



carers victoria



annual report

2009 - 2010

Carers Victoria is the statewide voice for family carers, representing and providing support for carers in the community.

our vision

Caring is a shared community responsibility

our core business

- Carer advocacy and representation
- Research and policy development
- Carer services and programs
- Education and training - for carers and for workers in the care system
- Influencing change in the services and institutions that support carers

the changes we work for

Carers enjoy improved health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security

- Access to high quality and flexible services
- Choice in caring and support options
- Improved carer entitlements
- Choices and balance in work and family responsibilities

Caring is recognised as a shared responsibility of family, community, business and government

- Increased public awareness of caring and carers' issues
- Health and community care services are carer inclusive, responsive and well coordinated
- National carer legislation and policy
- Increased government, community and corporate support for carers

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president's report

To better serve the interests of caring families, the Board has undertaken substantial work in 2009-2010 to update our Constitution, our strategic directions and the makeup of the Board and its committees.

We had long been aware of the need to update our Constitution. A challenge by a small group of members in the early half of the financial year became the catalyst for prioritising this work. At a Special General Meeting held in December 2009, nearly 1300 members of Carers Victoria voted (in person and by proxy). A resolution calling for the resignation of Board members was defeated with 88% of votes and an overwhelming 96% of votes accepted the Board's call for a change in the Association Rule regarding the number of members required to request a Special General Meeting.

Encouraged by this show of support from members, the Board has embarked on a review of Carers Victoria's Constitution to ensure its relevance for an organisation which had grown to nearly 6,000 members. A rigorous consultation process commenced to ensure that members were given opportunities to have their say. By the time you read this members will have decided on the new Rules at a Special General Meeting in August 2010.

A review of Carers Victoria's strategic directions was another key project for the year. In 2008 we launched The Next Chapter, our strategic directions for 2008-2012. Two years on and much has changed, both within the organisation and externally in the caring environment. This year, the Board have worked to refocus and renew our strategic directions to reflect the shifting circumstances and to reaffirm our commitment to seeking positive change for caring families. The Next Chapter V2 will be launched in the new financial year and will guide Carers Victoria's work for the next three years.

The Board also took the opportunity to explore better ways to meet our obligations. Our Board committees help us to provide good governance by developing and utilising skills and expertise in specialist areas to help streamline our decision-making processes. A review of our committees ensures that the Board remains representative, responsive and effective.

I express my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues on the Board; for their time, their expertise, and their commitment to carers. We are very fortunate to have Board members of such high calibre. On behalf of the Board I wish to thank our dedicated CEO and staff for another year of outstanding achievement.

The Board will remain alert and responsive to continually changing external influences. With a robust Constitution and a renewed vision we look forward to meeting the challenges ahead as we continue the good work we do for, and on behalf of, our members and the 700,000 family carers in Victoria.

Ben Chodziesner
President

ceo's report



With a state election looming in November 2010, Carers Victoria has focused its efforts this year on engaging with the caring community to ensure that the needs of caring families are not forgotten. Last year was all about listening to carers so that their views and experiences inform our work. This year we took things to the next level and asked carers to join our campaign for a better future for carers.

Informed by carers, our election manifesto calls on governments to make substantial investments to support caring families so that they can live well and have real participation in the community. We ask for investment in: housing and support for people with a disability and/or a mental illness; support for ageing parent carers; community support for people with a mental illness and their families; support for carers to earn an income; reform of the funding system for people with a disability and support for older people with a disability and their families.

We have delivered our manifesto to politicians, bureaucrats, and our community partners, mostly at face-to-face meetings. We also distributed a copy of the manifesto to each of our members as an insert with our quarterly magazine.

But that's not all...

In March 2010 we launched our Action eNewsletter to help promote our manifesto and to inspire and encourage members and supporters to take action. We know that many carers have little time (or energy) to spare for the election campaign and many others may feel they wouldn't know where to start.

We also developed a campaign toolkit with tips and ideas on how carers can contact their local MP or the media. A series of fact sheets was developed so that carers had access to statistics relating to each area of our manifesto.

We ran group workshops to help carers to advocate for better supports. We also promoted our election campaign at five Mingle events and through our carer education workshops across Victoria. We encouraged carers to sign up for our campaign and to share their stories about their caring experience and their support needs. Many carers have already shared with us the letters they have written to politicians – along with some of the responses they received.

Carer engagement was also a key objective in the redevelopment of Carers Victoria's website. We responded to carers' requests for a website where they could find information and support. The website will go live in July 2010.

Our election campaign and website are just two of the projects that have connected us with carers in the last year. This annual report highlights the many ways that Carers Victoria staff engage with carers as they deliver direct services across our range of programs.

We look forward to finding new ways to link with carers and new opportunities for working together to achieve community living for caring families.

I take this opportunity to thank the Board for their vision and leadership. I also thank the Executive and leadership team and all our staff for their dedication and hard work. I am proud to work with this talented, inspiring and caring group of people.

Maria Bohan

Maria Bohan
CEO

The Board is responsible for setting the direction, strategy and financial objectives for Carers Victoria. They contribute a diverse range of skills and experience to the organisation and help guide Carers Victoria towards a sustainable future.



Trevor Aronson
(Treasurer)

Board member since 2009
Committee member: Audit and Risk Banking Executive at Westpac; Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors



Michael Beres

Board member since 2004 (retired February 2010)
Committee member: Marketing; Strategic Directions; Carer; Business Manager at Good Shepherd Province Aust/NZ; Leadership Victoria Williamson Fellow



Ben Chodziesner
(President)

Board member since 1997
Committee member: Audit and Risk; Strategic Directions; Organisation Position Working Group Former carer; Former President Carers Australia



Briony Dow

Board member since 2008
Committee member: Rules Review Carer; Director of the Preventative & Public Health Division of the National Ageing Research Institute



David Fitch

Board member since June 2010
Committee member: Audit and Risk, Organisation Position Working Group Former Chief Executive Partner and now Consultant with Lander & Rogers Lawyers



Sandra Hillard
(Secretary)

Board member since 2007
Committee member: Audit and Risk; Organisation Position Working Group; Former carer



Helen Johnson

Board member since 2005
Committee member: Board Development; Strategic Directions; Carer; Parent Support Worker Association for Children with a Disability; Carers Australia Vice-President



