

Media Release



15 October 2017

Celebrating Australia's 2.7 million family and friend carers

National Carers Week – Sunday 15 – Saturday 21 October 2017

Today marks the beginning of National Carers Week, a time to acknowledge and celebrate the 2.7 million carers in Australia who support a loved one with a disability, mental illness, drug and/or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail.

Each week, carers in Australia provide 36 million hours of care and support to family members and friends. Replacing this critical care with formal support would cost the Australian government \$1.1 billion per week. The theme for National Carers Week, **Carers Count**, highlights Australia's dependence on family and friend carers.

While many carers experience a number of positive outcomes associated with caring for a loved one, caring does not come without its challenges. A large percentage of carers report below average wellbeing, high / very high levels of psychological distress* and often loneliness.

"The demands of a caring role often mean that carers aren't as free to participate in society as their peers who do not have caring responsibilities" said Carers NSW CEO, Elena Katrakis, "This can lead to loneliness and a sense of isolation."

Greg, a male carer, added "There are 1.2 million male carers in Australia but sometimes I feel like I'm the only one." Greg believes that "relationships and interests outside of the caring role are important, not selfish" and encourages carers to look after their own health and wellbeing. Lyn, a carer for her adult son, also believes in the importance of self-care and advises carers to "get as much information and help as you can and look after yourself as it [caring] is a long hard journey".

Key statistics

- There are 2.7 million carers in Australia
- Carers provide 36 million hours of support to loved ones each week
- The replacement value of that unpaid care is \$1.1 billion per week

Available for interview

- Carers NSW CEO, Elena Katrakis
- Greg, a male carer for his mother with a spinal condition
- Lyn, has been a carer for 27 years

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact: Carers NSW Communications team on commsteam@carersnsw.org.au or 02 9280 4744 or 0421 057 305 (after hours).

*Carers NSW 2016 Carer Survey