



**Carers WA**



**Carers WA Policy Submission – February 2026**

**Inquiry into the operation and adequacy of the  
National Employment Standards**

## About Carers WA

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Carers WA is the peak body representing the needs and interests of carers in Western Australia and is part of a national network of Carers Associations. Carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends with disability, mental health challenges, long term health conditions (including a chronic condition or terminal illness), have an alcohol or drug dependency, or who are frail aged. The person they care for may be a parent, partner, sibling, child, relative, friend or neighbour.

Caring is a significant form of unpaid work in the community and is integral to the maintenance of our aged, disability, health, mental health, and palliative care systems.

Some important facts about carers include:

- There are currently 3.04 million unpaid carers in Australia.
- There are more than 320,000 families and friends in a caring role in Western Australia.
- The replacement value of unpaid care, according to a report undertaken by Deloitte, Access Economics, "The economic value of unpaid care in Australia in 2020" is estimated at \$77.9 billion per annum.

### Acknowledgement of Country

Carers WA acknowledges the Wadjuk Noongar Nation's lands, water, customs, and culture of which the Carers WA Head Office is located. Carers WA recognises our services reach beyond the Perth (Boorlo) region, and so we also acknowledge the cultural diversity of First Nation Peoples across our state and throughout Australia.



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## 1.0 Recommendations

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1. Intersectionality be a consideration under the National Employment Standards, inclusive of the experience of being a carer.
2. The term 'carer' be defined as per the definition under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth).
3. Bespoke measures be included for carers in the National Employment Standards, inclusive of:
  - Defined and separate carer leave provisions of ten days per annum (with ten additional and separate days per annum of personal leave).
  - Five unpaid carers leave days per instance.
4. Personal and carers leave may also be taken to provide care or support to someone the employee provides care for (friend, family member or household member).
5. Reasons for taking this leave also specifically include one-off and ongoing appointments and other responsibilities related to the employee's caring role.
6. Bespoke paid carers leave entitlements also be available for carers who are casual employees.
7. Requirements be embedded in the National Employment Standards for employers to directly consider how to support carers in their workplace.
8. The development of training resources for carers and for employers for how to support carers in the workplace, and best practice for what to do when carers are not being supported in the workplace.

## 2.0 Introduction

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Carers WA (CWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to the federal Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations, Skills and Training, in relation to the Inquiry into the operation and adequacy of the National Employment Standards.

This submission is provided in addition to Carers WA's involvement in and endorsement of Carers Australia's submission and recommendations to this Inquiry, from the perspective of WA carers.

For the purposes of this submission, the term 'carer' is defined as per the meaning under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth), this being an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it due to having disability, a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness), mental health challenges, or who is frail and aged. A carer does not include someone who provides care or assistance as part of a contract for services or volunteer work.<sup>1</sup> A carer may include a friend, family member, neighbour or other contact<sup>2</sup>. Carers can be aged under 25 (young carers) or be older carers.

Under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth), carers must be supported to enjoy optimum health and wellbeing; participate in family, social and community life; supported to achieve greater economic wellbeing and sustainability, including opportunities to participate in employment and education.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Article 24 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights "*everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay,*" and Article 27 states "*everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.*"<sup>4</sup>

This submission and included recommendations have been informed by ongoing feedback from WA carers, including carer experiences in employment under the National Employment Standards, to achieve equitable changes for carer which attain the rights outlined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth) and United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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<sup>1</sup> (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010)

<sup>4</sup> (United Nations General Assembly, 1948)

## 3.0 General Feedback

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### 3.1 Context

*'[Recognition means] providing mental health support for Carers and proactive services for monitoring carers mental health. Recognise the huge financial burden that carers are carrying and provide means to lessen this burden by supporting carers to re-enter the workforce under more flexible arrangements or with incentives to employers who are able to provide work to suit the carer's family requirements.'* – feedback from a carer

In Western Australia (WA), there are more than 320,000 carers, who collectively provide \$6.6 billion dollars of unpaid care per annum. The demand for informal care is projected to increase 23% by 2030, however the number of carers available is only projected to increase by 16% over this timeframe<sup>5</sup>, leaving a shortfall of 22,400 carers at a cost of over \$600 million for replacement care.