Peter Kent

Board member since 2006
Committee member: Marketing; Managing Director of Porter Novelli, part of an international marketing communications group; Member Australian Institute of Company Directors



Mary Anne Noone

Board member since 2005
Committee member: Rules Review Former carer; Senior lecturer, School of Law at La Trobe University



**Anne Oakley
(Vice-President)**

Board member since 1997
Committee member: Strategic Directions; Audit and Risk; Rules Review; Organisation Position Working Group Carer; Manager at Melbourne Citymission Palliative Care Service



Valda Pugh

Board member since 2000;
Former carer



Anne Tuohey

Board member since 2001
Committee member: Strategic Directions; Rules Review; Organisation Position Working Group Former carer; Policy and Research Coordinator, St Vincent de Paul Aged Care and Community Services



carer and community services

supporting family carers

Staff across the Carer and Community Services stream provide a diverse range of high quality services for family carers. Whether providing a first contact point for a new carer seeking information or supporting a long-term carer to plan for the future, our services respond to the diverse and changing needs of carers.

Carer Information and Support

The Carer Information & Support Service (CISS) is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) via Carers Australia. The CISS provides carers across Victoria with access to the 1800 242 636 Carer Advisory Line from 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. The Carer Advisory Line connects carers to a range of services including: information and referral; support and counselling; carer education; and local services.

In 2009/2010 the Carer Advisory Line handled nearly 6,000 calls – more than 120 calls per week every week – a huge and constant challenge for such a small part-time team. Around 20% per cent of these calls resulted in guided referrals, meaning that there was some interaction with another program or service to facilitate that referral. Around 10% of calls resulted in an active referral and intake assessment for the Carer Counselling Program, and 20% of carers were referred to their local regional carer services.

The Carer Advisory Line has changed over time from providing Carer Kits and information, to responding to more complex calls from carers seeking a broader range of support. In 2009/2010 the Carer Advisory line still organised the dispatch of more than 90,000 information products.

As the central point of contact for many carers enquiring about available supports, staff on the Carer Advisory Line keep up with a vast range of information about new programs and services. This includes Victorian Government initiatives such as the new Carer Card and new Carer Charter.

Thank you for this important service - I felt so supported from my very first call to Advisory Line which suggested and arranged the very helpful Counselling Program.

Promotion or publicity of carer issues within the community, along with promotion strategies implemented by Carers Victoria always results in increased calls from carers to the Carer Advisory Line. As awareness of carers and carer issues increases across the community, so does the demand for carer information and support. Consequently, the small team is under constant pressure to meet the increasing demand and will require additional resources to keep pace with this growing trend.

National Carer Counselling

The National Carer Counselling Program (NCCP) is funded by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) via Carers Australia. The NCCP provides carers with access to counselling to support them in their caring role. Carers across Victoria can access up to six sessions of counselling at a time through a network of professional counsellors.

During 2009-2010 more than 1000 carers received counselling support through more than 4,000 counselling sessions. The majority of carers accessing the Carer Counselling Program are women between 45 and 64 years who have been in their caring role from between two and 24 years. More than half are carers of family members who are frail aged and/or with dementia.

Counselling has helped me to largely overcome the guilt and pressure that I see other carers suffering all the time.

In 2009 a comprehensive National Evaluation of the NCCP was completed by consultants Alt Beatty. This report confirmed carers' very high appreciation of the program. In particular they identified an improved sense of self and empowerment, a positive sense of future, and a reduction in isolation.

Following the national evaluation, Carers Victoria has been selected to trial the NCCP Carers Well Being Longitudinal Evaluation: a unique and exciting opportunity for NCCP to demonstrate evidence based outcomes for carers.

The NCCP is now in its eighth year of operation. Carers Victoria is extending the reach of its Carer Counselling Program through a range of therapeutic approaches; we contract more than 120 professional counsellors across Victoria, covering more than 20 different languages. The development of a Video Counselling Pilot Project in partnership with the Loddon Mallee will target carers in isolated regions where professional counsellors are not readily available.

Demand for counselling support continues to exceed our current resources and at times we have to prioritise first-time users of the service. Meeting increasing demand will be an ongoing challenge for the Carer Counselling Program.

Education and Training

The Education and Training Program supports caring families through the provision of information, knowledge and skills. Funding from the Victorian

Department of Human Services, largely through HACC and Capacity Building Grants, enables us to offer workshops and sessions free to carers and carer support groups across Victoria.

Our workshops and educational programs are designed under the themes of 'Lasting the Distance – A Wellbeing Focus'; 'Having Your Say – An Advocacy Focus'; 'Naming the Changes – An Emotions Focus' and 'Planning Ahead – A Futures Focus'. We also run two special programs for those caring for someone with a disability – 'Ageing Parents of Adult Children with a Disability' and 'From Parenting a Child to Parenting an Adult'.

Another focus of our team is to provide quality training to enable care professionals to work more effectively with caring families. We aim to influence how service providers engage with caring families – integrating the needs of clients and their families. We deliver specialised workshops and the nationally accredited units of competency – 'Working Effectively with Carers' and 'Supporting Relationships with Carers and Families' for Certificate III and Certificate IV in HACC and Aged Care and Disability across Victoria.

In 2009-2010, the team developed and trialled a number of new workshops with groups across metropolitan and regional Victoria with a view to expanding our suite of education programs.

We have also been working with organisations such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence to trial the use of teleconferencing in the hope of extending our reach to carers who may find it difficult to attend workshops and sessions.

This year we have delivered 585 carer workshops to over 10,150 participants and 66 training sessions to 800 participants.



In this financial year, we have seen an increase in interest from carers and carer support groups focusing on mental health issues and from carers and families of children with autism.

We are very proud of our work to raise awareness of caring within ethnic communities. We have presented at two joint forums: one with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and another with the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing. We have also been working with 12 organisations under the Community Partners Programs to raise awareness of caring families and carers in their communities through the development of community services announcements for broadcast on ethnic radio programs.

National Carer Support Services

On 1 September 2009, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) contracted Carers Victoria to provide National Carer Support Services (NCSS) for the veteran and ex-service community across Australia.

This is a unique program and while it is new in terms of national service delivery, Carers Victoria previously had a contract with DVA for approximately eight years, delivering services within Victoria. Four staff members are employed under the new contract.

