



## CEO Message

In this edition we are focusing on the introduction of the new federally funded carer services. As announced by the federal government in August 2019, Carers WA secured both the metropolitan and regional contracts to provide support to carers across WA under the newly designed Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) model. This new way of providing support, which is being implemented by the federal government, begins in April 2020.

In this newsletter we have detailed the new services and how carers can access these services through Carers WA and the Carer Gateway.

Carers WA has been supporting unpaid carers in our state for over 25 years and we are pleased to continue this support as the lead delivery partner for WA. The reformed model, which was developed over the past three years in consultation with carers and care-related

organisations, aims to identify family and friend carers earlier in the caring journey and provide them with a suite of supports, both local and online. Carers WA is hopeful that through this holistic model carers will receive the supports that are available in the new system and appropriate to their needs.

Best wishes,  
**Paul Coates, CEO Carers WA**

## What is ICSS and Carer Gateway?

The Federal Government's 2015-16 Budget committed to developing an integrated plan for carer services nationally and created the model, Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) to deliver this.

The national carer support model consolidates the funding from over one hundred separate organisations to ten delivery partners across Australia, including Carers WA.

As one of the selected providers, Carers WA, in conjunction with consortia partner HelpingMinds, will deliver support and services to unpaid carers under the government's new framework.

The model, inclusive of the Carer Gateway, will focus on early intervention, preventative and skill building supports to improve carer wellbeing and long term outcomes. This new approach will replace the old system which focused on the provision of respite supports through organisations such as the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres.

With the implementation of this new model there are a number of new descriptors that carers will hear over the coming months and the main ones have been explained below.

- Integrated Carer Support Service or ICSS - the name given to the bundle

of supports available to carers

- Carer Gateway - refers to the website and national 1800 number that will allow carers to access supports
- Carer Gateway Service Providers - the organisations the federal government have contracted to deliver locally based supports to carers
- Carer Support Planning Process - the process involves the formal assessment of the individual needs of each carer and the development of a plan of supports (that are funded and available) tailored to meet the carer's need.

### What are the new services?

The Carer Gateway will provide a mix of digital and in-person supports. The services to be delivered by the Carer Gateway Service Providers include:

- Carer needs assessment and planning
- In-person and phone-based coaching, counselling and peer support
- Targeted support packages with a focus on supporting participation in employment and education

- Information and advice
- Assistance with navigating relevant, local services available to carers through federal, state and local government and non-government providers, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, My Aged Care and palliative care.

Service delivery will be led by Carers WA working in partnership with HelpingMinds who are our main consortia partner. The new service will also be supported by a network of partners whose specialism brings further targeted expert knowledge to support key cohorts in the carer community.

To complement the services that Carers WA will provide, a number of helpful online services are also available. These can be accessed via the national Carer Gateway website, [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

Services currently available via this website include:

- On-line peer support
- Self-guided coaching
- Phone based counselling
- Practical skills courses

### How will the new service model impact Carers WA?

Carers WA will remain as the peak body for carers in WA and will continue to strive towards our vision of a nation which values and supports carers, providing them with choices and opportunities to participate in every aspect of life. The introduction of the new support model requires Carers WA to make some operational and structural changes. Depending on which service you are receiving at Carers WA, there may be some changes to how you continue accessing the service.

From April 2020:

- The 1800 phone numbers for Carer Gateway and Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre will be directed to, and answered by, Carers WA. The calls will be answered by the Carer Support Planning team, which is a new team within Carers WA.
- All carers who are not currently accessing services through Carers WA will undergo an intake, registration and assessment process.
- Existing clients wishing to access the new services or continue with particular services (eg counselling) will be required to complete the full intake and planning process.
- The Carer Advisory Service which offers

specialist information via telephone will remain within Carers WA and will be answered by the Carer Support Planning team.

- The 1800 007 332 counselling phone line managed by Carers WA will be redirected to the Carer Support Planning team and carers will be required to undertake the intake, registration and assessment process before being referred to counselling and/or other supports.