Carers play a crucial role in supporting the people they care for, working tirelessly to advocate for their loved ones, provide personal care and emotional support, attend and organize appointments, and any other task which may be required of them by their loved ones. However, where carers are not recognized, supported and connected, this significantly impacts their ability to survive and thrive in their caring role, and substantially impacts the longevity of this role.

WA carers have wellbeing levels 20% below that of the average Australian population, a gap which can be reduced and lifted through changes to carer recognition and social factors<sup>6</sup>. However, should carers further experience social isolation, the wellbeing of WA carers can drop even further<sup>7</sup>. WA carers feel significantly unrecognized by government bodies, community, service providers and formal services, which does little to help them feel valued<sup>8</sup>. This lack of acknowledgement impacts on carers' level of wellbeing and on their ability to perform their caring role, have longevity in this role, and thrive outside of their caring role (including in employment). Increasing levels of formal carer recognition can lift carer wellbeing and positively impact other related areas of their lives, including levels of recognition of their caring role from family, friends and those they care for – which in turn further boosts carer wellbeing<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> (Deloitte Access Economics, 2020)

<sup>6</sup> (SAGE Design and Advisory, 2025)

<sup>7</sup> (SAGE Design and Advisory, 2025)

<sup>8</sup> (SAGE Design and Advisory, 2025)

<sup>9</sup> (SAGE Design and Advisory, 2025)

## WA Carers and Employment

*‘Recognition means that carers are supported to achieve their best self. Recognising that people of all income levels have to make sacrifices to be an unpaid carer, whether that is work, socially or mentally. There appears to be different standards set for people who are unemployed (paid unemployment benefits) versus those who are employed but can't work more hours due to their caring role. The carers allowance barely covers the additional costs of paediatrician appointments, travel, etc. There is no money left for respite which might allow parents to work more and support their family.’ – feedback from a carer*

In WA, 7.5% of the population is estimated to be in a caring role, with 5.6% of Western Australians in a primary caring role<sup>10</sup>. Almost three-quarters (74.5%) of Australian carers are in the labour force, with 70.4% of carers being employed (compared to 79.3% of non-carers). For primary carers, they are less likely to be in the labour force, with this likelihood further decreasing the more hours of care they provide<sup>11</sup>.

The WA results of the 2022 National Carer Survey identified factors which acted as protective influencers on carers’ lives, which included external factors such as work-life balance, the way carers are supported in employment, and the degree that they feel recognised and valued by society for their caring role. Internal factors included a carer’s psychological wellbeing and financial stress, and social factors included how supported a carer felt, as well as how satisfied they were with their social network and community.<sup>12</sup> These protective factors are all at some level related to workplace support, or the impact of limited to no employment.

Indeed, factors which reduced wellbeing for carers were found to include the volume of care tasks provided, the psychological distress of the carer, and the impact of their caring role on their work. The level of this impact depended on the level of needs the carer themselves had.<sup>13</sup> In the 2022 National Carer Survey, WA had the second highest proportion of high needs carers in Australia, this being carers which experienced higher levels of psychological distress, a higher impact on their work, and which provided a higher number of care tasks. These carers had lower social support, self-efficacy, work-life balance and recognition.<sup>14</sup>

While WA carers report that though they would like to be in employment or work more hours, many barriers prevent them from doing so, including the time they need to spend caring, leave allowances, ability to access childcare, lack of recognition of their caring role from employers and the community, or restrictions on employment due to receipt of carer concession payments. Even when in situations where they are not supported by their employers (as in Addendum Case Study 1), WA carers report the lengths that they go to in trying to maintain their employment and their performance at work, seeking some understanding from employers of the stress and pressure of caring responsibilities. Where carers have experienced support from their employers, they describe that they would not have been able to continue to be employed without it, demonstrating the importance of supporting carers in the workplace.

