



The WA Carer Card Program

The What

Carers WA is seeking the establishment of a Carer Card Program in Western Australia (WA) which will provide WA carers increased benefits to support their caring role.

- A WA Carer Card Program will assist in increased recognition, validation, support and understanding for unpaid carers in WA.
- The Carer Card is an initiative to recognise primary carers and provides a wide range of discounts and benefits on offer from businesses, local government and community organisations. Eligibility is determined either via a medical professional, or through provision of a primary carer's Centrelink Customer Reference Number.

The Why

- In WA, 1 in 9 people are carers, totalling at least 320,000 Western Australians.
- Carers do not currently have a form of identification they can use to identify themselves as a carer. Initiatives such as the Companion Card Program have limited eligibility, are targeted to the card holder, and use of the card is dependent on the card holder being present.
- Carers do not currently feel recognised, included or supported. This has a direct impact on their wellbeing and on the numbers of people willing to take on a caring role.
- Carers experience significant financial disadvantage because of their caring role, and often have to reduce or cease working to take care of their loved ones.
- 25% of carers provide care for more than one person.
- The care provided by carers in WA is valued at \$6.9 billion per year, amounting to 195.8 million hours of unpaid care per year. Carers help many people to retain their independence as home, outside of services such as residential aged care.
- An estimated shortfall of 22,400 carers in WA by 2030, with a \$623 million annual replacement cost in waged workers; resulting in significant impact on WA's already strained health system, especially as the population ages and more carers are needed.

Outcomes and Benefits:

For carers:

- Carers are better recognised, resulting in increased carer wellbeing.
- Carers' financial wellbeing is supported through concessions, discounts and waivers targeted to the needs of WA carers.
- Carers' roles are validated, with a form of identification as a carer when needed.
- Carers can sustainably care for longer.

For Government:

- The WA Carer Card Program will recognise the significant contribution that carers make to the lives of the people they care for and the community they live in.
- 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 Who

Who is the WA Carer Card Program for?

The WA Carer Card Program would be for WA primary carers. This means that the Carer Card would be for applicants who are:

- A resident of Western Australia
- A primary carer of a person with disability, chronic illness, mental ill-health, alcohol or other drug dependency, or who is frail.

How will eligibility be determined?

Eligibility for a WA Carer Card is to be determined by:

- Provision of an applicant's Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN) if applicant is in receipt of a carer payment or allowance; or/and,
- Having a medical professional verify the applicant's eligibility through an application process.

The How

Carers WA recommends the WA Carer Card Program be operated by the Department of Communities, alongside existing operations for the WA Seniors Card, with in-kind support from Carers WA for its development.

The WA Carers Card is more than a 'cost of living' support card; rather it is an acknowledgement and recognition of, and in support of carers who face the extra costs associated with the ongoing care they provide.

In particular, the WA Carer Card should include:

- Discounts or waivers for public transport, and primary carers be included as part of the PATS model, without the need to apply for companion funding.
- Free parking at public hospitals.
- Utility and household concessions at the same rate and offering as the WA Seniors Card.
- Local government concessions such as rate rebates and concessions/free entry to leisure facilities.
- Housing assistance inclusions to maintain tenancies, access social housing and achieve home ownership.
- Discounts on hotel rooms for respite use and/or for carers to take a break.
- Use as a means of identification at hospitals.
- Access to the MyHealthRecord of the person they care for, where consent has been provided.

Timeframe

The suggested timeframe for rollout of the WA Carer Card is from mid-2026.