Carers NSW
Celebrating 50 Years

Carers Count: Introducing a NSW Carer Card to make recognition practical

At least 958,500 people in NSW, almost one in eight, provide unpaid care to a family member or friend who lives with disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic or terminal illness, or who is frail or ageing. It would cost the NSW Government more than $25 billion a year to replace the unpaid contributions made by carers. While caring responsibilities continue every day, consecutive National Carer Surveys show that recognition of carers has steadily declined since 2020, and the most recent survey results identified that only 11.8% of carers feel recognised by governments.

We know that when carers are recognised, they are better supported to maintain their wellbeing and connect with help early.* When caring breaks down, both carers and the people they care for increase their use of government-funded health and social services, and some families face crisis. This is the very outcome that $25 billion in unpaid care currently prevents.

958,500*
Carers in NSW, almost one in eight people.

$25 Billion**
a year in unpaid care the state relies on.

11.8%***
Of carers feel recognised by governments.

Our proposal

Recognition determines whether unpaid care in NSW remains sustainable. That is why Carers NSW is calling for a co-designed NSW Carer Card - a formal, statewide recognition and access mechanism for family and friend carers. It would be delivered through Service NSW on the proven Seniors Card infrastructure, in both physical and digital formats, with a dedicated variant accessible from the age of 16.

This is recognition infrastructure, not a new entitlement. The Card gives government, businesses and services a practical, visible way to recognise carers and connect them with the support already available to them in hospitals, schools, workplaces and government agencies. Carers who are seen, valued and counted are carers who can keep caring sustainably.

*Carers NSW (2024) 2024 National Carer Survey; **Carers NSW estimate based on Deloitte Access Economics (2020), The economic value of informal care in Australia in 2020, Carers Australia; ***Carers NSW (2024) 2024 National Carer Survey (unpublished data).

CARERS COUNT BECAUSE NSW COUNTS ON CARERS

Back a NSW Carer Card so carers are counted in where it matters most

Carers NSW
Celebrating 50 Years

The NSW Carer Card delivers on commitments that have *already been made to carers*

The NSW Government legislated recognition of carers in the *NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* and reaffirmed it in the NSW Carers Strategy 2020–2030. The Carer Card is the practical delivery mechanism that can action those commitments in everyday scenarios.

The Carer Card is proven and affordable

Victoria's Carer Card (established 2018) has over 32,000 cardholders and 4,000+ participating businesses; Queensland's Carer Business Discount Card (2008) connects some 17,000 carers with 4,300+ businesses. Year 1 establishment is estimated at $13.1m–$22.9m, falling to $4m–$7m a year - a modest investment to help sustain more than $25 billion in care NSW currently receives at no cost.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING OF THE NSW GOVERNMENT

Approve the establishment of a NSW Carer Card and **commission a detailed business case** from the Department of Communities and Justice, with Service NSW, to confirm approach, budget and delivery timeframe.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING OF YOU

If your organisation shares our commitment to recognising the ongoing contribution of family and friend carers, **add your organisation's name to our joint statement of support** (through an authorised representative), **share the campaign with your networks,** and **help us identify where a NSW Carer Card could deliver practical benefit within your own services.**

SIGN TO BACK THE NSW CARERS CARD

Contact: email policy@carersnsw.org.au or call 02 9280 4744 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

*Carers NSW (2024) 2024 National Carer Survey, unpublished data; Hamilton, M, Bainbridge, H, Baird, M, Zettna, N, Hofstatter, L, Judd-Lam, S & O'Loughlin, K (2024), 'The importance of recognition: predictors and outcomes of carer recognition among working carers of ageing relatives', Community, Work & Family

Authorised by Kristen Hannah, Carers NSW, Level 10/213 Miller Street, North Sydney NSW 2060.

CARERS COUNT BECAUSE NSW COUNTS ON CARERS

Back a NSW Carer Card so carers are counted in where it matters most