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<sup>10</sup> (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022)

<sup>11</sup> (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022)

<sup>12</sup> (SAGE Design & Advisory, 2023)

<sup>13</sup> (SAGE Design & Advisory, 2023)

<sup>14</sup> (SAGE Design & Advisory, 2023)

In a survey of WA carers to inform CWA's response to the Inquiry into Carer Recognition,<sup>15</sup> 77.23% of carers responded that it was important or very important to them to be recognised in the workplace. Yet without access to suitable flexible working arrangements, carers decrease paid workforce engagement, with the outcomes being limited income, reduced advancement opportunities, and long-term impact on carers' financial security, health and wellbeing<sup>16</sup>. In addition, disengagement with employment decreases carer access to social connections, and to what many carers describe as providing a sense of purpose<sup>17</sup>, resulting in adverse impacts to carer health and wellbeing.

The long term financial cost alone for a carer is on average (to age 67) \$175,000 in superannuation and \$392,500 in lifetime earnings. For the most impacted 10% of carers, this increases to a loss of \$444,500 in superannuation and \$940,000 in lifetime earnings<sup>18</sup>. For government, the projected average lifetime cost for people on the Carer Payment is \$592,000<sup>19</sup>. This is with the Carer Payment only being equal to 28% of weekly ordinary time earnings for singles and 21% of weekly ordinary time earnings for couples in Australia.<sup>20</sup> Every carer who is supported to remain in or reengage with employment, with supportive employers and legislation to maintain this support, is not only supporting carers to be better off financially but also represents a long term saving to government. Add to this other savings such as this person's reduced need for the age pension due to having built up superannuation; the increase to their mental and physical wellbeing that participation in paid work brings carers; etc. Taking initiatives to support carers under the National Employment Standards is a measure which makes economic sense.

### 3.2 Types of workers covered by the NES

*'[Recognition means] the time we spend caring for our loved one/s is recognized by government, and by employers (particularly these 2, but others too), as being invaluable to community and financially to government.'* – feedback from a carer

As outlined in section 3.1 of this submission, the experiences of Australian carers are unique, and as such, require bespoke offerings within the National Employment Standards to support them to be able to remain at work and reengage in employment. Carers WA is concerned at the lack of inclusion within the Inquiry Terms of Reference of carers as a priority group, and has further concerns as to a similar lack of inclusion within the NES. While some of the priority group considered in the Inquiry Terms of Reference may capture some carers, within these priority groups themselves the experience of caring will present other needs which must be considered for these employees. Carers WA recommends that intersectionality be a consideration under the National Employment Standards, inclusive of the experience of being a carer.

Further, Carers WA also recommends that the term 'carer' be defined as per the definition under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth).

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<sup>15</sup> (Carers WA, 2023)

<sup>16</sup> (Carers NSW, 2023)

<sup>17</sup> (Carers NSW, 2023)

<sup>18</sup> (Furnival & Cullen, 2022)

<sup>19</sup> (Department of Social Services, 2022)

<sup>20</sup> (Furnival & Cullen, 2022)

#### Carers WA recommends:

1. Intersectionality be a consideration under the National Employment Standards, inclusive of the experience of being a carer.
2. The term 'carer' be defined as per the definition under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth).

### 3.3 The extent to which the NES is fit for purpose

*'Recognition means that carers are supported to achieve their best self. Recognising that people of all income levels have to make sacrifices to be an unpaid carer, whether that is a work, socially or mentally. There appears to be different standards set for people who are unemployed (paid unemployment benefits) versus those who are employed but can't work more hours due to their caring role. The carers allowance barely covers the additional costs of paediatrician appointments, travel, etc. There is no money left for respite which might allow parents to work more and support their family.'* – feedback from a carer

For carers, the present form of the National Employment Standards offers significantly more provisions than past iterations. However, given the current and projected prevalence of caring in Australia, as well as the impact of this on workers' needs and the format of employment, the National Employment Standards must evolve to remain fit for purpose for the diversity and intersecting experiences of working Australians.

Current provisions in the National Employment Standards do little to separate and differentiate the role of carers and recognise the increased flexibility and support that carers need in the workplace. The current form of paid carers leave is combined with personal leave, with only ten days of leave per annum provided to all workers eligible for this benefit, with no recognition of the increased challenges faced by a person in a caring role.