The national program is education focused and tailored to the needs of the veteran and ex-service community. Sensitivity and understanding of the impacts of defence force training, lifestyles and experiences are the cornerstones against which post service challenges such as transition into civilian life, relationship and lifestyle changes are taken into account.

The impact of injury, illness, and service related experiences and trauma is explored from the carers' perspective through interactive workshops and educational programs. Carers have an opportunity to explore a diverse range of relevant topics featuring effective strength-based strategies to enhance their own health and wellbeing while they care for others.

NCSS also offers a range of interactive and informative workshops to ex-service organisations wanting to provide further training to their staff and volunteers including advocates, welfare and pension officers. We can also provide consultative advice to community service providers and ex-service organisations to enhance their carer / partner inclusive practice and to those seeking to gain greater understanding of caring families within the veteran and ex-service context.

The first seven months of the new contract focused on building the infrastructure to support the national roll-out of the NCSS. Implementation of a marketing strategy has resulted in a lot of interest in our program and interstate requests for our services

are now being received.

In April 2010, DVA provided NCSS with extra funding to create a new community resource resulting in the development of a DVD entitled Men Care Too! This resource is due for launch later in the year and has already received endorsement from the Minister for Veteran's Affairs.

Young carers

This program is funded by the Australian Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) for a part time worker to raise community awareness of young carers.

Part of this role is membership of the Office for Youth's Ministerial Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) which meets directly with the state Minister for Youth four times a year.

This year, information about young carers and an identification checklist were sent to all Principals of Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and in the Catholic Education Office Archdiocese of Melbourne.

During Youth Week in April, collaboration with the regional carer services resulted in the production of a series of advertisements which were placed in MX magazine to raise awareness and identification of young carers.

For Carers Week work with our Victorian Young Carer Action Team (VYCAT) resulted in the development of a multimedia presentation aimed at raising community awareness of young carers. The "Young Carer Survival Kit" presentation was on public display at the City Library in Melbourne, and the launch was attended by young carers from across the state. The Survival Kit is now being developed as a resource kit for use with young carer groups.

This year, Carers Victoria hosted a meeting of the Australian Young Carer Action Team (ANYCAT) which was attended by young carers and young carer workers from all states and territories.

Respite Connections

Carers Victoria Respite Connections offers a range of services for carers living in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. Funded through the Victorian Government's Support for Carers Program and the National Respite for Carers Program, services are delivered by the Aged Team, Disability Team, Mental Health Team and Young Carers Team.

In 2009-2010, a total of 2864 carers were supported including 1081 carers who were supported for the first time. Of the total carers supported, 996 were from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Funding for Respite Connections programs includes the brokering of respite funds. In 2009-2010, respite valued at a total of \$1,632,295.55 was coordinated for carers.

Respite Connections – Aged

Sixteen professional staff work in various roles within Respite Connections Aged Team.

The aims of the Aged Team programs are to provide emotional and practical support for carers of people who are frail aged and to link them into relevant community supports including respite.

This is achieved by one on one carer support either by phone or in a carer's home.

Service development staff (dementia and residential respite) work with service provider networks to help them to better meet carers' individual needs and by organising information and support sessions for carers. These include Music Therapy workshops, Dementia Information sessions, Carers in Transition (from caring in the community to caring in an aged care facility) sessions and opportunities for carers to have a break with other carers and the people they are caring for.

Aged Team staff also manage the community information service, Carelink.

During the last 12 months the Carers@Work program supported 65 carers to juggle employment and caring for someone who is aged or has dementia by organising and brokering respite. This program brokered 5,493 hours of day centre based respite and 5,240 hours of in-home respite

"A big thank you for all your phone calls and chats throughout my association with the carers program. Your moral support and offers of assistance along the way have been invaluable. I really appreciate everything that you and your program have been able to provide me. It's been an absolute godsend."

In May, 14 carers attended two day retreat: having time out from their normal caring routine and participating in information sessions and activities with other carers.

Caring for someone with dementia who has challenging behaviours can be very difficult and can lead to carers feeling unable to continue to care within their homes. The Aged team identified the need for dementia behaviour assessments within the home and the development of strategies to support carers to manage these behaviours. Over the last three years the team has applied for funding to explore this model of carer support. In 2009 a project was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. As a result the Aged team is now able to organise in home dementia behaviour assessments and support carers to implement management strategies. Carers Victoria Respite Connections are one of a very few agencies in Victoria who are able to offer this model of support to carers. The outcome for many carers is reduced stress levels through strategies and support that they might never have thought of.

The Aged team supports carers with programs that improve their lives. We continue to review and improve our programs based on carers' feedback and program evaluations.



carer and community services - supporting family carers

A case study

A mother with a school aged child with very high needs was sent information about packages via DHS. She contacted the Respite Connections Disability team and was offered planning and supports to enable her to continue caring. Following our conversation, and with encouragement, she then re-called a previous service provider who 'listened' and provided even more respite support.

Respite Connections - Mental Health

The Mental Health team aims to support and raise the profile of carers and families of people with a mental illness. They offer support in a time of crisis, planning for the future and can assist with information, advocacy and referral. They are a team of six workers, all with mental health backgrounds and all with significant experience in working in Melbourne's west. Funding is primarily through FaHCSIA, with some funding from DHS.

This year, the Monthly Movie Club and the development of two Swim and Gym weekly programs in different parts of the region have been hugely successful, with a third Swim and Gym commencing in a few month times. The inaugural Men who Care group meeting was held and we have held three carer retreats for women.

These events provided carers with opportunities for learning to take care of themselves, enjoy the company of others and have time away from their caring responsibilities. But most importantly, they provide carers with a sense of belonging and knowledge that others share their often very difficult circumstances.

Funding from trusts and foundations was received to continue our work with communities who are transitioning from trauma. Many, if not all, families are dealing with mental health issues particularly in relation to Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome from life experiences in their home country or from years in refugee camps prior to arrival. We have been very involved in the Karen community living in Werribee and have eight of these women attending our regular Swim and Gym carer program.

In this financial year, \$166,000 of respite support was brokered for individual carers, \$35,000 was brokered to assist carer support groups and a further \$55,000 was spent on service development projects.

Funding for the Mental Health program will decrease by \$189,000 in the 2010-2011 financial year – presenting a significant challenge for the program to meet demand and build on the success of its community development projects.

