



**Submission to the Draft Western Australian
Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug
Accommodation and Support Strategy
2018-2025**

October 2018

AN AUSTRALIA THAT VALUES AND SUPPORTS ALL CARERS

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ABOUT CARERS WA

Carers WA is the peak body representing the needs and interests of carers in Western Australia and is part of a national network of Carers Associations. Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have disability, mental illness, a chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged. The person they care for may be a parent, partner, sibling, child, relative, friend or neighbour. Illness and disability are non-discriminatory and the caring role can be borne by any individual at any given time, regardless of socioeconomic status, age or location. Caring is a significant form of unpaid work in the community and is integral to the maintenance of our aged, disability, health, mental health, and palliative care systems. A report undertaken by Deloitte, Access Economics, 'The economic value of unpaid care in Australia in 2015', determined the replacement value of the care undertaken by carers in Australia to cost \$60.3 billion per annum.

Some important facts about carers include:

- There are 2.7 million unpaid carers in Australia. More than 856,000 carers are primary carers.
- There are more than 320,000 family and friends in a caring role in Western Australia or approximately 1 in 8 in the community.

ENQUIRIES

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Introduction

Carers WA appreciates the opportunity to make comment on the draft Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Accommodation and Support Strategy 2018-2025 (the Strategy). Comments in this submission are confined to those raised by unpaid carers in Western Australia.¹

Comments

a. Aims and Principles

Carers WA is supportive of the aims and principles of the Strategy.

b. Key focus areas

Carers WA agrees with the key focus areas of the Strategy and wishes to express particular support for actions 1B and 2C.

It is vital that innovative approaches to accommodation options be developed in genuine partnership with consumers, families and carers. Actions 1B and 2C together allow for such innovations and partnerships.

c. Stakeholders

The infographic on page 31 does not adequately represent consumers and their carers and families as key partners in the delivery of accommodation and support services. Carers should be included in this infographic as a discreet stakeholder group. The section on peak bodies on page 33 lists some key bodies but does not mention Carers WA. While Carers WA will not be involved in the implementation of the Strategy, the organisation can be added to this list as a partner to involve carers in co-design activities.

d. Rebalancing the system

A key action in the Plan is the divestment of services at Graylands Hospital and Selby Older Adult Unit. Carers continue to express concern about these actions. While the Strategy envisages replacement services, carers are concerned that the needs of vulnerable groups will not be met within these new services. In particular, services for older people with severe dementia and other mental health problems may be

¹ Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have disability, mental illness, a chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged.

overlooked. The Selby Older Adult Unit currently meets the unique needs of these individuals.