The National Employment Standards provide leave for parents, for people experiencing family and domestic violence, yet they do not have a separate and differentiated paid leave for carers. The responsibilities and impact of being a carer go far beyond the parameters of personal leave or parental leave. Unpaid leave for instances of caring exists, but this means that carers must forgo sorely-needed income to take care of those they care for, and must do this in two days per instance. Carers often find themselves with no leave left, and in a difficult situation where they still have caring responsibilities. This is one of the times at which employment disengagement occurs.

This differentiation between a carer as defined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*, and other forms of care such as that the circumstances generally covered by the present form of personal/carers leave, is important to make due to the differing challenges faced by persons undertaking different forms of care. In the case of a carer as defined in the Carers Recognition Act 2010, these difficulties are compounded significantly, and further differ depending on the carer's individual circumstances (age, condition of care recipient, cultural background, etc). This is often at great cost to the carer's own wellbeing and prospective wage and superannuation income, as outlined in section 3.1 of this submission. Carers WA recommends that bespoke measures be included within the National Employment Standards to ensure equity for carers in the workplace, inclusive of: defined and separate carer leave provisions; increased unpaid carer leave provisions; x.

#### Carers WA recommends:

3. Bespoke measures be included for carers in the National Employment Standards, inclusive of:
  - Defined and separate carer leave provisions of ten days per annum (with ten additional and separate days per annum of personal leave).
  - Five unpaid carers leave days per instance.

### 3.4 The adequacy, relevance and coherence of existing NES entitlements

*'I think people forget that your life is so different. Instead of play dates we do therapies or hospital appointments or other activities that will help our loved one. It's mentally and emotionally exhausting aside from physical exhaustion. We constantly research to see if there's anything new in the medical field to help our child. We buy supplements so they don't get sick as much or to help with their daily activities. Then we have to work on top of that because carer allowance is not enough or if you work more hours carer payment will be reduced. But we have to work because it's just not enough. We can't really take care of ourselves anymore. If you wanna join a gym, that adds to expenses, have a day off- oh I need to clean the house or do this chore etc. Recognition of unpaid carers should mean having someone to care for us too.'* – feedback from a carer

Current National Employment Standards entitlements for paid personal/carers leave are for a combined ten days, accruing progressively, and accumulating year to year. It is applicable to employees, other than casual employees. Personal/carers leave may be taken when the employee is not fit for work due to a personal illness, or personal injury; or to provided care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family, or a member of the employee's household, who requires care or support due to a personal illness or personal injury, affecting the member; or an unexpected emergency, affecting the member.

This form of leave is often not reflective of the reality of a caring role as defined under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth), for several reasons.

- i. A caring role as defined under the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* (Cth) may be for a person who is neither a member of the employee's immediate family, or a member of their household.
- ii. Caring roles often involve care for someone with an ongoing health condition or disability, and involve ongoing therapy, appointments and other responsibilities which are not related to illness, injury or emergency; but are to treat the health condition or disability, and maintain quality of life.
- iii. Due to the responsibilities required of their caring role, just under 2 in 10 (17.6%) of employed carers work in casual roles<sup>21</sup>, leaving many without access to paid personal/carers leave.

#### Carers WA recommends

4. Personal and carers leave may also be taken to provide care or support to someone the employee provides care for (friend, family member or household member).
5. Reasons for taking this leave also specifically include one-off and ongoing appointments and other responsibilities related to the employee's caring role.
6. Bespoke paid carers leave entitlements also be available for carers who are casual employees.

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<sup>21</sup> (Carers NSW, 2023)

### 3.5 Protections for carers in the NES

*'I think working carers shouldn't have extra stress put on them by their employment.'* – feedback from a carer

While anti-discrimination protections exist for carers in the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) and other legislation, as demonstrated in Case Study 1 of the Addendum of this submission – discrimination still occurs for carers and is a significant psychosocial hazard in the workplace. Carers are already at high risk for psychological distress, low wellbeing, financial and economic challenges, and other risks; which can be compounded if they are not supported in the workplace. Indeed, in Case Study 1 of this submission, the carer describes 'sweating blood' due to their level of stress in their experience of increased caring responsibilities and not being supported in the workplace.