Some of our success stories include:

- Supporting a carer to become a swimming instructor. He now has regular casual work: work he loves and can manage around his caring responsibilities.
- At a carer retreat one carer said "we had taught her to laugh again."

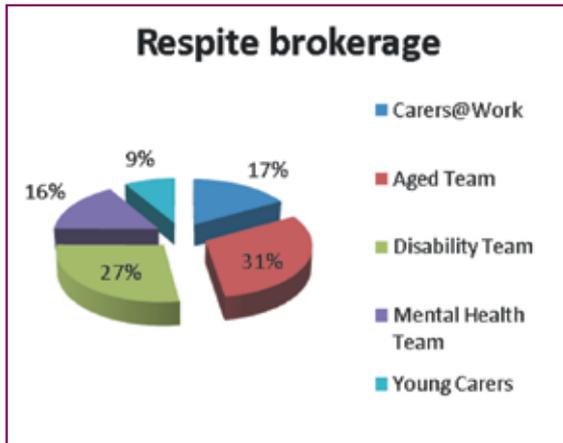
Respite Connections - Disability

The Disability team aims to support and raise the profile of carers and families of people with disabilities and chronic illness. They offer a range of supports to assist in the caring role at a time of crisis, to plan for the future and to assist with providing both direct and indirect respite, information, advocacy and referral. The team is comprised of seven staff with three workers specifically dedicated to the Older Families Support and Planning Team. This team assists family carers over the age of 65 who are caring for a person with lifelong disabilities.

The Disability team continued its involvement with the newly settled communities including attendance at African women's groups throughout the region and working closely with Spectrum (another Victorian Disability Service) who have a funded project to scope the disability needs within these communities. We also worked with Vietnamese carers who are not linked into the existing Vietnamese support groups.

The Disability team brokered \$275,000 for individual respite support, \$25,000 to assist carer support groups and a further \$57,000 for service development projects.

Marketing and promotion is problematic in the disability sector as demand exceeds our ability to respond - or respond in a timely manner. Within the disability sector there is no real throughput as carers continue to care and their needs often grow exponentially as the person they care for gets older, with each life stage presenting different challenges. There are growing expectations placed on service providers and families are no longer passive or unassertive. Complex issues for these families also places great stress on staff who are passionate about carers' needs and hugely aware of carer stress,



but constrained in their ability to respond because of limited resources.

"Thanks for listening, thanks for caring, making me think about myself, something I don't do."

Respite Connections - Young Carers

The Young Carer team aims to support and raise the profile of young carers and families in Melbourne's west. Primarily funded by FaHCSIA the team consists of two workers. They offer support in a time of crisis, can assist in strategies to assist carers to balance school and home responsibilities and can also assist with information, advocacy and referral. The team offers one to one support to young people and also group and social opportunities for fun and taking a real break.

- Approximately 70% of our young carers are caring for a family member, most commonly a parent with a mental illness.

- A further 10% are caring for someone with MS or similar neurological condition.
- Around 10% are caring for someone with acquired brain injury.

The 2009-2010 year saw a focus on internal communications including meetings with colleagues in the Education and Training team, the Counselling team, the Policy team and Corporate Services staff. A result of this work was the development of Carers Victoria's Principles of Working with Young People with Care Responsibilities. These principles will ensure inclusive practices when working with young people and has been fully endorsed.

Our limited resources, together with the popularity of tutoring services, have led the program to review how these services can best support young carers. This has resulted in the development of an Education Support Program that does not just focus on one to one tutoring (an exceptionally rewarding, but unsustainable program) but includes a group support and homework club, internet resources and a program of education workshops that tackle topics such as exam preparation, study time and self management. It is expected that these packages will vary with the grade level of the young carer, and support will increase with the increasing demands of school work. These packages will be introduced in semester two of 2010.

In 2009-2010, \$91,000 was brokered for individual respite support, and \$30,000 was brokered for carer sibling support groups. A further \$19,000 was spent on service development projects.

The funding for this program has not increased, except through the CPI increases, since its inception five years ago and demand for the service continues to grow.

A case study

A young carer with significant caring responsibilities for her father with schizophrenia was supported by the program and completed VCE in 2009 with a score of 99.75. She is at university this year studying commerce and business. Another young carer lost 23 kilos in eight months, with help from Respite Connections who paid for his gym membership. This young carer now has renewed confidence and resilience.

marketing, strategy and policy

positioning caring and Carers Victoria

The social, political and economic landscape of caring in Victoria is continually shifting and evolving. Staff in the Marketing Strategy and Policy stream work to ensure that Carers Victoria is able to respond to the changing climate, to better represent caring families.

Policy and Research

The Policy team consists of three policy advisers, a coordinator of carer consultations and an administrative assistant.

Their aim is to represent the needs of families and people with a disability or chronic illness to government policy makers and to service providers. They aim to improve access to support services, to financial security and to improve employment and community participation opportunities. By consulting with groups of family carers, our policy work is informed by issues from the coal face.

Highlights of this years work include:

- A strong focus on housing and support, particularly the urgent needs of many families of people with a disability or mental illness for supported housing. We have argued for better access to public and community housing and for better government planning and investment in housing and support services. The May Victorian Budget made some modest investments in this area.
- Promoting research concerning the needs of ageing parents of people with lifelong disabilities.
- Promoting the need for reform to the Guardianship and Administration systems to better support families of people with lifelong disabilities. The Government is yet to report.
- Supporting the establishment of a National Disability Care and Support Scheme. Imagine a system with sustainable funding to which

all citizens contribute. Imagine a guarantee of lifetime care.

- Work on a research project about the changes that are needed to help parents of people with a lifelong disability to participate in paid employment.
- The development of an election manifesto, fact sheets, tool kit and call to action for the Victorian election in November 2010.

The team also contributed to important achievements for carers, including:

- more flexible eligibility rules for Carer Payment (Child),
- big improvements to Special Disability Trusts,
- influencing eligibility requirements for the Carer Card, and
- influencing a variety of government reviews such as the Pension Review, the Henry Tax review, the Carer Inquiry, the state inquiry into supported accommodation, and reviews of young carer policy.

The team also developed an original discussion paper about the need to recognise interdependence in caring families and to end the separation of services for people with a disability and their families. We hope this paper will contribute to reforms in the sector.

This year the Policy team has prepared 27 major submissions, presented seven times to government

inquiries and hearings concerning key reforms, and participated on 19 reference groups to push the agenda for family carers. Together with the CEO they have lobbied many Ministers, Shadow Ministers and their Advisers.

