

WA Carer Card

ASK: Establishment of a Carer Card in Western Australia.

The Problem



Carers do not have a common method of carer identification, resulting in a lack of recognition and exclusion from processes that have an impact on them and those they care for.



Recognition has a significant direct impact on a carer's wellbeing. The more recognised and valued a carer feels – the higher their level of wellbeing becomes.



Carers experience low wellbeing, isolation, psychological distress and financial hardship. A lack of recognition and carer self-identification prevents them accessing needed supports to mitigate the impact of their caring role.



Community and stakeholder awareness of carers and the vital role they play is limited, resulting in misunderstandings such as use of the term 'carer' to describe paid care or support workers.

The Solution

Carers WA calls for the establishment of a WA Carer Card Program. The WA Carer Card will be an essential tool for carers to:

- Identify and validate their role.
- Provide carers with cost-of-living support through targeted benefits, concessions and waivers.
- Provide a tool for government to specifically target future supports of particular benefit to WA carers and build awareness and recognition of carers and their rights across many industries, including in the health and community sector.
- Ensure carers are formally identified and included in the ongoing health and medical needs of the person they are caring for.



You are one, know one or will be one.

All carers should:



Be recognised, respected and validated for the vital role they play in the community.



Be able to easily identify themselves as a carer, ensuring they are acknowledged and involved in processes that have an impact on their caring role and the person they care for.

Over **320,000** WA carers perform invaluable and unpaid caring roles in our communities.

45%

of WA carers do not feel recognised.

64%

of carers believe there is a need for further recognition of carers.

53%

of carers report low or very low wellbeing.

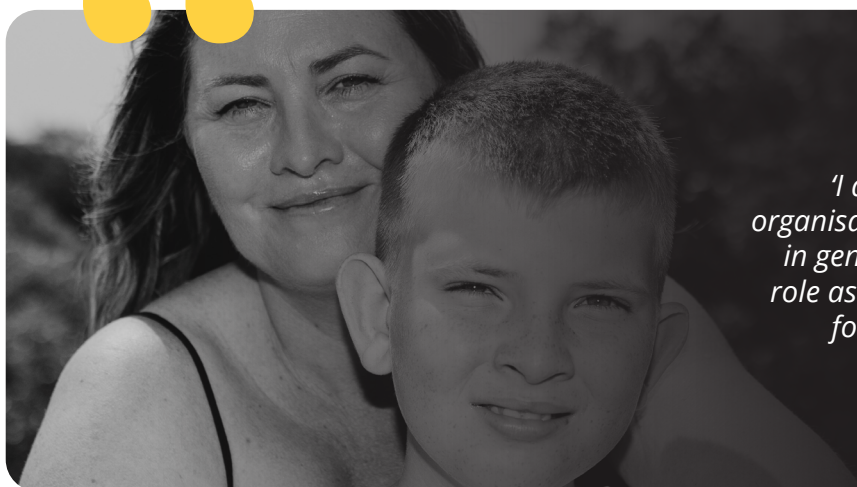
60%

of carers are socially isolated.

The Benefits

The WA Carer Card will:

1. Assist carers to be included in the discharge process from hospitals and GP clinics, supporting carers to provide more care at home and reduce readmission and hospital A&E/ambulance ramping.
2. Elevate the carer as an equal partner in the ongoing support of the person they care for when there is any interface with community and/or health services.
3. Assist carers to manage the increased costs associated with their caring role.
4. Provide greater oversight on the number and type of carers and their caring roles.
5. Provide formal validation of the caring role under the 2004 WA Carers Recognition Act and Carers Charter.



Voices of WA Carers

'I am a carer - my hope is that governments, organisations and businesses (and the community in general) understand, respect and support my role as an unpaid carer so I can be the best I can for those I care for.' – response from a carer

Note: Quote not attributed to the carer pictured.



What is Working Elsewhere

- Other Australian States and Territories have already recognised the need for a Carer Card and have successfully introduced these initiatives, including the Victorian Carer Card Program and the Queensland Carer Business Discount Card.
- The WA Companion Card Program is an excellent initiative, however, it is targeted to the person being cared for, with carers not able to use the card if the person being cared for is not present.

Alignment to Legislative and Policy Frameworks

- Carers Recognition Act 2004 (WA) – The WA Carers Charter states that carers must be recognised, treated with respect and dignity, and that the views and needs of carers must be taken into account.
- Review of the Carers Recognition Act 2004: Report to Parliament – Supports Findings 2 & 3 of the Review, in which it is stated that further action is required to achieve greater and wider community awareness, recognition and understanding of carers.
- WA Carers Strategy – Recognises the significant impact of the caring role on carers, and the need to support carers to balance their caring responsibilities, personal wellbeing and life outside of caring.