

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers

Fact sheet 5, July 2023

The 2022 National Carer Survey heard from 6,825 carers from across Australia, of whom 176 (2.5%) identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Among them, the majority (84.1%) identified as female. With an average age of 53 years, they were significantly younger than the survey average of 59 years. The majority (56.5%) lived in regional areas, with 41.8% living in major cities, and 1.8% in remote areas. Identified respondents came from traditional lands all over the continent and 6.6% reported speaking a language other than English at home.

The 2022 National Carer Survey was conducted from June to July 2022 by Carers NSW with the support of the State and Territory Carer Organisations and funding from the NSW Government. A carer is any individual who provides 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.

The clans and language groups most frequently represented among identified respondents were Wiradjuri, Kaurna, Darug/Burramattagal, Bundjalung and Kamilaroi. However more than half of respondents (50.5%) did not specify, or did not know about their ancestral connection because they or their parents belonged to the stolen generations.



More than
2 in 5
care for more
than one person

About the people they care for

With 43.1% of identified respondents caring for more than one person, and 17.4% caring for three or more people, they were much more likely than other carers to support multiple care recipients. Most (85.4%) of those receiving care were aged under 65 years. Two thirds of identified respondents were caring for their child (including adult children), 1 in 4 for their partner, and 1 in 5 for a parent.

2022 NATIONAL CARER SURVEY

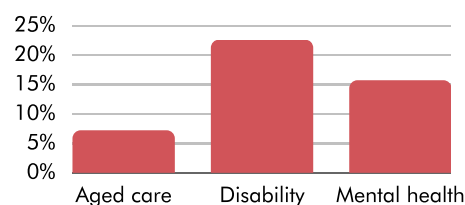
The majority (80.9%) were caring for someone living with a disability, with 42.6% caring for someone with a chronic health condition and 39.5% caring for someone living with a mental illness. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents spent an average of 112 hours per week caring, with more than half (55.1%) providing 24/7 care, and the majority (81.5%) caring for at 5 years or more. While 90.8% of were living with a person they care for, almost 1 in 4 were also caring for someone living separately.

Experiences accessing services

The Survey asked carers about their experiences accessing services with or on behalf of the person they care for. Identified carers were most commonly caring for someone accessing mental health services (50.9%) or disability services (50.3%). Across all service types, around half of respondents were involved in planning and decision-making, however, they were significantly less likely to be asked about their needs as a carer than the survey average.

The most frequently reported service issues were long wait times to access services (reported by 62.9% of carers), interruptions due to COVID-19 (60.9%), and required services not being available locally (32.6%). Overall 17.4% reported that no culturally appropriate services were available for the person they care for.

Culturally appropriate services were not available for...



4 in 5
experienced
financial stress

Key challenges

Identified carers reported significantly lower wellbeing (50.2%) than the survey average (57.5%). The majority reported being socially isolated (69.4%) and experiencing high to very high psychological distress (61.2%). Most respondents (84.3%) had experienced some form of financial stress, with 38.4% being in financial distress. In the past 2 years, 1 in 5 identified carers had accessed emergency support and 1 in 3 said their home is not adequate for their caring role.

Key points

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers responding to the 2022 National Carer Survey were most often caring for their child (incl. adult children) living with disability.
- Nearly 1 in 5 did not have access to culturally appropriate services.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported low wellbeing, and high levels of social isolation and psychological and financial stress