

Media Release

15 July 2020

Young carers resilient amidst challenges of COVID-19

Young carers are resilient in navigating life's challenges and gain a range of valuable skills and qualities through caring for others, according to a new research report released today by Carers NSW.

A number of recent studies have highlighted the challenges facing young people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like their peers, young people aged 16 to 25 who are caring for a family member or friend have experienced significant change and instability during this unprecedented period.

Young carers are children and young people aged 25 years and under who provide unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who lives with a disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail due to age. There are approximately 83,700 young carers in NSW up to the age of 25 years, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

During the peak of the COVID-19 lockdown, Carers NSW conducted online interviews and focus groups with 28 young carers to better understand their experiences and support needs and to learn how to engage with them more effectively. A summary report from the project has been released today, sharing powerful stories of young people caring for loved ones while juggling study, work, family and social responsibilities.

Young carers reported that their caring role helped them develop patience, empathy, resilience, organisation and time management skills and other skills relevant to professional fields, including advocacy. However, maintaining social relationships and work and study responsibilities could prove challenging.

Carers NSW CEO, Elena Katrakis said the study aimed to identify ways to improve engagement with young carers by listening to their experiences.

"Many young carers do not identify as carers or access support because they view the support they provide as an intrinsic part of the role in their family," Ms Katrakis said.

"Our research highlights the key role that teachers, parents, managers and other key adults in young carers' lives can play in helping young carers to access support when they need it."

The report also highlights the importance young carers place on connecting and sharing experiences with their peers.

The full report is available on the Carers NSW website at www.carersnsw.org.au/research/

Young carers and carers of all ages can access support services through Carer Gateway by calling 1800 422 737 or www.carergateway.gov.au

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About Carers NSW

Carers NSW is the peak non-government organisation for carers in NSW and a member of the National Network of Carers Associations. Our vision is an Australia that values and supports all carers. For more information please phone 02 9280 4744 or visit our website www.carersnsw.org.au

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