In addition:

- Carers WA corporate team will be moving to new premises within walking distance of The Carer Centre. The Carer Centre located on Lord Street, Perth will continue to be the service delivery hub for Carers WA.
- Carers WA membership program, including membership cards, will be phased out. Carers can request a new membership card until 31st December 2020 at which point they will be discontinued.

### Regional, multicultural and indigenous carers in WA

Carers WA and consortium partner HelpingMinds were awarded both the metropolitan and regional contracts for WA. While the primary head office of both organisations will remain in Perth, Carers WA

and HelpingMinds will also have staff/offices in the Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Broome, Port Hedland, Geraldton, South West and Goldfields.

To further extend regional reach, Carers WA and HelpingMinds is partnering with a network of service providers who operate in regional WA.

The main point of contact for Carer Gateway services across WA is the Carer Gateway phone number 1800 422 737.

### Changes to respite funding

It is important for carers and people with care needs to be aware that the respite funding under the new support model is very different to the model previously delivered by Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres.

The new federal model focuses on early intervention, preventative and skill building supports to improve carer wellbeing rather than allocating resources primarily to respite activities. Some funding for respite for carers may be available in the new model as either emergency respite or planned respite, depending on eligibility criteria which will be ascertained during the intake process. Respite for people with care needs can be organised through My Aged Care if the person is aged 65 or over or through NDIS if the person has disability and can get an NDIS package.



## Take a break and meet other carers

Taking a regular break and having a supportive social network helps carers to keep providing the best care they can.

Carers WA offer monthly Social Support groups for members to assist them to improve their emotional and physical health and empower them to be proactive in their caring role. These Linking Together Groups are designed to be relaxed, friendly and act as a gateway to other Carers WA services.

*'My blood pressure has gone down and it's good for my general wellness not to feel like I am struggling alone.'*

*Attending these carer groups make me more refreshed and cheerful around the person I care for.'*

- Linking Together attendee

For information about your closest Linking Together group visit the Carers WA website or contact the Social Support Team on 1300 CARERS (1300 227 377) or email [socialsupport@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:socialsupport@carerswa.asn.au)

## National Carers Week

National Carers Week 2020 will be held from Sunday 11th to Saturday 17th October.

Carers Week is our national awareness raising week held annually in the third week of October. Carers Week aims to raise awareness of carers, the caring role and relationships, and carer supports and services.

To celebrate National Carers Week, Carers WA will be hosting a variety of events\*. Visit our website to keep updated on Carers Week activities and events. The webpage will be updated regularly as events are confirmed.

Carers WA also offers grants for care-related organisations and carer support groups to host their own event for carers during Carers Week\*. Regional, rural and remote organisations are encouraged to apply. Applications will open early July. Application forms will be available from our Carers Week webpage or email the Marketing team at [marketing@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:marketing@carerswa.asn.au) for more information.

(\*dependent on funding)

## 2020 National Carer Survey is coming in May

Make a difference for carers across our country and have your say!

Carers across Australia will be invited to complete the 2020 National Carer Survey from 1 May - 30 June 2020.

The 2020 National Carer Survey is developed in collaboration with five universities and for the first time is capturing the views of carers nationally. The information collected will help to strengthen our support for carers and raise awareness about what matters most.

Keep an eye out for the 2020 National Carer Survey which will be available online and in hard copy from 1 May 2020.

For more information about the Carer Survey, you can visit [www.carersnsw.org.au/research/survey/](http://www.carersnsw.org.au/research/survey/) or contact the Carers NSW Research Team at [research@carersnsw.org.au](mailto:research@carersnsw.org.au) or on 02 9280 4744.

 **1300 227 377** Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 7.30pm

 'Carers WA'  [info@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:info@carerswa.asn.au)  [www.carerswa.asn.au](http://www.carerswa.asn.au)

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