Section 3.1 of this submission discusses protective influencers on carers' lives, including external factors such as work-life balance, the way carers are supported in employment, and the degree that they feel recognised and valued by society for their caring role. Internal factors included a carer's psychological wellbeing and financial stress, and social factors included how supported a carer felt, as well as how satisfied they were with their social network and community.<sup>22</sup> These protective factors are all at some level related to workplace support, and are areas which could be embedded in legislation to better support carers in the workplace.

While legislation that offers anti-discrimination protections for carers is a good first step, it also needs to be successfully translated into practice. Indeed, it is recommended that requirements be embedded in the National Employment Standards for employers to directly consider how to support carers in their workplace. Examples of how to better support carers in the workplace can be found through the [Carer Friendly Employers Program](#) and [Carer Inclusive Workplace Initiative](#).

Carers WA also recommends the development of training resources for carers and for employers for how to support carers in the workplace, and best practice for what to do when carers are not being supported in the workplace.

#### **Carers WA recommends**

9. Requirements be embedded in the National Employment Standards for employers to directly consider how to support carers in their workplace.
10. The development of training resources for carers and for employers for how to support carers in the workplace, and best practice for what to do when carers are not being supported in the workplace.

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<sup>22</sup> (SAGE Design & Advisory, 2023)

## 4.0 Conclusion

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Should any further information be required regarding the comments included within this submission, or assistance from the perspective of WA carers, Carers WA would be delighted to assist. Please contact the Carers WA Policy Team at [policy@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:policy@carerswa.asn.au).

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# Addendum

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## 3.1 Case Studies

### Carer Employment Extended Case Study 1 from 2026

William\* is a 45 year old carer in WA who cares for his two children, wife and mother-in-law. Up until recently, William had been working from home two days a week due to carer responsibilities for both children. William's wife was admitted to hospital and his mother-in-law was diagnosed with dementia, which doctors confirmed would be ongoing. Due to these increased caring responsibilities, William requested a discussion on flexible working arrangements from his employer, specifically for increased working from home (WFH) days. An initial verbal agreement was reached with the employer's middle management, and this was worked into William's wife's care plan with her doctors. However, after discussing with senior management, middle management started raising complaints, claiming they were told William had taken too much leave (including various complaints around impact of parental and carers leave). After William illustrated his leave was all within allocated balances, senior management got involved, making claims of unspecified concerns regarding work performance. William's two rostered working from home days were also cancelled with no consultation or explanation on the day of his wife's discharge from hospital (while he was still on leave).

Upon advice from a colleague, William escalated the request to the Fair Work Commission. During this time period, William's wife was readmitted to hospital due to stress, with the removed WFH arrangements being a major factor in her previous discharge failing. William's wife and care team recommended that he move to working three days a week from home, with planned flexibility around periods of illness and school holidays.

During conciliation with Fair Work, trial arrangements were established, and William's employer acknowledged that there was no evidence of any ongoing performance issues. From this, an in-principal agreement was reached for two days WFH per week, with William to return to work more days in the office when suitable. However, when the contract was provided in written form a requirement was included by the employer that William had to report on his wife's health on a monthly basis or the agreement could be cancelled, which William felt to be unreasonable, both as expectations seemed excessive, and did not account for his other carer responsibilities. William's employers justified this based on claims related to earlier work performance, which William felt to be the complaints about taking parental leave reframed. The employer continued to refuse to discuss or detail these claims further with William.

William had been seeing a counsellor, who raised concerns that his mental health was critically low and that this was not sustainable. William submitted a further request for three days WFH and flexibility on the other two days around school holidays, illness and appointments. His employer met with him again and read off a script provided by their attorneys (which did not include any of the historical concerns). This new request, as well as other compromises suggested by William, were also denied, raising again the historical concerns as the key reason, along with requirements to support other staff (which was not in William's job description, and he regularly did remotely as most of the junior staff he was requested to support worked overseas). The 2 days WFH was reoffered by the employer, with option to cancel if evidence was not provided of William's wife's health.