Carers Victoria's research agenda is currently underdeveloped. Despite this, the team has directly undertaken two key pieces of research and supported 16 external research projects concerning caring families.

Membership

Carers Victoria's members help steer our organisation and contribute to our mission of making a difference for caring families. Membership and Fundraising is a small team of two staff and one volunteer who strive to provide an engaging and friendly service to our 5,891 members.

Membership consists of carers, former carers, interested persons, carer support groups and organisations. Ninety two percent of members are carers or former carers. Members are located in all regions across Victoria with 66% residing in metropolitan areas. Members support our work, with 73% offering to participate in research and 15% indicating interest in advocating for carers.

Carers Victoria membership has been steadily increasing with 1,632 new members registering this year, a growth of 13%. The increase in membership is predominately due to increased awareness of caring and Carers Victoria, combined with strong promotion by staff. We expect membership growth to continue as awareness of caring and support for carers increases.

This year we engaged with our members and the broader community at several events. In October 2009 we launched Carers Week with a reading of *Who Cares?* A play written by Roland Rocchiccioli. Over 600 carers, friends and supporters attended the event.

In May 2010, Carers Victoria hosted five Mingle events in Melbourne, Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Traralgon funded by a Carer Recognition Grant from FaHCSIA. A total of 656 carers attended the Mingle events, with the majority attending Mingle the first time. Among them were many who were not previously

linked into or aware of the services and supports available to carers.

Mingle 2010 was hosted by Roland Rocchiccioli, with entertainment from guest speaker Tracy Bartram. Information about Carers Victoria and Carers Victoria's election campaign was provided and local Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres hosted information desks to provide local respite information to carers.



"Thank you for doing this on a Saturday! I came and work and it is difficult to come during the week. Overall great - had a lovely time, please keep doing these - they are so beneficial - help us to unwind."

Speakers Bank plays an important role in furthering Carers Victoria's efforts to improve the lives of carers by providing real examples of a carer's life: an extremely powerful tool in promoting an understanding of carers' issues. Sixty five members volunteer their time in the Speakers Bank Program.

In 2009-2010, Speakers Bank members:

raised their needs and issues with Jenny Macklin, Federal Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at a function at Carers Victoria,

- helped promote the Victorian Government Carers Card by participating in the development of a DVD, brochure, and the official launch,
- shared their stories in our Carers in Victoria magazine,
- shared their experiences in a DVD for use in carer workshops,
- helped build Carers Victoria's Image Library by participating in photo shoots,
- presented to Carer Support Groups and mentored new carers, and
- participated in advisory committees and various media opportunities.

Fundraising

The Carers Victoria Fundraising team works towards creating a sustainable future for Carers Victoria. We do this by fostering support from individuals and businesses who share our passion for making a difference for caring families. The Fundraising team is a small team of two staff and one volunteer who also deliver the Membership and Speakers Bank Programs.

In 2009-2010, fundraising activities included:

Carers Circle. Twelve individuals have joined our Carers Circle indicating their great support for carers and the work we do at Carers Victoria by including a bequest to Carers Victoria in their will. We continue

to receive a steady flow of requests from supporters asking for information about making a bequest to Carers Victoria and continue to engage with these loyal supporters.

Trust and Foundations. We continue to foster philanthropic support for our work with carers. However due to increased demand and competition within the not for profit sector, this has been increasingly challenging. A total of \$74,000 was received this year, with the focus being on young carers programs: the WCF/Rotary Young Carer Scholarships and the Transitions from Trauma Project.

Direct mail appeals. We implemented two targeted campaigns in the past year in Christmas 2009 and Winter 2010, asking our supporters to donate towards a specific program. The focus of our appeals was an awareness campaign with a strategy focusing on general practitioners. Our campaigns this year raised a total of \$16,675, an increase of 23% from the previous year. Online campaigns will be launched in the coming year.

General donations from members and supporters. Both the number of individual supporters and the amount that they donated have increased by 40% this year. A portion of this is due to contributions from various community groups towards young carer programs. However the increase in both the number of donations (161 more than last year) as well as the value of the donations indicates strong support from loyal individuals who support Carers Victoria's mission.

In Memoriam. In Memoriam envelopes for loved ones to give donations at funerals was requested three times in the past year. This resulted in twenty-three donations totalling \$820 dedicated in memory of loved ones.

Community support. We have gained fantastic support from various community organisations in the form of donations and in-kind support for our work with young carers. Those groups include Rotary Club of Mt Eliza, Rotary Club of Cranbourne, Rotary Club of Dandenong East, Rotary Club of West Footscray, The Victorian Dragon Boating Association and the Country Women's Association.

Sponsorship. Sponsorship for our 2009 Carers Week event was gratefully received from Australian Unity, MECU and Southern Cross Care. However, due to tough economic times caused by the global financial crisis it has been a challenge to gain business and corporate support.

Pro bono support. Carers Victoria has been fortunate to have fantastic pro bono support from many businesses and individuals. This support totalled \$40,000.

In-kind support. Carers Victoria has received much in-kind support from businesses and individuals who value our work on behalf of caring families.

New Business

The Program Manager New Business manages the Carers Week Activity Grants Program and the Young Carer Scholarship program. The last financial year also saw a focus on supporting the governance functions of the Board.

Now in its fourth year, the annual Young Carer Scholarship program aims to help young people with caring responsibilities to continue their education and take part in social activities. This year 110 young carers were awarded with scholarships totalling \$46,397.26.

The scholarships create life opportunities through assistance with school fees and uniforms, school camps, tutoring, music and dance lessons, sports uniforms, driving lessons and text books. The scholarships help to relieve financial hardship at home.

Young carers actively take part in the program on the selection panel and give advice on how the program can be improved. The scholarships let teachers and service providers know about young carers' needs and are an effective way of helping young carers to link with services and supports.

The scholarship program's major partners are the Rotary Club of Mt Eliza and the WFC Thomas Charitable Trust. In addition, donations from the Rotary Clubs of Dandenong East and Cranbourne provided money for five scholarships and the Umina Branch of the Country Women's Association raised funds to provide for an additional six scholarships.

Carers Victoria also distributed Carers Week Activity grants to 199 carer support groups. Over 4000 carers across Victoria attended luncheons, pamper days, mystery trips, concerts and adventures, in celebration and recognition of the contributions that carers make to their families and the community.

