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Carers WA Policy Submission

Inquiry into the Support at Home Program

July 2026

About Carers WA

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

1. The establishment of an Interim Support Guarantee to ensure approved older Australians receive temporary supports while awaiting commencement of ongoing Support at Home services.
2. Carer inclusion be made a standard implementation requirement — routine inclusion in assessment, care planning and service reviews.
3. Carer strain be treated as a service urgency factor to trigger faster access when caring arrangements are at risk of breakdown.
4. Monitoring and public reporting be established on reductions in service utilization attributable to co-payment arrangements and associated impacts on carers.
5. Providers be required to provide standardised service comparisons showing support hours, budget impacts and out-of-pocket costs before and after transition to Support at Home.
6. Implement automatic temporary hardship protections while applications are being assessed to prevent interruption of essential services.
7. Strengthen affordability protections and hardship pathways — simplify hardship processes and monitor whether co-payments are increasing unpaid care.
8. Make respite a core implementation pillar — invest in planned, emergency and regionally appropriate respite, especially in areas of identified unmet need.
9. Establish nationally consistent transition communication standards, including plain-English documentation and mandatory provision of hard-copy information where requested.
10. Introduce place-based commissioning, workforce incentives and thin-market loadings to improve service viability in regional and remote communities.
11. Use place-based implementation settings in thin markets — deploy active commissioning, provider support and transport-aware planning in regional and remote WA.
12. The expansion of culturally safe aged care delivery models, including greater investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled and culturally specific service provision.
13. Review the effectiveness of Support at Home assessment processes, including the Integrated Assessment Tool, in identifying carer capacity, carer strain, respite needs and risk of caring arrangement breakdown.
14. Establishment of a dedicated complaints and escalation pathway for carers experiencing adverse impacts arising from support at home implementation.
15. Require implementation to reflect the Carer Recognition Act principles — embed the Statement for Australia's Carers into operational guidance and commissioning.
16. Strengthen co-design and consultation with carers — establish explicit mechanisms for carer bodies to be consulted on implementation.
17. Improve implementation accountability and public reporting — publish regular data on wait times, regional access, hardship use and respite availability.

2.0 Introduction

Carers WA welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee's Inquiry into the Support at Home Program, as well as the Inquiry's focus on ensuring older Australians can access affordable, timely and appropriate care at home. However, Carers WA is concerned at the exclusion of the additional and equally important query of relevance to every part of the terms of reference. This is what the impact of Support at Home is on the unpaid carers who sustain the aged care system.

For the purposes of this submission, a carer is a person who provides personal care, support and assistance to another person who has disability, a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness), mental health condition, alcohol or other drug dependency, or who is frail and aged¹. A carer can be any aged, can be a friend or family member, is not paid, and can have multiple caring roles.

Support at Home was introduced alongside the Aged Care Act 2024 to deliver a more rights-based, sustainable model of aged care. While Carers WA supports the intent of the reform and welcomes recent additional Commonwealth investment in aged care², evidence from carers across Western Australia indicates that implementation challenges continue to transfer risk, workload and financial pressure onto unpaid carers. These pressures are particularly evident in relation to long wait times, service shortages, affordability barriers, transition complexity, respite access and thin market failures. An aged care system that continues to rely on unpaid carers as a hidden subsidy when the formal system fails to deliver timely, affordable and accessible support, is not a sustainable one.

Current evidence shows that the implementation gap remains substantial. In WA, these pressures are magnified by geography and pre-existing service challenges, with the state having entered aged care reform with significant provider scarcity and hospital discharge pressure.

Carers WA urges the Committee to recognise that carers remain the people who step in when the formal system does not — when packages have not commenced, when there is no provider in the region, when supports are unaffordable, and when there is no one else. This submission therefore asks the Committee to hold implementation to account. The core test should be simple: is Support at Home actually working to increase the independence of older people at home in practice, or is it still relying on carers to make the system work?