William raised with the Fair Work Commission that his employer had been discriminating, bullying and creating psychosocial hazards in the office through their actions, and requested the Fair Work Commission to decide if his flexible work requests had been declined on reasonable business grounds. He outlined that reasoning for the denied requests had been inconsistent and varied over the requests made and addressed each of the reasonings made for the denied requests.

William's employer intervened before this case could reach the Fair Work Commission for a hearing, with an organisational restructure which cited that William's role was not complex and would be more profitable to be executed by junior staff members, however the proposed restructure did not follow work level requirements in the relevant award. This coincided with a mutual agreeable separation agreement to William, which he did not accept.

In the restructure meeting redeployment was also discussed to alternate positions within the company, but William was told there was not a suitable position available, and William's position was made redundant. Prior to this meeting, William's access to organisational accounts and emails was terminated, which led the carer to feeling these actions by the employer were pre-meditated and not subject to any choice or decision he may have made at the meeting.

This whole process was incredibly stressful for William, who on top of his increased caring responsibilities describes at one point that he was 'sweating blood' due to the situation with his employer. He described that all he had wanted was for his employer to sit and have a person-to-person discussion with him (all meetings being pre-scripted with no discussion or conducted through lawyers). He felt that many alleged issues could have been easily resolved just by sitting and addressing the evidence or getting people making conflicting claims in the same room.

Despite what was happening in his personal life, William consistently maintained "good" results on monthly performance reviews. Above all, after 4 years of employment, William was just hoping for some understanding of the stress and pressure he was feeling from his increased caring and family responsibilities.

*\*Name changed for confidentiality purposes.*

## Feedback from WA carers

In 2023, Carers WA conducted a survey of WA carers as part of its response to the federal Inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers. Of the 246 carers that responded to the survey, 77.23% reported that recognition of carers in the workplace was important or very important to them.

### Quotes from carer responses to this survey:

*'Acknowledging the work we do saves government and society millions annually and has a huge cost on our mental health and futures. It costs us so much to look after our son, I'm unemployed as a result of it as he cannot attend school or after school care.'* – Feedback from a carer

*'I have an autistic PdA son. Due to his complex nervous system disability and manifestation of this behaviourally, he has been terminated from two childcare centres. I am trying to maintain employment and juggle his care and this is significantly challenging as the NDIS do not recognise this as a point for support, claiming childcare is a parental responsibility. Though there are no suitable options for him to attend childcare.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] providing mental health support for Carers and proactive services for monitoring carers mental health. Recognise the huge financial burden that carers are carrying and provide means to lessen this burden by supporting carers to re-enter the workforce under more flexible arrangements or with incentives to employers who are able to provide work to suit the carer's family requirements.'* – feedback from a carer

*'Acknowledgement of the role carers play and that they are valued. Recognition would hopefully lead to more understanding from employers and the provision of additional support over time for carers. It may also assist carers who experience financial decline due to their caring role.'* – feedback from a carer

*'Recognition means that carers are supported to achieve their best self. Recognising that people of all income levels have to make sacrifices to be an unpaid carer, whether that is work, socially or mentally. There appears to be different standards set for people who are unemployed (paid unemployment benefits) versus those who are employed but can't work more hours due to their caring role. The carers allowance barely covers the additional costs of paediatrician appointments, travel, etc. There is no money left for respite which might allow parents to work more and support their family.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] support from employers and the community'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] help and recognition from employers.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] being treated with respect rather than "that is your role as you are the wife/mother". It would be good to have the option to be paid for this role too. It is very frustrating having to go to work to earn an hourly rate less than the carer who has to be employed to take my husband or my son to their appointments and when I look after them on weekends and after hours, to be told by NDIA and other government agencies that is my role and I should not be paid! I am told I am "only the wife /parent" and it is spousal or parental duty to do so.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] the time we spend caring for our loved one/s is recognized by government, and by employers (particularly these 2, but others too), as being invaluable to community and financially to government.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] acknowledgement of the commitment e.g. social, financial, lack of employment, lack of nurture, etc.'* – feedback from a carer

*'I think working carers shouldn't have extra stress put on them by their employment.'* – feedback from a carer

