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Acknowledging senior carers in Seniors Week

“With Seniors Week upon us it is important for us to acknowledge the contribution senior carers make to society,” said Elena Katrakis, CEO of Carers NSW

As the population continues to age, more and more people are requiring care. The reality is that it is largely family and friends providing this care.

“We often think of older people as the recipients of care. However, many seniors are themselves carers. They may be caring for a partner, a parent, a sibling, a friend, a grandchild or an adult child,” said Ms Katrakis.

Carers NSW is the peak organisation for carers in New South Wales, and is dedicated to supporting all unpaid carers – including senior carers.

Two of the most common family situations involving senior carers are older carers caring for a son or daughter with a disability or long term illness, and older carers caring for a spouse or partner with dementia, chronic condition, terminal illness or disabilities resulting from ageing.

Carers NSW has a targeted support program for older parent carers. The Older Parent Carer Program supports carers who are 60 years and over (or 45 years and over if Aboriginal) and caring for a son or daughter with a disability or long-term illness.

“Older parent carers have been identified as a group often containing ‘hidden’ carers who are less likely to be accessing services,” said Ms Katrakis.

“As well as the unique day-to-day demands of caring due to their age, older parent carers face other challenges including the need to plan for their future and the future of the person they are caring for.”

The Older Parent Carer Program can provide assistance with emergency planning, long-term care planning and ‘succession’ planning. The program provides individualised and specialised support.

“Carers NSW is a strong advocate for the needs of all older carers, and it is important that carers know where they can receive support and access to services,” said Ms Katrakis.

“Through the Carer Line – **1800 242 636** (free call except from mobile phones) – Carers NSW offers information, support, referrals and access to counselling and support groups.”

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A carer is any individual who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependencies, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail.