

MEDIA RELEASE



4 October 2017

Carer Respite Alliance highlights respite crisis in NSW

Changes to the delivery of disability and aged care services are making it harder for many carers* to take a break, says a newly established network of organisations that either deliver, broker or evaluate carer respite across New South Wales (NSW).

The Carer Respite Alliance, a network of peak organisations, service providers and university research centres, has been set up in response to escalating concerns from the carer support sector that appropriate, flexible respite is in short supply.

“Carers must be supported to take regular breaks from their caring role in order to sustain their own health and wellbeing”, said Carers NSW CEO, Elena Katrakis. “The success of our new disability and aged care systems depends on the continued, sustainable involvement of carers. Depriving carers of time out for themselves places them at risk of burnout, putting pressure on already stretched service systems.”

Dr Lyn Phillipson, a researcher from the University of Wollongong, added, “Carers had problems before the recent system reforms. Now it seems the priority of carer respite has fallen further by the wayside, with the focus of support funding in individual packages shifting exclusively to the needs of older people and people with disability.”

Research by member organisations, featuring at this week’s 7th International Carers Conference in Adelaide, indicates that governments need to invest more in respite to meet the diverse needs of carers. Together, the Carer Respite Alliance calls on the NSW and Australian governments to:

- secure adequate funding for carer respite services outside of NDIS plans and Home Care Packages, while ensuring that the needs of carers are assessed in the planning process
- provide clearer, more accurate information to carers about what respite is and how to access it
- increase support for carers navigating the changing aged care, disability, mental health and carer support systems
- offer greater incentives to Residential Aged Care providers to maintain respite beds, and to specialise in respite for dementia and high care
- invest in the development of more dedicated respite facilities that offer flexible respite options and are equipped to meet the needs of people with diverse needs
- fund and evaluate more pilot programs to ascertain the most effective flexible and alternative models of respite

* 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/or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail.

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact: Carers NSW Media and Communications team on commsteam@carersnsw.org.au or 02 9280 4744 or 0421 057 305 (after hours). Information about the Carer Respite Alliance can be found at www.carersnsw.org.au/get-involved/campaigns



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