*'I think people forget that your life is so different. Instead of play dates we do therapies or hospital appointments or other activities that will help our loved one. It's mentally and emotionally exhausting aside from physical exhaustion. We constantly research to see if there's anything new in the medical field to help our child. We buy supplements so they don't get sick as much or to help with their daily activities. Then we have to work on top of that because carer allowance is not enough or if you work more hours carer payment will be reduced. But we have to work because it's just not enough. We can't really take care of ourselves anymore. If you wanna join a gym, that adds to expenses, have a day off- oh I need to clean the house or do this chore etc. Recognition of unpaid carers should mean having someone to care for us too.'* – feedback from a carer

*'Whilst I was working I was able to access carers leave, until I was unable to work as a result of the level of care required.'* – feedback from a carer

*'Without the support of my workplace over the past 12 months, I would have had to give up my employment in order to be able to undertake the care I have needed to provide to my 87 year old parent. The financial value of the caring I provide is enormous and of course this is not taken into account in the tax I pay, or any other financial mechanism available to me. I am effectively having to make a decision between providing less than the level of care needed and holding down a job. I simply cannot do both to the extent that is required.'* – feedback from a carer

*'I would like unpaid carers' inability to build their super to the same levels as people who are employed to be explored. The government need to lead by example in hiring carers and ensuring more flexible terms of employment so carers can meet their responsibilities and have an opportunity to earn, pay tax, contribute towards their super.'* – feedback from a carer

*'I have a flexible workplace but the cost to work to employ people to care for my children to work longer hours, outweighs the benefit of doing so. The daycare subsidies do not help with school aged children. The carers allowance is not enough money to compensate and the threshold for the carers payment is too low. The NDIS does not allow for the impact of the unpaid caring role on families. There is no respite for parents as it is not easy to locate child minding services for kids with disability, unless you pay a lot of money (which we are unable to earn).'* – feedback from a carer

*'I don't think our society values unpaid carers in any way. I had to give up my professional career as my customers/clients were not interested in me trying to balance my work with my family/caring role. Private occupational health and safety consultancy service delivery leaves no room for carers' responsibilities. Our family has lost an enormous amount of income, I have lost my career, my role as a professional business owner, my connections with business communities and other business professionals. Flexible workplaces - haven't had this experience. My commonwealth government employer (prior to my self-employment) insisted that I return to work full-time within months of returning to work after maternity leave when that breached the relevant Act. Zero recognition of my role as a carer. My child (sibling to our child with multiple diagnoses) has suffered greatly as a result of his sibling's issues and now developed his own mental health issues (anxiety and depression diagnosed and treated by a psychiatrist). We are invisible to our friends, schools, government. Now only people with spare money can have any respite. So many people desperately need help, support, and urgent respite which they cannot afford or access (single parents, CALD, etc). Our carers need very significantly more recognition, more than \$75 a week to recognise our role and contribution to the country, saving massive amounts for the government. It's a sad and frustrating system with no improvement in sight. I feel like I've lost so much in my life as a result of being a carer, and no one other than my husband and elderly*

*parents even acknowledges that, let alone supports it adequately. Feeling despondent...' – feedback from a carer*

*'Help those carers that have to give up full-time employment due to a caring role and miss out on superannuation payments for their old-age. Being a carer can = money constraints.' – feedback from a carer*

*'Yes! Give us a liveable payment to continue our caring roles At moment NDIS support workers get \$50 a hour and are unreliable and us carers are still expected to be available to our loved ones even if it means we have to call our employers and say hey my daughter's support worker is a no show so I can't come in either. We are getting a lousy 0.50 an hour to be unpaid carers yet we have no sleep and deal with everything . Yes I'm burnt out and tired and just want to go to work so we are not living in poverty.' – feedback from a carer*

*'Finding attitude towards carers at any level can be a battle to get through the systems or even understand where you stand. Society has a very low recognition towards the unpaid because it's not holding any social monetary value. Also they judge you when you tell them you're not getting paid and can't afford things - when you're the one who has given up work to attend full time care. The worst is after you are no longer needed and the stigma of explaining what is often traumatic to try and get a job again. When the absolute opposite is true - it would cost governments and agencies far more if they weren't there doing those roles. Not enough assistance to re-employment value, self worth or even rebuilding a person to feel human is so neglected afterwards.' – feedback from a carer*