Under the auspices of the Board Rules Review Working Group a major review of Carers Victoria's Constitution and Statement of Purposes has been conducted.

This work was undertaken to ensure that Carers Victoria's Constitution reflected the growth of the organisation, supported increased participation by the members and was compliant with recent changes

Case studies

- Gaining a qualification in shearing will give Shane a way of helping the family with an income. As a carer for his seriously ill father, Shane also takes responsibility for the management of the family's small mixed farm.
- Adrian is in year 7 and lives in the outer suburbs. He will see his first live game of AFL football. Adrian is the primary carer for his mother who is an amputee.
- Neville's scholarship will assist this 15 year old to keep up his involvement in scouts and football. As the primary carer of his seriously ill mother, respite opportunities such as this are extremely important.
- Therese is 15 and has cared for her autistic brother for 6 years. Therese's scholarship will pay for some school equipment and replace her glasses which her brother broke.
- Kevin is in year 8 and lives in the country. Kevin's brother has leukaemia and Kevin devotes most of his spare time to his brother's needs. This scholarship will give Kevin a chance to keep up his piano lessons. This will also help give some balance in his life.
- Anne is in year 10 and is the primary carer for her mother. A Young Carer Scholarship will pay for Anne's singing lessons and give her some time out while developing her singing talent.

to the Associations Incorporation Act (1981).

Prior to presenting the draft Constitution to members at a special general meeting, an extensive consultation process was undertaken with the members at several locations around the state.

Communications

The Communications team works to raise awareness of caring, and the profile of Carers Victoria through the provision of brand management, media relations, editorial services, design and print production.

Winning hearts and minds requires extending our reach to new and hidden carers, and to the broader community. Informed by the findings of market research conducted in June 2009 this year we targeted online platforms and GP clinics for the focus of our work.

In January 2010, work commenced on the development of a new website for Carers Victoria informed by feedback collected over the years from caring families. The new website will include:

- easy, intuitive access to information about Carers Victoria, how we can help and what we are doing to improve supports for caring families,
- information about other services and supports and advice on how to make the caring role easier,
- up to date facts, figures and research about caring and information about best practice in supporting caring families, and
- options for how people can support our work.

With a contemporary design and simple, intuitive navigation, the website will go live in July 2010. We will continue to build on packaging useful and current content to provide 24/7 access to relevant and useful information.

Our online presence is further enhanced by the re-development of our electronic newsletter. Voice: news for the caring community was launched in February 2010 with distribution reaching 2,183 subscribers by the end of June. Our election campaign was the focus of our Action eBulletin, launched in March 2010 and reaching 704 subscribers by the end of the financial year.

In 2010-2011, we will continue to build our online presence and provide more opportunities for carer engagement through the use of social media platforms.

The Carers in Victoria magazine continues to receive positive reader feedback with quarterly circulation figures reaching 9,000 copies. We aim to further improve content and design to ensure that it remains relevant, interesting and engaging to readers.

In 2008-2009, the Communication team developed a brochure for distribution across 560 GP practices in Metropolitan Melbourne, Geelong and Mornington Peninsula. With exposure to 2,600 GPs and 13.8 million patients annually, almost 20,000 of Carers Victoria's 'Sometimes carers need help too' brochures were taken up between July 2009 and June 2010.

This year the team produced a new corporate brochure, Carer Education brochure and a brochure for the new National Carer Support Services program. We also designed a suite of resources to support our state election campaign and produced a range of promotional products including: information cards, pens and fridge magnets.

The team also provided support to promote our programs and events through the development and distribution of media releases, advertising and community announcements.

Library

Our library is an information service for caring families and the professionals who support them.

This year, 127 people borrowed 1164 items. We answered 790 reference queries and carried out detailed research for other support organisations. This is an 8% increase from last year. Less people asked us for help but they asked us to do more.

In late 2009, we reviewed our library services. We looked at the cost-benefit of different types of services and surveyed different types of library users about what we do. The review showed that we need to focus on the provision of news and research of interest to caring families.

In 2009-2010, the library will continue to package useful and current information to include in our magazine, eBulletins, and on our website. We will continue to offer a free, Victoria wide library service for carers, former carers and carer support groups.



marketing, strategy and policy - positioning caring
and Carers Victoria



corporate services

building a strong
infrastructure

Staff in the Corporate Services stream work behind the scenes to ensure that the organisation can fulfil its mission. Efficient and effective services – Office Management, Finance, Human Resources and Information Communication Technology – are vital to support the functions of Carers Victoria.

Office Management

Office Management works to provide efficient and effective management of the organisation's fleet, building systems and amenities, resources including furniture and equipment as well as coordination of administrative staff and services. Office Management also oversees all front of house functions including reception, public amenities and information distribution services.

A team of four permanent staff work across the organisation.

In 2009-2010, Office Management continued to find ways to provide the organisation with the best infrastructure possible within funding constraints. We value our staff, our office and the way it looks and feels. To this end we:

- applied for and used grants and other one-off funding to make building and staff amenity improvements;
- monitored our office facilities and undertook repairs, maintenance and upgrades in a timely manner;
- monitored and maintained our fleet of vehicles, including coordinating repairs as necessary; and
- ensured appropriate security systems, fire

equipment services, cleaning services and office facilities were sourced, engaged and maintained.

Office Management recently launched our new look greening and ambience values. These value statements highlight our commitment to an environmentally friendly, aesthetic environment for staff – one that remains conducive to our core work of supporting carers in the community.

We pride ourselves on the excellent customer service provision of our administrative staff across our organisation. Regular meetings with administrative staff across all work areas ensure a consistent approach to customer service and provide opportunities for skill sharing and professional and team development.

Office Management continued to ensure continuity of support for programs through the management of the Carers Victoria casual admin bank. This initiative involves recruitment, training and resourcing of a team of three or four casual administrative staff who are highly skilled and proficient in Carers Victoria's administrative systems, processes and procedures as well as in a broader understanding of the work of Carers Victoria. Casual staff fill holiday and sick leave gaps and step in on those occasions when we have more work than people to do it!

Human Resources

The Human Resources team works closely with line managers and the executive to provide support in their human resource activities. This important function ensures that Carers Victoria offers the best possible employment experience for our staff while also maintaining a skilled and productive workforce.

