



## New WA Carers Strategy

### The What

Carers WA is calling for a new WA Carers Strategy as a key 2025 State Election Commitment, to better reflect the current needs and demographics of WA carers, and strategically build on the work already undertaken for the National Carers Strategy.

### The Why

- The current WA Carers Strategy:
  - was written in 2016; it is now out of date and does not reflect the current impact of caring and the need for carer wellbeing.
  - does not contain quantitative measures to determine its success.
  - was created before the introduction of key carer programs, which have vastly changed the landscape of supports for carers.
- The demographic landscape has shifted, with an aging population and a rise in chronic health conditions, resulting in an increased demand for carer support.
- There has been an increase in carers who identify as being ethnodiverse, from a First Nations background, LGBTQI+, who have multiple caring roles, or who are young carers.
- The demand for carers is expected to grow by 24% by 2030, yet the number of carers available is only expected to increase by 16%. In WA, this leaves a short fall of 22,400 carers, with an annual replacement cost of \$623 million in waged workers.
- Western Australia was formerly a leader in carer recognition and support when it introduced the *Carer Recognition Act 2004* (WA), the second jurisdiction in the world to do so. Now carer strategies in nearly every state and territory in Australia are either more recent and contemporary than WA's 2016 Carers Strategy, or are presently under development and review.

### Outcomes and Benefits:

#### **For carers:**

- Carers will be better recognised and valued for their contributions.
- Access to respite care, education and training, will enable a more sustainable and supportive caregiving environment.
- Improved wellbeing of carers and enhanced quality of care provided to vulnerable individuals of society.

- A strategy which has a focus on the economic and financial sustainability and wellbeing of carers will delivery a more inclusive and supportive community which in turn places less reliance on health services.

**For Government:**

- An updated Carers Strategy will address the evolving needs of carers in Western Australia.
- Support the implementation of the Objects of the Carer Recognition Act 2004 (WA) and the WA Carers Charter.
- Contain actions and quantitative measures to indicate achievement of outcomes.

## The Who

**Who is the WA Carers Strategy for?**

The WA Carer Card Program would be for people who are:

- A carer of a person with disability, chronic illness, mental illness, alcohol or other drug dependency, or who is frail. (as described under the Carers Recognition Act 2004).
- The community services and not for profit sector.
- The Health services sector.
- Government agencies and statutory bodies.

## The How

The WA Government could leverage off the substantial work already undertaken by Carers WA in the development of the National Carer Strategy.

- This has included state-wide consultations by Carers WA and its Carer representative program.
- Utilising the eight regional reports and issues papers which Carers WA published in 2023 and 2024.
- Additional consultations may be required in some regional areas and in specific carer cohort groups such as LGBTIQ+ carers, First Nations carers, young carers, ethno- diverse carers, etc.; however, those networks exist and can be easily leveraged.

**Timeframe**

The suggested timeframe for the commencement of a review of the WA Carers Strategy is the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2025.