This submission is informed by ongoing research, as well as feedback from carers and service providers. It is also made to provide a WA perspective on Support at Home, in addition to Carers WA's involvement and endorsement of the Inquiry submission made by Carers Australia and the Carer Network.

¹ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010)

² (Commonwealth of Australia, 2026)

3.0 General Feedback

3.1 Context

In Australia, there are over three million unpaid carers,³ who provide an estimated 2.2 billion hours of care each year, valued at \$77.9 billion annually⁴. In WA there are over 320,000 carers⁵, more than half of which provide 24/7 care, with 69.7% of WA carers providing more than 60 hours of care per week. WA carers report needing to leave or make significant changes to work to care; they have levels of wellbeing 20% below that of the general population; more than half have high or very high psychological distress; and 47.9% have poor or fair health⁶.

An estimated 15.3% of WA carers are aged 65+ themselves (9.2% primary carers; 6.5% secondary carers). Many primary carers in this age group provide care for someone with physical disability (46.6%), live in the same household as the person they care for (86.9%), are providing care alone (63.7%), and one in five report they cannot leave the person they care for alone (19.1%)⁷. Carers in this age group report they have been caring for 2-3 years (23.1%), 3-5 years (24.2%) or 5-10 years (26.9%)⁸.

WA carers who support older people report significant challenges navigating the aged care system, with long wait times, under-servicing and information barriers common. Despite being central to care delivery, fewer than half feel their own needs are addressed, and many experience financial strain, psychological distress and low levels of recognition⁹.

Carers in regional and remote Western Australia continue to experience significant inequities under the new aged care system, with shortages of services, workforce and residential care options forcing older people and unpaid carers to travel long distances to access support. Carers WA has identified persistent challenges including poor communication, inconsistent service delivery, complex administrative processes, limited respite and permanent care options, and affordability barriers, all of which disproportionately affect regional communities and thin markets. In some cases, people with dementia or complex needs have been placed thousands of kilometres from their families due to a lack of local care options, transferring additional emotional, financial and practical burdens onto unpaid carers. These challenges demonstrate that aged care reform must be accompanied by targeted investment, workforce development and service guarantees for regional and remote communities to ensure equitable access to care regardless of postcode.

³ (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022)

⁴ (Deloitte Access Economics, 2020)

⁵ (Government of Western Australia, 2018)

⁶ (Carers NSW, 2024)

⁷ (Carers NSW, 2024)

⁸ (Carers NSW, 2024)

⁹ (Carers NSW, 2024)

3.1.1 Existing carer challenges and the impact of recent reforms

Prior to the commencement of the Aged Care Act 2024 and the Support at Home program, carers in WA were already experiencing a lack of recognition and inclusion in the aged care system. They were also reporting a range of issues across the aged care system, which have since been exacerbated following the commencement of the Act. This data is broken down into WA regions in Appendix 1, and presented overall below for WA carers from the 2024 National Carer Survey who were providing care for someone receiving aged care services. This is important to review as these issues have not subsided, and have been further exacerbated by system reform.

	WA	Indicative
Caring for someone receiving aged care services	42.8%	4 in 10
Aged care: Asked about needs as a carer - disagree or strongly disagree	37.6%	4 in 10
Aged care: Involved in planning/decisions - disagree or strongly disagree	13.0%	1 in 10
Aged care: Views had a real influence - disagree or strongly disagree	16.1%	2 in 10
Aged care: Provided with all the information I need - disagree or strongly disagree	24.4%	2 in 10
Aged care: Enabled focus on paid work, looking for work, study, volunteering - disagree or strongly disagree	50.2%	5 in 10
Aged care: Enabled to attend to responsibilities outside of caring role - disagree or strongly disagree	36.7%	4 in 10
Aged care: Enabled to properly rest and recharge - disagree or strongly disagree	52.5%	5 in 10

Figure 1 Carer inclusion and issues for carers of someone using aged care services in WA (Carers NSW, 2024)

Overall, 4 in 10 WA carers surveyed were providing care to a person receiving aged care services. Many of these carers were not asked about their needs as a carer, and many found that these services did not enable them to have responsibilities outside of their caring role. Over half of these carers also said the services did not allow them to focus on paid work, or looking for work, study or volunteering. More than half also said the services did not allow them to properly rest and recharge. When asked about common issues, the most common issue raised by survey respondents overall was the long waiting period to access services. This was followed by the long waiting period to get assessed, and then the difficulties carers

experienced in finding and organising services.

