in-four probability of reporting healthy wellbeing (28 per cent).

“Those carers who spend half that amount of time caring, are twice as likely to have healthy wellbeing (54.7 per cent).”

Ms Cave said the Support at Home program resulted in higher caring workloads for unpaid carers and the same is anticipated with the NDIS amendments.

“The reduction in support budgets for social, economic and community participation will mean unpaid carers pick up the slack providing those supports. Our own survey of carers of elderly people receiving the Support at Home Program, found the caring workload had increased, and half said their wellbeing had declined.

“In addition, the latest Carer Wellbeing Survey found that those caring for a child or grandchild with a disability, illness or developmental challenges reported lower wellbeing than others – only 20 per cent reporting healthy levels of wellbeing,” she said.



Ms Cave said it was particularly important during National Carers Week for Australians to reach out and offer support to those unpaid carers in their families, communities and social groups.

"The Carer Wellbeing Survey paints a picture of a cohort of Australians who feel disconnected, exhausted and under recognised, despite the enormous contribution they make to Australian communities, families and the economy.

"Unpaid carers contribute \$78 billion (Deloitte 2020) in care to Australia's economy, propping up our health and community services. They are already under significant strain, and we need to do more to support them.

"There are supports available to carers through the Carer Gateway (carergateway.gov.au) which provides a range of free in-person, online and phone-based support and services to unpaid carers. We encourage unpaid carers to reach out for support," she said.

Ms Cave said despite the challenges, unpaid carers continue to report that their caring responsibilities contribute to their meaning and purpose in life and as they find it a positive experience.

Additional results from the survey:

- 63 per cent of carers reported not feeling part of their community
Only 12 per cent feel more connected to their community since becoming a carer
- 43 per cent often or always feel lonely, 33 per cent are sometimes lonely (compared to 20.8 per cent of average Australians often or always feel lonely, 26 per cent feel lonely sometimes)
- 48 per cent of carers report being a carer contributes to their meaning and purpose in life
- 40 per cent find being a carer a positive experience.

Case study

Carer Adela Ramadina, who cares for her younger brother, is also concerned about the impact additional caring hours could have on families. Having experienced first-hand the challenge of balancing caring responsibilities with school, study and other aspects of life, Adela says increasing reliance on unpaid carers risks placing even more pressure on people who are already navigating work, education and family commitments.

"I'm a part-time carer, and I work around the needs of the person I look after... If those supports are cut before anything else is in place, it's me who fills the gap, and I'm not sure how long I could keep doing both," she said.

"I know I'm not alone, and some carers have it much harder. Young carers are already giving up time at school, with friends and on their own future, and fewer supports will mean they carry



even more. Carers in rural and regional areas often have no providers nearby to begin with, so when funding drops there's simply nothing else to turn to. Promises of new services mean little if they don't reach a country town.

"I also come from a community where caring is often done quietly within the family, and many people like me don't know what help exists or feel able to ask. These changes affect every carer, but those of us already on the edges of the system may not realise what we've lost until it's gone.

"I'm asking that carers be properly considered before supports are reduced, and that no one loses help until something real is there to replace it."

-ENDS-

***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. It surveyed carers across the country, in all states and territories.

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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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.