The HR team keeps up to date with current legislative changes, HR trends and best practice in human resources; our skills and knowledge add value to the organisation. During the past year HR has continued to work on further developing the policy manual and associated information booklets for staff.

In 2009-2010, the HR team were kept busy with recruitment and staff orientation processes with twenty-eight new staff commencing at Carers Victoria, including the appointment of one returning former employee. The twenty-four resignations for the period are consistent with earlier trends. Resignations included two retirements and two due to the conclusion of fixed term contracts. Five casual staff also left the organisation during the year.

Carers Victoria encourages development opportunities through internal advertising of vacancies. During 2009-2010, seventeen staff members were appointed to new positions within the organisation.

Two staff were seconded to the Victorian Bushfire Crisis Project and continued to work in this capacity through to August 2009. Both have since returned to their previous roles at Carers Victoria.

As at 30 June 2010, Carers Victoria employed 107 staff of whom 33 were full-time, 66 were part-time and a further 10 were casual.

The HR team also supported the restructure of the finance team this year, including the addition of a new data entry operator position. This was achieved without any increase in funding being required.

We are pleased to report that, following enterprise agreement negotiations, the proposed new agreement went to vote on 6 August 2009 and was adopted unanimously. The new agreement has been lodged with Fair Work Australia and will be in force for a three year period.

As agreed during the enterprise agreement negotiations, a comprehensive review of the classification of positions within Carers Victoria has commenced. This key project is designed to ensure that, as a growing organisation, new and existing positions are well aligned, both internally and when compared to the sector and broader industry.

Carers Victoria is successfully maintaining a low risk workplace environment through active involvement by elected health and safety representatives (HSRs).

The HSRs have proactively promoted safe work practice amongst staff by attending team meetings and providing education at these forums. The OHS committee has overseen the work of the HSRs and collaboratively worked to improve incident reporting and feedback processes.

There were an average of three incidents a month and there was no increase in incident reports when compared to previous years. We have continued to provide ergonomic assessments for new staff upon commencement and for other staff where required. This has proved to be a very effective approach to injury prevention.

There were only two work cover claims during this year; both staff have since returned to full duties.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Our goal is to provide IT support for Carers Victoria: from network infrastructure, software, and email to internet connectivity and computer security. We advise on and deliver a range of IT services and technologies to improve service levels and meet our business objectives.

The two professional staff respond to computing and technical queries in a timely and efficient manner, supporting staff to access and use the tools they need to get their work done, and keep them productive.

The 2009-2010 year has proven to be a very busy one for the ICT Department.

A change of internet provider resulted in an improvement in internet speed and capacity for our organisation. While improved efficiency for staff is one benefit, the change has also enabled capacity for new work. One such project is the video conferencing pilot project, trialling a service which enables carers to communicate with counsellors through video conferencing.

This year the ICT team also set up a new email address for Carers Victoria (carersvictoria.org.au) which better aligns email addresses with the organisation's website address, thereby reinforcing the Carers Victoria brand identity.

The ICT team also played a significant role in the redevelopment of Carers Victoria's website, providing technical support for the infrastructure and backend systems.

In 2009, we engaged the services of an external provider to develop a counselling database. The work on this was completed this year and the counselling team have been utilising the additional capabilities provided to improve reporting and analysis. The

team has also been undertaking internal database development, including a database for the Education & Training team to allow staff to record relevant workshop information.

This year also saw the purchase of smart phones for all Executive Managers to improve communications when offsite, as well as updating the CEO's smart phone.

The team will continue to respond innovatively to the current and future ICT needs of the organisation, aware of internal program needs and external ICT trends and opportunities.

Finance

The finance team is responsible for ensuring that Carers Victoria meets both its operational and legislative accounting requirements, as well as supporting the organisation to remain viable and sustainable into the future.

As well as ongoing responsibilities including payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable and taxation matters, the team offers a comprehensive management accounting function, providing regular financial reports to all areas of the organisation and to the Board.

Finance works closely with the organisation's leadership team to assist with interpretation of financial results, developing and reviewing budgets, preparation of financial acquittals for funding bodies and maintenance of financial policies and procedures to ensure both legislative compliance and sound internal governance.

During the 2009/10 financial year, the strategic focus was on improving systems and procedures to

better support and inform Carers Victoria staff in an environment of increasing financial stringency. Key projects included a review of the organisation's cost centre structure and reporting framework to better align with funder reporting requirements as well as the introduction of a new budget process to facilitate increased input and understanding by program managers.

With an increasingly complex scope of work, the finance team also began implementation of enhanced software capabilities to support the improved management of assets, leave planning, staff information and timesheets. A comprehensive review of the legislative environment and internal financial procedures was also begun. Both these projects are expected to be completed by the end of the 2010/11 financial year, along with a range of new measures expected to be required as a consequence of new parental leave legislation and the anticipated introduction of portable long service leave within the sector.

treasurer's report



In 2009-2010 we operated in an environment of financial stringency from our main Government funders. As a result we have had to draw on our reserves to allow implementation of some key activities to maintain our services and support for carers. These reserves had been set aside in previous years for this eventuality. Overall there was a reduction in members' funds similar to that experienced in the previous year.

Operations for the year resulted in a loss of \$ 283,059 which was offset by a transfer of \$289,791 from our specific purpose reserve. There was significant capital expenditure of \$108,823 for computer and related equipment, largely drawn from our equipment replacement reserve. We continued to maintain this reserve through an allocation of \$82,153 resulting in the elimination of our accumulated surplus which now shows a deficit of \$822.

For the year there was a reduction in recurrent grants, a small increase in project grants, a 22.4 % reduction in carer discretionary funding (brokerage) and a welcome increased contribution from donations and sponsorships. Excluding this significant reduction in discretionary funding and expenses, all other income in total increased by 0.9% while all other expenses increased by 2.2%. The upshot was an increase in the net operating deficit for the year from 1.7% to 3.1%.

As shown in our balance sheet, liquidity as measured by the ratio of current assets to current liabilities remained satisfactory at 1.49, a small reduction from the previous year. In this difficult financial climate our efforts remain focused on preserving the sustainability of the organisation while continuing to provide the services and support which carers need.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'W. B. Chodziesner'.