Common aged care issues reported by carers	WA	Indicative
Person being cared for not eligible for required services	12.3%	1 in 10
Service at a lower level than required	24.8%	2 in 10
Long waiting period to get assessed	32.6%	3 in 10
Long waiting period to access services	36.1%	4 in 10
Not available locally	14.8%	1 in 10
Not meeting cultural needs	4.2%	0.5 in 10
Not inclusive of gender or sexuality	0.2%	0.2 in 10
Cost was too high	14.6%	1 in 10
Difficult to find information/organise services	28.5%	3 in 10
Difficult to make complaints/raise concerns	19.2%	2 in 10
Other issues	16.7%	2 in 10

Figure 2 Carer inclusion and issues for carers of someone using aged care services in WA (Carers NSW, 2024)

Ongoing feedback from carers since the commencement of the Aged Care Act 2024 and the commencement of the Support at Home program indicates that these and other issues have not subsided. Indeed, recent data collected and presented in Carers Australia's submission to this Inquiry reports that 43% of carers of older Australians had found that access to services had worsened under the new Support at Home program.

3.1.2 The implementation gap

Across many elements of Support at Home, carers are absorbing the consequences of implementation gaps. Where services are delayed, carers provide interim care. Where affordability limits service uptake, carers undertake additional caring tasks. Where providers are unavailable, carers fill the service gap. Where transition arrangements are confusing, carers navigate the administrative burden. This pattern has been repeatedly identified by carers across Western Australia and reflects concerns previously raised by the Aged Care Royal Commission.

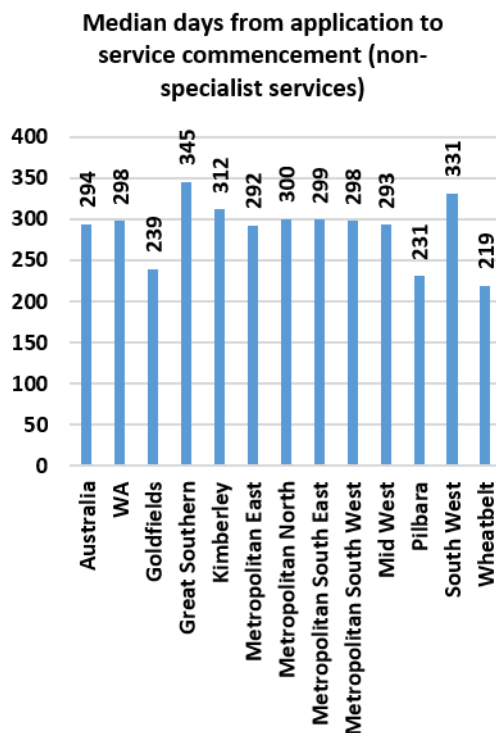


Figure 3 Median number of days between an application for aged care and service commencement for services commenced in the reporting period (Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2026)

Current evidence shows the implementation gap remains substantial. As at December 2025, 94,963 people nationally were waiting in the Support at Home Priority System. In 2024-25, 4,812 older people died waiting for the level of home care they had been assessed as needing. The first quarterly wait-times report under the new Aged Care Act found a national median elapsed time of 294 days from application to service commencement, while Support at Home (ongoing) recorded a median elapsed time of 347 days – the longest service type median wait time¹⁰. In WA, general median non-specialist wait times for aged care services ranged from 219 days in the Wheatbelt (7 months) to 345 days in the Great Southern (12 months).