*'Being a carer can result in burnout, isolation, and financial hardship, to name a few...how does carer recognition help in these situations? Why aren't carers paid as support workers? Why does caring for a family member mean that you cannot be paid when becoming the carer results in other employment not being possible?' – feedback from a carer*

*'It [recognition] means a lot. I care for both my parents, I have had to cut back on work, I hardly work at all. Main reason because care [workers] are unreliable through services, so I can't take shifts just in case they cancel on me on the day. I miss out of earning a living to care for my parents, but if they were to go into a home it would cost the government so much more money.' – feedback from a carer*

*'[Recognition means] providing mental health support for Carers and proactive services for monitoring carers mental health. Recognise the huge financial burden that carers are carrying and provide means to lessen this burden by supporting carers to re-enter the workforce under more flexible arrangements or with incentives to employers who are able to provide work to suit the carer's family requirements.' – feedback from a carer*

*'Recognition means that carers are supported to achieve their best self. Recognising that people of all income levels have to make sacrifices to be an unpaid carer, whether that is a work, socially or mentally. There appears to be different standards set for people who are unemployed (paid unemployment benefits) versus those who are employed but can't work more hours due to their caring role. The carers allowance barely covers the additional costs of paediatrician appointments, travel, etc. There is no money left for respite which might allow parents to work more and support their family.' – feedback from a carer*

*'[Recognition means] acknowledgement of importance - the same way mothers/parents are recognised in the culture (workplace, subsidies, health services, etc), etc' – feedback from a carer*

*'It means people understanding the balance of time for my family, time for myself, time for my role in society (working etc) and time as a carer - it's a lot to juggle.' – feedback from a carer*

*'I gave up my career to be home with my 2 ASD children who are now adults. I have had little to no support. Have worked so hard to get my kids to where are today. I am exhausted and would have loved more support and understanding.'* – feedback from a carer

*'If there was more recognition, it would mean that I wouldn't have to seek full time work to afford a rental property, whilst also trying to provide support to my son!'* – feedback from a carer

*'As a carer we do what we have to do to care for our child. Why should we not be rewarded for the hard work and support we give to them. I could have had a great career and been in a high paid job. Now I work for minimum wage as I had to give up other opportunities to be there for my child. Even with having support from the NDIS there are a lot of times when you can't just get a carer in to support your child.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] being paid for loss of wages when I need to step in for paid support workers which is a regular thing And I have lost jobs because of my caring responsibilities.'* – feedback from a carer

*'We are slaves. We are treated with disrespect by our own government. We are not paid enough, we did not choose to give up our lives to become a carer. If I choose to stop being a carer and become a support worker for the friend I care for my pay goes from \$0.30hr to min \$54+ hour. We get no financial or legal assistance. Legal aid is a joke. Try buying a wheelchair accessible vehicle on \$0.30 hour.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] monetary compensation (living wage) because of inability to stay in workforce.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] nothing as I cannot work, I have no 'rights' to enforce. I am invisible. Recognition is meaningless.'* – feedback from a carer

*'I would hope that the recognition of unpaid carers, would be more support for them to be able to look after their family member either through having others come in to assist in general areas, such as work, study wise so the carer can work or study without having to worry/stressing about the family member you care for and for Centrelink to allow payments to be made to the carer.'* – feedback from a carer

*'Life is difficult for most people now days. For example: pricing of everyday items! It's important to me personally to make the general public know, that some of us (carers) have it a lot tougher. As a carer it never stops & having to work 2 days a week just to survive, it really gets tough. We care for our loved ones because we love them and we want the best for them, it's just hard at times.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] work places recognizing our commitment to our caring roles and that this can impact on leave.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] being able to have flexible work arrangements.'* – feedback from a carer

*'[Recognition means] an understanding of the load I carry - impacting on my mental health, physical health, available work time. I want it recognised as a job - to validate the role - even if it's unpaid work. I want recognition of the range of skills you need and or develop as a cadet and advocate.'* – feedback from a carer