

## Survey Reveals New Findings for WA Carers this National Carers Week

This week, the initial findings of the 2022 National Carer Survey were launched to mark the beginning of National Carers Week.

With more than 2.65 million unpaid family and friend carers living in Australia, and over 320,000 living in WA - National Carers Week, from 16–22 October 2022 is dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the outstanding contribution carers make to Australian society.

In Australia it is estimated a total of nearly 2.2 billion hours of care are provided every year by family members and friends. The replacement value of unpaid care in Australia is estimated at over \$1.5 billion per week, while carers lose on average \$392,500 in lifetime income due to care commitments.

The 2022 National Carer Survey provides important insights into the lives of carers and shows their continued care and support of their loved ones no matter what they are confronted with.

### Key findings from the 2022 National Carer Survey include:

- Carers spend an average of 109 hours providing care per week.
- 53% of carers provide care 24/7.
- The average length of time spent in a caring role 11.2 years.
- 4 in 5 carers are female.
- 3 in 5 carers experience financial stress and 1 in 6 experience financial distress.
- More than half of the carers who responded were experiencing high or very high psychological distress, and felt highly socially isolated.
- The majority of carers reported *not* being asked about their own needs when accessing aged care, NDIS, and mental health services with or on behalf of the person they cared for.
- The average wellbeing of carers remains significantly lower than for the general population in Australia.

Despite COVID-related service interruptions, widespread natural disasters, and an ever-changing service landscape, carers have persevered. However, half of respondents do not feel that their caring role is recognised and almost 3 in 5 carers still experience some form of financial stress, and 56% are socially isolated.

Anyone at any time can become a carer, providing support to a family member or friend with disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail due to age.

We encourage everyone to be informed about the role of carers in our community and the supports that are available. To do this, Carers WA is celebrating National Carers Week with a range of in-person and online and events including wellbeing workshops and webinars for carers. A full calendar of WA events for National Carers Week is available at [carerswa.asn.au](http://carerswa.asn.au).

## Notes to the editor

*The 2022 National Carer Survey was conducted by Carers NSW with the support of the other State and Territory Carer Organisations and an expert reference committee that includes carers, service providers and academics from several universities. Carers NSW receives funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to conduct the biennial Carer Survey, which was conducted nationally for the second time in 2022.*

### Supplementary Statistics

- There are approximately 320,000 carers in WA \*i
- It is estimated that carers in Australia provided 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care in 2020. \*ii
- The replacement value of that care (the cost were it provided by paid care workers) is estimated at \$77.9 billion, over \$1.5 billion per week \*ii
- The demand for unpaid carers is at an all-time high and set to increase in the future \*ii
- Carers lose on average \$392,500 of lifetime earnings at age 67, with the top percentile losing \$940,000 \*iii

*i Review of the Carers Recognition Act (2004) Report to Parliament*

*ii Deloitte Access Economics (2020) The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2020*

*iii Evaluate (2022) Caring Costs Us: The economic impact on lifetime income and retirement savings of informal carers. A report for Carers Australia.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

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***“What supports and services Carers WA can provide? Are there costs involved to the carers?”***

- Free to register with Carers WA
- Support and services include:
  - Carer Gateway
    - Carer support planning
    - Counselling
    - Coaching
    - Peer support
    - Tailored support packages
    - Respite care
  - Carers in Employment
  - Social Support
  - Young Carers

***“Carers WA is the lead provider of Carer Gateway services in WA, an Australian Government initiative. How do Carers WA and Carer Gateway work together?”***

- Carer Gateway is an Australian Government initiative providing a mix of free online, telephone and in-person supports, services and advice, for family carers in Australia
- For Western Australia, Carers WA is leading the delivery of these in-person services

***“At what point in a caring role does Carers WA encourage carers to contact them to seek support?”***

- It’s important to access services as early as possible in the caring journey.
- Early intervention, rather than crisis support.
- Preventative and skill building supports to improve carer wellbeing and reduce burn out, rather than allocating resources primarily to emergency activities.

***“Carers WA, for over 25 years, has supported countless carers. In what ways have carers benefitted from this support.”***

- Building resilience, reducing isolation, social interaction with other carers who have similar experiences, ability to take a break, enhance wellbeing
- Stories of carers who have benefitted from our services available on our website

Example 1, Sharon:

- Sharon cares for her 26-year-old son with mental health challenges.
- She became increasingly isolated and overwhelmed by her caring role.
- Began accessing support services through Carers WA including counselling and training sessions.
- Now she is able to focus on her own wellbeing and continue caring with renewed strength and resilience.

Example 2, Lynette.

- Lynette was a carer for her mum who lived with dementia for 10 years.
- It wasn't only about caring, but learning how to grieve the loss of her mother, despite her mum still being alive.
- She began accessing counselling and monthly social groups in her local area.
- Lynette's capacity to care, including to self-care, strengthened. Socialising with people in a similar situation provided great support.

***“How do carers, who may need support, contact Carers WA?”***

Call Carer Gateway on **1800 422 737**

Carers WA website - [www.carerswa.asn.au](http://www.carerswa.asn.au)

## Additional Information

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### **Who are Carers?**

An informal unpaid carer is a family member or friend who cares for someone with disability, chronic or life-limited illness, is frail aged, has a mental health illness, alcohol or other drug related issue. Informal carers are distinct from *paid support workers* who are colloquially also called carers, but are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration.

### **About Carers WA**

Carers WA, celebrating over 25 years, is the peak body that represents the needs and interests of carers in WA. Carers WA aims to enhance and support the empowerment and wellbeing of carers through our programs, services and advocacy. Carers WA provides a range of free supports and services, including those available through Carer Gateway. Carers WA is a non-profit, community based organisation and registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of the estimated 230,000 family carers living in WA.

### **About Carer Gateway**

Carers WA is also the lead provider of Carer Gateway services in WA. Carer Gateway is an Australian Government initiative providing a mix of free online, telephone and in-person supports, services and advice for family carers in Australia.

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