

Media Release

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2020 National Carer Survey report released for National Carers Week

Carers NSW has launched the 2020 National Carer Survey summary report today, which also marks the start of National Carers Week.

With more than 2.65 million unpaid family and friend carers living in Australia, and over 854,300 living in NSW - National Carers Week, from 11–17 October 2020 is dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the outstanding contribution unpaid carers make to Australian society.

In Australia is estimated a total of nearly 2.2 billion hours of care will be provided during 2020 and the replacement value of unpaid care in Australia is now estimated at over \$1.5 billion per week.

Carers NSW, CEO, Elena Katrakis said the 2020 National Carer Survey provides important new evidence of the contribution carers make across Australia. The survey results released today also provide key insights into what is and isn't working for carers and in the services they access.

The survey received a total of 7,735 valid responses from carers across Australia. This included a great response from diverse and hidden groups of carers - including young carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, culturally and linguistically diverse carers and LGBTQI+ carers, which will enable better understanding the needs of these groups to tailor services to benefit them.

Key findings from the 2020 National Carer Survey include:

- The average age of survey respondents was 58 years, with the oldest respondent being 94 years of age.
- Survey respondents were most likely to be caring for their child (including adult children), or caring for their partner. One in four respondents cared for more than one person.
- The most common group of people being cared for by survey respondents were people with physical disability, followed by people with a chronic condition and people living with a mental illness.
- Nearly half of the carers who responded were experiencing high or very high psychological distress, and one in three felt highly socially isolated, which may have been influenced by the COVID-19 lockdowns in place in many states and territories at the time.
- One in three respondents said they *never* get time out from their caring responsibilities, with only around half having enough time to keep on top of other responsibilities.
- Large numbers of carers reported *not* being asked about their own needs when accessing disability, aged care, health and mental health services with or on behalf of the person they cared for.
- Up to one in three carers had found it difficult to get information about, and to organise, services to support the person they care for.
- One in four carers reported spending more money than they made in the past 12 months.

“Carers of a family member or friend are facing unprecedented challenges during COVID-19 but are also showing great resilience,” Ms Katrakis said.

“These survey results help Carers NSW and our partners to advocate for carers, influence policy development and improve service delivery for carers into the future,” Ms Katrakis said.

While the Carers NSW Carer Survey is traditionally conducted every two years, this is the first time it has been expanded to be a national survey.

The 2020 National Carer Survey has been conducted by Carers NSW with the support of the other state and territory Carer Associations and an expert reference committee that includes carers, academics from several universities and NSW Government representatives. Carers NSW receives funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to conduct the biennial Carer Survey.

Anyone at any time can become a carer, providing support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail due to age.

“We encourage carers to take some time out for themselves during National Carers Week. This year Carers NSW is celebrating National Carers Week with a range of online events including wellbeing workshops and webinars for carers,” Ms Katrakis said.

A full calendar of NSW Carers Week online events is available at www.carersnsw.org.au/national-carers-week

Notes to the editor

Key Statistics

- There are approximately 854,300 carers across NSW i
- It is estimated that carers provided 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care in 2020. ii
- The replacement value of that care (the cost were it provided by paid care workers) is estimated at \$77.9 billion, over \$1.5 billion per week iii
- The demand for unpaid carers is at an all-time high and set to increase in the future iv

i Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

ii Deloitte Access Economics (2020) The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2020

iii Deloitte Access Economics (2020) The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2020

iv Deloitte Access Economics (2020) The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2020

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