Ben Chodziesner
Acting Treasurer

financial statements

INCOME STATEMENT

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2010

	2010	2009
	\$	\$
Income		
Grant Income	8,706,995	9,158,414
Income Generation	300,444	311,161
Other Income	106,422	101,222
	<u>9,113,861</u>	<u>9,570,797</u>
Expenses		
Salaries, Wages and Oncosts	5,854,685	5,396,168
Carer Discretionary Expenditure	1,850,478	2,352,354
Other Expenditure	1,691,757	1,988,677
	<u>9,396,920</u>	<u>9,737,199</u>
Net Operating Result for the year	<u>(283,059)</u>	<u>(166,402)</u>
Other Comprehensive Income	15,037	-
Total Comprehensive Income	<u>(268,022)</u>	<u>(166,402)</u>

STATEMENT OF APPROPRIATIONS

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2010

	2010	2009
	\$	\$
Total Comprehensive Income	(268,022)	(166,402)
Accumulated Surplus at Beginning of Financial Year	<u>22,445</u>	<u>43,407</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) Available for Appropriation	<u>(245,577)</u>	<u>(122,995)</u>
Fixed Assets Reserve Allocations		
Equipment Purchases	(108,823)	(71,599)
Equipment Disposals	1,795	18,465
Depreciation	80,358	101,011
	<u>(26,670)</u>	<u>47,877</u>
Other Reserve Allocations		
Specific Purpose Reserve	289,791	97,563
Equipment Replacement Reserve	(18,366)	-
	<u>271,425</u>	<u>97,563</u>
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit) at End of Financial Year	<u>(822)</u>	<u>22,445</u>

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2009

	2010	2009
	\$	\$
Members' Funds		
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	(822)	22,445
Total Reserves	1,287,067	1,531,821
	<u>1,286,245</u>	<u>1,554,266</u>
Represented by:		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,487,941	3,808,369
Sundry Debtors and Grants Receivable	174,189	90,626
Prepaid Expenses	37,678	25,501
Shareholdings	5	5
	<u>3,699,813</u>	<u>3,924,501</u>
Non-Current Assets		
Fixed Assets at written down value	228,456	201,785
	<u>228,456</u>	<u>201,785</u>
Total Assets	<u>3,928,269</u>	<u>4,126,286</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors and Sundry Accruals	1,080,305	1,145,702
Employee Benefits	686,914	512,085
Grants Received in Advance	487,826	680,659
Gift Fund	220,688	148,293
	<u>2,475,733</u>	<u>2,486,739</u>
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee Benefits	166,291	85,281
	<u>166,291</u>	<u>85,281</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>2,642,024</u>	<u>2,572,020</u>
Net Assets	<u>1,286,245</u>	<u>1,554,266</u>

thank you

Carers Victoria's achievements are made possible through the generous contributions and ongoing commitment of many. Your support proves to us that our work is valued and acknowledges caring as a community responsibility.

We extend our whole-hearted thanks to the following:

Our members – for their contributions, feedback and fabulous ongoing support for our work.

Our volunteers make a significant and valuable contribution to our work. Our thanks to Veronica Hassing, Zelma Riddell, Theresa De Gabrielle, Rick Massese, Darren Topp, and Lino Massese. We also thank the members of our Speakers Bank and the Victorian Young Carer Action Team.

Corporate supporters

Advanced Solutions International (ASI) • Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ) • Australia Post • Australian Unity • Blake Dawson • CG Publicity • City West Water Limited • Connex • Freehills • Greatconnections • Herald Sun • Hoyts Corporation • KPMG • Marriner Theatres • Natural Beauty Care Pty Ltd • Relay Australia • Tobin Brothers

Trusts and foundations

W.C.F Thomas Charitable Trust • Fred P. Archer Charitable Trust • Harold Moreland Oldham • Perpetual Trust • Charles Lamond Forrest • Portland House Foundation





And the following individuals:

Tracy Bartram • Bruce Bonyhady • Patricia Cameron-Hill and Shayne Yates • Ann Hicks • Tony Lang • Sonya Loke • Marie and Neil Lloyd • Kate Redwood • Roland Rocchiccioli • Sue Oakley of Susan Oakley and Associates

Community partners

ACTU • ADEC • Aids & Equipment Alliance • Alfred Health • Alzheimer's Australia Victoria • annecto • Arthritis Victoria • Association for Children with a Disability • Association of Independent Schools Victoria • Australian Greek Welfare Society • Australian Polish Community Services • Autism Victoria • Ballarat Health Services • Bapcare • Barwon Health • Bendigo Health • Brainlink • Brotherhood of St Laurence • Cancer Council Victoria • Canteen • Care with Quality • Carers Australia, and the National Network of Carers Associations • Catholic Education Office • Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc • CELAS • Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing • Centre for Multicultural Youth • Chronic Illness Alliance • Coalition for Disability Rights • COASIT • COTA Victoria • Country Women's Association – Toorak • Deakin University • Department of Education and Early Childhood Development • Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria • Filipino Community Council of Victoria • Fronditha • General Practice Victoria • Gippsland Multicultural Services • Hesta Superfund • Huntington's Victoria • Inspire • Kidney Health Australia • LaTrobe Community Health • Leadership Victoria • Leukaemia Foundation • Maltese Community Council of Victoria • MECU • Mental Illness Fellowship • Mercy Health and Aged Care • Migrant Resource Centres • Moreland Community Health Service • MS Australia • Musica Viva • National Disability Services • ourcommunity.com • Palliative Care Victoria • Parkinson's Victoria • Rotary Club of Cranbourne • Rotary Club of Dandenong East • Rotary Club of Mt Eliza • Rotary Club of West Footscray • Royal District Nursing Service • Serbian Community Association • Silver Circle • Southern Cross Care • Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre • Uniting Care Aged Care Network • Uniting Care Community Options • URCOT • VALID • VCOSS • Veterans Affairs Network • Veterans and Veterans' Families Counselling Service • Victoria Aboriginal Health Service • Victorian Carer Services Network • The Victorian Dragon Boating Association • Victorian Mental Health Carers Network • Vietnam Women's Association • Villa Maria • Western Suburbs Indigenous Gathering Place





Carers Victoria

Level 1, 37 Albert Street (PO Box 2204) Footscray VIC 3011

Phone: 03 9396 9500

Carer Advisory Line: 1800 242 636

Respite Connections: 03 9396 9550

Email: reception@carersvic.org.au

www.carersvictoria.org.au