In WA, these pressures are magnified by geography and pre-existing service deficits, with the state having entered aged care reform with significant provider scarcity and hospital discharge pressure, including reporting that around 200 hospital beds per day were occupied by people waiting for aged care or home support¹¹. This number has not improved, with a reported 349 beds occupied by people waiting for aged care services as at June 2026¹².

Carers WA acknowledges the significant aged care funding commitment, including in the last federal budget; however, implementation gaps remain. Delays in accessing services, limited service availability, and affordability barriers continue to transfer care responsibilities onto unpaid carers. Success will depend not on further policy development, but on the effective implementation of existing commitments, with clear accountability for outcomes for carers.

¹⁰ (Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2026)

¹¹ (WA Parliament Hansard, 2025)

¹² (Parliament of Western Australia, 2026)

3.2 Support at Home Inquiry Terms of Reference

3.2.1 Older Australians' ability to access services to live safely and with dignity at home

The ability of older Australians to access services in a timely manner remains one of the strongest indicators of implementation success. As demonstrated in section 3.1 of this submission and in ongoing feedback from carers and service providers, current evidence indicates service access remains constrained by availability, affordability and waiting times.

Carers WA recommends:

1. The establishment of an Interim Support Guarantee to ensure approved older Australians receive temporary supports while awaiting commencement of ongoing Support at Home services.
2. Carer inclusion be made a standard implementation requirement — routine inclusion in assessment, care planning and service reviews.
3. Carer strain be treated as a service urgency factor to trigger faster access when caring arrangements are at risk of breakdown.

3.2.2 Impact of the co-payment contributions for independent services and everyday living services on the financial security and wellbeing of older Australians

Carers WA has received feedback from carers regarding the financial impact of Support at Home co-contributions and service pricing changes. Carers WA regional coordinators report that some consumers and carers were not adequately informed of increased hourly service charges, resulting in support budgets being exhausted more quickly and support hours being substantially reduced or discontinued.

Carers have reported examples of personal care costs increasing substantially under the new model and respite supports becoming unaffordable. In some cases, carers have subsequently provided these services themselves when formal supports could no longer be funded.

The impact of co-payments should therefore be assessed not only as a consumer affordability issue, but also as a mechanism that risks transferring costs from government-funded care to unpaid carers.

Carers WA recommends:

4. Monitoring and public reporting be established on reductions in service utilization attributable to co-payment arrangements and associated impacts on carers.

3.2.3 Trends and impact of pricing mechanisms on consumers

While pricing reforms aim to increase transparency, carers report confusion regarding revised budgets, classifications and service charges. Carers WA has received reports of inconsistent communication from providers, uncertainty about available funding, and situations where support hours were reduced because revised budgets did not reflect actual service costs.

In practice, carers are less concerned with theoretical pricing transparency and more concerned with whether approved funding continues to purchase the services required. Where service hours fall as a result of higher prices, carers fill the difference through additional unpaid care.

Carers WA recommends:

5. Providers be required to provide standardised service comparisons showing support hours, budget impacts and out-of-pocket costs before and after transition to Support at Home.

3.2.4 Adequacy of the financial hardship assistance for older Australians facing financial difficulty

Carers WA supports the availability of hardship assistance but notes ongoing concerns regarding accessibility and complexity. Regional carer feedback has identified significant administrative burdens associated with hardship applications, including lengthy forms and multiple agency interactions. Carers also report instances where services cease while hardship determinations are being processed.

For carers already experiencing financial strain, these processes can create additional stress and increase reliance on unpaid care.

Carers WA recommends:

6. Implement automatic temporary hardship protections while applications are being assessed to prevent interruption of essential services.
7. Strengthen affordability protections and hardship pathways — simplify hardship processes and monitor whether co-payments are increasing unpaid care.

