

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Carers Hidden in NSW Budget

**As the NSW Government transitions all of its disability funding to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), family carers are set to lose out, says Carers NSW CEO Elena Katrakis.**

The NSW Budget for 2017-18, delivered yesterday, revealed that 65% of funding for disability supports in NSW will go directly to the NDIS in the next financial year. Part of the agreed NDIS rollout in NSW, this will benefit people with disability who are eligible for the NDIS, and indirectly, many of their family carers.

However, what the Budget fails to recognise is that much of the funding being transferred currently supports carers of people with disability in their own right. These carers will no longer be eligible for targeted support once the person they care for transitions to the NDIS.

“Carers are losing out on much needed support at a critical time,” said Carers NSW CEO Elena Katrakis. “They are struggling to negotiate the changing system, and at the same time having many of the supports they rely on withdrawn. Carers are being asked to do more with less.”

The Older Parent Carer Support Coordination Program is one carer program that is rapidly disappearing as the NDIS rolls out. Funded by Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) since 2008 and delivered by a range of NGOs across NSW, this program works with ageing carers of an adult son or daughter with disability to help them plan for the future.

Research shows that ageing parent carers need tailored support to engage effectively with service systems, especially when services are largely delivered online. As programs like this are forced to close their doors, ageing parent carers will be left to manage a new service landscape on their own.

“The drastic reduction in carer support funding will rob many carers of the people they go to for information and support. Skilled staff will have no choice but to leave the sector, causing carer support in NSW to take an even bigger step backwards”, said Ms Katrakis.

The Commonwealth Government is currently developing an integrated carer support system to sit alongside the NDIS, however it is far from clear whether this will go ahead, and in what form. In the meantime, a number of effective service types stand to be lost, including:

- case management focused on the carer’s needs, including their need for a break
- retreats and recreational programs focused on improving carer health and wellbeing
- peer support groups that enable access to information and emotional support
- grants and funding packages to support carers’ social and economic engagement

It is hard enough already for services to reach the many hidden carers that need support across NSW. Unless the NSW and Commonwealth governments step up to fill these gaps, thousands of carers in NSW will remain isolated and unsupported.

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