



## Grants for WA Carers

### The What

Carers WA is seeking the establishment of a Carer Grants Program in Western Australia (WA), that will offer WA carers increased support during times of hardship, and support carers' wellbeing through the reintroduction of short breaks (respite) to mitigate the pressures of their caring role.

- This initiative will help mitigate the financial impacts of the caring role, as well as the impact on carers' physical, mental and psychological wellbeing, and on their ability to engage in social and economic activities.
- Carers WA will support this initiative through in-kind contributions to staffing, program development and resourcing.

### The Why

- In WA, 1 in 9 people are carers, totalling more than 320,000 Western Australians.
- 24% of WA carers are in crisis, particularly due to high carer needs in regional areas.
- A lack of respite is the most significant and prevailing issue raised by WA carers, one which encompasses carers across metropolitan, regional and remote WA.
- There is estimated to be a shortfall of 22,400 carers in WA by 2030, with a \$623 million annual replacement cost in waged workers. This will have a significant impact on WA's already strained health system, especially as the population ages and more carers are needed.
- Carers experience increased and heightened levels of social isolation, loneliness, psychological distress, as well as ill health and low wellbeing –impacts of their caring role which necessitate them being able to take a break.
- Caring has significant negative impacts on carer employment and income opportunities, including on levels of superannuation, lost wages, carer recognition, and time to partake in employment and education.
- On average, by age 67 primary carers will lose \$175,000 in superannuation and \$392,000 in lifetime earnings.
- The economic impact of having someone out of the workforce and caring, as well as the immediate financial impact which a caring role has on the life of a carer, affecting their ability to pay bills on time, raise money when needed, and live within their very limited means. Indeed, some carers are not even having their basic needs met for food, housing, health services, internet access, and transport.

## **Outcomes and Benefits:**

Introduction of a grants program for carers will bring the following benefits:

### ***For carers:***

- Carers are supported in times of significant hardship and to have longevity in their caring role.
- Carers have better wellbeing, meaning they can continue to provide care and support at home.
- Carers are less likely to go to hospital with those they care for and hospitals have reduced social admissions.

### ***For Government:***

- More people are willing to continue or commence a caring role, benefiting the WA health system and enabling people to retain their independence for longer at home, decreasing the costs of healthcare.
- The Carer Grants Program will recognise the significant contribution that carers make to the lives of the people they care for and the community they live in.
- Carers experience less burnout and have longevity in their caring role.

## **The Who**

### **Who is the WA Carer Grants Program for and who is eligible?**

The WA Carer Grants Program would be for:

- A carer of a person with disability, chronic illness, mental ill-health, alcohol or other drug dependency, or who is frail.
- Who is experiencing hardship.
- Community groups and organisations who support carers can seek a small grant to assist their group with a short break away for carers.

### **How will eligibility be determined?**

Eligibility for the WA Carer Grants Program will be determined through criteria established by a partnership with Carers WA, government and the community. Carers facing hardship would be eligible for up to \$2,000 grant once per year with proof of difficulties such as living costs, rent, utilities, etc. This maintains a broader focus than existing grant programs, specifically targeted to WA carers.

## **The How**

Carers WA will implement the WA Carer Grants Program through an in-kind contribution of:

- A 0.6 FTE for the management and distribution of short breaks and hardship grants to carers and carers groups.
- Development of systems payment structure and registration.
- Providing a dedicated phone line and an online application process, including the use of existing pathways and partnerships.

### **Timeframe**

The suggested timeframe for rollout of the WA Grants Program is from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025.