3.2.5 Impact on the residential aged care system, and hospitals

Carers WA is concerned that delays to in home support has consequences far beyond the home care system. Prior to implementation of Support at Home, Western Australia already experienced significant hospital discharge delays, with around 200 hospital beds occupied daily by people awaiting aged care or home support. As outlined in section 3.1 of this submission, this has significantly increased.

People waiting for home-based support remained in hospital for longer and those awaiting residential care faced substantial delays.

Carers have also reported difficulties accessing respite or permanent care placements for people with complex needs, dementia or behavioural support requirements. Some carers described months of unsuccessful applications and circumstances where care recipients ultimately entered hospital because no suitable care option could be secured.

These experiences illustrate that barriers within home care increase pressure on hospitals, residential aged care and carers simultaneously.

Carers WA recommends:

8. Make respite a core implementation pillar — invest in planned, emergency and regionally appropriate respite, especially in areas of identified unmet need.

3.2.6 Impact on older Australians transitioning from the Home Care Packages Program

The transition process has created substantial administrative burden for many carers. Carers report inconsistent messaging from providers, difficulty understanding classifications, lengthy service agreements, digital-only support plans, and changes to respite arrangements that have reduced flexibility.

For many households, carers have become the primary navigators of a highly complex transition process.

Carers WA recommends:

9. Establish nationally consistent transition communication standards, including plain-English documentation and mandatory provision of hard-copy information where requested.

3.2.7 Thin markets including those affected by geographic remoteness and population size

Thin markets present one of the greatest risks to successful implementation in Western Australia. Significant provider shortages remain across regional, rural and remote areas. Previous reporting identified severe provider shortages in several regions and significant aged care "care deserts".

Carers have described cases where suitable services were unavailable locally, resulting in care recipients being placed thousands of kilometres from home or separated from family, community and Country. These outcomes cannot be considered consistent with the objectives of ageing in place.

Carers WA recommends:

10. Introduce place-based commissioning, workforce incentives and thin-market loadings to improve service viability in regional and remote communities.
11. Use place-based implementation settings in thin markets — deploy active commissioning, provider support and transport-aware planning in regional and remote WA.

3.2.8 Impact on First Nations communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The impact of service shortages is magnified for First Nations communities and culturally diverse populations. Carers WA's regional consultations identified concerns relating to cultural safety, disconnection from Country, limited culturally appropriate aged care options and reluctance to enter institutional care due to historical trauma.

In regions such as the Kimberley and Goldfields, where communities already experience service scarcity and higher caring responsibilities, implementation failures are likely to have disproportionate impacts on both older people and carers.

Carers WA recommends:

12. The expansion of culturally safe aged care delivery models, including greater investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled and culturally specific service provision.

3.2.9 Any other related matters

Carers WA is concerned that assessment processes under Support at Home may not adequately capture carer sustainability, capacity or risk of caring arrangement breakdown. Where a carer is present, the system must not assume that unpaid care is available, safe or sustainable. Assessment should consider the carer's willingness and ability to continue providing care, their health and wellbeing, the intensity and duration of the caring role, competing employment or family responsibilities, and the consequences if formal services are delayed or insufficient.

Carers WA also encourages the Committee to consider several additional issues emerging during implementation:

- Alignment of Support at Home to key federal strategies such as the National Carer Strategy and Action Plan.
- Reliance on digital communication and documentation can exclude carers with limited digital literacy or access to technology. Hard-copy information should be the default, with digital options available where preferred.
- Communication methods that are inaccessible for some carers.
- The increasing administrative burden of navigating multiple systems.
- Use of carer guarantor agreements and associated liability concerns.
- The need for a formal complaints and escalation pathway where implementation failures place unreasonable burden on carers.

Carers WA recommends:

13. Review the effectiveness of Support at Home assessment processes, including the Integrated Assessment Tool, in identifying carer capacity, carer strain, respite needs and risk of caring arrangement breakdown.
14. Establishment of a dedicated complaints and escalation pathway for carers experiencing adverse impacts arising from support at home implementation.
15. Require implementation to reflect the Carer Recognition Act principles — embed the Statement for Australia's Carers into operational guidance and commissioning.
16. Strengthen co-design and consultation with carers — establish explicit mechanisms for carer bodies to be consulted on implementation.
17. Improve implementation accountability and public reporting — publish regular data on wait times, regional access, hardship use and respite availability.

4.0 Conclusion

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.

References

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Appendix One: Data Tables

This appendix further informs common issues experienced in the aged care system prior to the commencement of the Aged Care Act 2024 and Support at Home. These issues are important as carer feedback indicates they have continued and have been exacerbated by system reform processes.

	Bunbury	Mandurah	Perth- Inner	Perth- North East	Perth- North West	Perth- South East	Perth - South West	Outback North	Outback South	Wheatbelt	Total
Caring for someone receiving aged care services	41.0%	45.6%	47.9%	46.0%	45.9%	36.5%	38.3%	12.5%	36.6%	55.0%	42.8%
Aged care: Asked about needs as a carer - disagree or strongly disagree	44.7%	41.9%	37.5%	27.0%	40.6%	32.8%	48.2%	50.0%	42.9%	24.0%	37.6%
Aged care: Involved in planning/decisions - disagree or strongly disagree	15.4%	26.7%	9.7%	5.3%	19.8%	9.0%	9.1%	100.0%	7.7%	3.9%	13.0%
Aged care: Views had a real influence - disagree or strongly disagree	23.1%	25.8%	9.7%	7.9%	20.0%	14.3%	14.8%	100.0%	15.4%	7.8%	16.1%
Aged care: Provided with all the information I need - disagree or strongly disagree	25.6%	33.3%	31.3%	15.8%	25.5%	17.1%	32.1%	100.0%	35.7%	13.7%	24.4%
Aged care: Enabled focus on paid work, looking for work, study, volunteering - disagree or strongly disagree	57.7%	72.7%	52.4%	25.0%	46.4%	45.8%	47.7%	50.0%	63.6%	60.0%	50.2%
Aged care: Enabled to attend to responsibilities outside of caring role - disagree or strongly disagree	44.4%	51.7%	32.3%	17.1%	35.9%	32.8%	41.8%	100.0%	61.5%	31.0%	36.7%
Aged care: Enabled to properly rest and recharge - disagree or strongly disagree	62.2%	53.6%	48.4%	38.2%	49.0%	59.7%	59.3%	100.0%	76.9%	39.1%	52.5%

Figure 4 Carer inclusion and issues for carers of someone using aged care services in WA (Carers NSW, 2024)

Note: some regional survey data may be impacted by small sample sizes

Common aged care issues reported by carers	Bunbury	Mandurah	Perth- Inner	Perth- North East	Perth- North West	Perth- South East	Perth - South West	Outback North	Outback South	Wheatbelt	Total
Person being cared for not eligible for required services	22.5%	6.7%	15.6%	15.8%	11.5%	7.5%	3.8%	100.0%	14.3%	15.4%	12.3%
Service at a lower level than required	27.5%	10.0%	18.8%	21.1%	29.8%	19.4%	32.1%	50.0%	14.3%	28.8%	24.8%
Long waiting period to get assessed	30.0%	40.0%	40.6%	23.7%	40.4%	28.4%	30.2%	50.0%	21.4%	26.9%	32.6%
Long waiting period to access services	35.0%	43.3%	25.0%	31.6%	44.2%	35.8%	24.5%	50.0%	57.1%	32.7%	36.1%
Not available locally	27.5%	16.7%	9.4%	7.9%	6.7%	13.4%	9.4%	50.0%	42.9%	26.9%	14.8%
Not meeting cultural needs	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	5.3%	4.8%	7.5%	3.8%	50.0%	0.0%	1.9%	4.2%
Not inclusive of gender or sexuality	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Cost was too high	10.0%	20.0%	15.6%	5.3%	16.3%	11.9%	18.9%	50.0%	7.1%	17.3%	14.6%
Difficult to find information/organise services	35.0%	33.3%	15.6%	21.1%	25.0%	25.4%	30.2%	50.0%	42.9%	38.5%	28.5%
Difficult to make complaints/raise concerns	15.0%	13.3%	18.8%	10.5%	18.3%	16.4%	30.2%	50.0%	35.7%	21.2%	19.2%
Other issues	20.0%	10.0%	12.5%	13.2%	17.3%	19.4%	22.6%	50.0%	0.0%	15.4%	16.7%

Figure 5 Carer inclusion and issues for carers of someone using aged care services in WA (Carers NSW, 2024)

Note: some regional survey data may be impacted by small sample sizes

Appendix Two

Alignment of Carers WA Recommendations with existing Inquiries and Strategies

Carers WA notes that the recommendations contained in this submission are consistent with the findings and reform directions established through the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry *Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Unpaid Carers* (2024), the Australian Government's response to that inquiry, and the National Carer Strategy 2024–2034.

Together, these frameworks emphasise recognition of carers, improved access to respite and support services, carer inclusion in decision-making, equitable access to services, and greater accountability for outcomes affecting carers. The recommendations put forward in this submission seek to strengthen implementation of these existing commitments within the Support at Home Program rather than establish new policy directions.

Carers WA Recommendation	Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety	House Inquiry: <i>Recognising, Valuing and Supporting Unpaid Carers</i> (2024)	National Carer Strategy 2024–2034
Make carer inclusion a standard implementation requirement	Consistent with recommendations promoting partnered care, inclusion of families and carers in assessment, planning and ongoing care arrangements.	Aligns with recommendations seeking stronger recognition of carers within government systems and service delivery.	Supports Priority Area 1: Recognition and Inclusion of Carers.
Treat carer strain as a service urgency factor	Consistent with recommendations emphasising sustainable caring relationships and early intervention to prevent crisis.	Aligns with recommendations focused on carer wellbeing, health and sustainability.	Supports Priority Area 2: Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability of Carers.
Make respite a core implementation pillar	Aligns with Royal Commission findings identifying respite as essential infrastructure supporting ageing in place.	Consistent with recommendations seeking improved access to respite and replacement care.	Supports actions to improve access to flexible and responsive respite supports.
Strengthen affordability protections and hardship pathways	Aligns with recommendations promoting equitable access to care regardless of income or circumstance.	Relates to recommendations seeking to reduce financial disadvantage experienced by carers.	Supports Priority Area 3: Financial Security for Carers.
Require implementation to reflect Carer Recognition Act	Supports a rights-based and relationship-centred approach to care.	Consistent with recommendations encouraging stronger implementation of	Supports Strategy-wide commitment to embed recognition of carers across

principles		carer recognition frameworks.	government systems.
Strengthen co-design and consultation with carers	Aligns with recommendations promoting consumer and stakeholder participation in reform implementation.	Aligns with recommendations strengthening carer voice and representation in policy development.	Supports Priority Area 1 actions relating to participation and lived experience engagement.
Improve implementation accountability and public reporting	Consistent with Royal Commission recommendations concerning transparency, reporting and system accountability.	Supports recommendations calling for better data collection and visibility of carers' experiences.	Supports Strategy monitoring and evaluation commitments.
Establish a complaints and escalation pathway	Aligns with recommendations strengthening safeguards and complaints mechanisms.	Consistent with recommendations seeking more responsive systems for carers.	Supports actions promoting safe, accessible and responsive services.
Use place-based implementation settings in thin markets	Consistent with recommendations aimed at addressing regional service inequities and market failure.	Aligns with recommendations concerning equity of access for regional, remote and diverse communities.	Supports Priority Area 5: Access to Services and Supports, particularly for regional and remote carers.