



Annual Report

2017–18



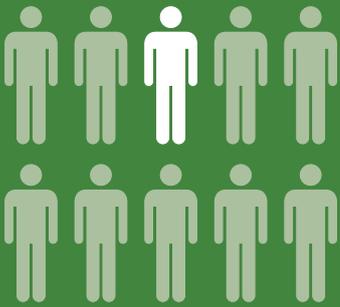
Key Carer Statistics

736,600

Victorians are carers



OR **12.5%**
of the State



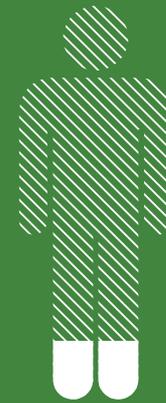
1 in 10

carers is under 25, with 272,200 young carers Australia-wide.



33%

of Australia's primary carers have been caring for more than a decade



12%

of Australians in the workforce are carers

Carers Victoria is recognised and funded as the leading body for carers and caring families in Victoria. We work collaboratively with Carers Australia and other State and Territory-based Carer Associations to represent, advocate and provide services on behalf of carers throughout Australia.

CEO & President's Report for 2017–18

The 2017-18 financial year was dominated by a program of intensive review and strategic planning as Carers Victoria positions itself to address major change to the State and Federal Government funding arrangements caused by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Aged Care reforms.

This back office strategic work, restructuring and appointment of a new CEO has enabled Carers Victoria to be well prepared to tender to provide services under the new Commonwealth Integrated Carer Support Service: Regional Delivery model. From July 2019, this new national model will direct carer supports and services across Australia. There will be 16 regions, of which Victoria has two – one metropolitan and one regional. We are now confident we are ready to expand the organisation and further grow and improve services to Victoria's 736,600 unpaid carers.

Victorian Carer Strategy

In July 2018 the Andrews Government launched Victoria's first whole-of-government Carer Strategy 2018-22. This highly anticipated Strategy follows three years of advocacy for improved carer supports and services. Importantly, it responds directly to Carers Victoria's extensive research funded by the State Government via State-wide carer consultations throughout 2017. The Strategy was launched by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Martin Foley and Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, Gabrielle Williams at Parliament House, with Premier Daniel Andrews in attendance.

The Strategy sets out a framework to better recognise and support carers in their own right. It has five priorities:

- Carers are recognised, acknowledged and respected
- Carers have better health and wellbeing
- Carers are supported in school, study and work environments
- Carers can access support and services that meet their needs
- Carers have less financial stress.

The Strategy outlines ways carers, peak organisations, service providers and communities will work with the State Government to address the priorities. At the launch the Government

announced an additional \$1.2 million in funding to support Carers Victoria, Tandem, Little Dreamers and the Support for Carers Program. The funds will provide extra respite, school holiday programs and supports for young carers, and extra supports for carers of people with a mental illness. There will also be updated information and resources, including help finding existing financial support, concessions and discounts available to carers.

Carers Victoria's funding will be dedicated to four projects focusing on:

- Upgrading the Everything Carers website and integrating it with the Carers Victoria website to facilitate easier, more streamlined access to information about carer supports and services
- Promoting available carer benefits
- Raising awareness of carer needs amongst health and medical professionals
- Leveraging the Mildura Carer Blueprint pilot project across other regions.

At the time of writing, Carers Victoria has had a major breakthrough. It was announced that a re-elected Andrews Labor Government would pledge \$49.5 million to increase respite and support services for carers. This would fund an extra 100,000 hours of respite care each year and expand the eligibility to include carers of people with a mental illness; \$4 million in grants for both grass roots and State-wide carer support groups, including young carers and LGBTI carers; and, half price travel on public transport all year round and free travel during National Carers Week.

These election promises will be welcomed by carers across Victoria if the Labor government is re-elected. In the meantime, it is the job of Carers Victoria to continue to advocate to all political parties for similar commitments for the greater good of carers.

Strategic Planning

Carers Victoria has developed its Strategic Imperatives for 2018-2019 to provide a framework for the organisation's direction over the next 18 months.

The shorter duration for this strategic plan is in consideration of the significant changes to Government funding models underpinning the organisation's delivery



Scott Walker
CEO
Carers Victoria



Sue Peden
President
Carers Victoria



Young Carer Michael Casha (centre) with his mother Vicky Casha (left) and Jacqueline Leorke, Executive Assistant Carer & Community Services at Carers Victoria's 25 year celebration at Government House.

of services and supports. As already mentioned, there is still much uncertainty surrounding the tender for the Regional Delivery Partners of the Integrated Carer Supports and Services.

Carers Victoria's 18-month Strategic Plan – '18 imperatives in 18 months' – has three main themes:

1. Raise our profile
2. Leverage our knowledge and resources, and
3. Ensure financial sustainability.

Each of the 18 Strategic Imperatives aligns to one of these themes and has a number of projects and programs which will be developed by teams across the organisation. To ensure we are successful in delivering on each of the '18 imperatives in 18 months', the Board will commit funds to cover any additional resources required to deliver within this timeframe.

Financial Performance

Carers Victoria's net operating result for the 17/18 financial year was a surplus of \$695,655.

Total revenue for Carers Victoria increased for the year from \$12.2 million to \$12.4 million. While overall Government grants saw a slight increase, other non-grant income was constant.

In response to this uncertain environment Carers Victoria has instigated some cost saving initiatives but more importantly, structured the organisation to cope with the possibility of a reduced funding base.

In the next 12 months Carers Victoria will tender for new services as they become available, including the Regional Delivery Partner component of the ICSS, as well as developing new and different ways of raising revenue.

Member Election Campaign

As we approach the Victorian State election on 24 November 2018, we have an opportunity to build awareness of our issues within each local electorate. With this in mind we have developed an Election Strategy to lobby for the needs of carers among all political parties and build awareness of our issues within each local electorate. In addition to Carers Victoria meeting with politicians across all parties, we will be calling on our members to lobby their local candidates.

In the background much work has been done to identify four themes for our systemic advocacy work, so we are well equipped to brief the political parties. Our themes closely mirror the priorities of the State Government's Carer Strategy:

- Recognition and value
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and employment
- Financial security.

25 Year Celebration

Last October 2017 Carers Victoria celebrated a significant milestone – the anniversary of 25 years supporting Victoria's carers. The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria, hosted a cocktail party at Government House which was attended by 120 guests, which included carers, long-servicing staff members, board members and people with a long association with the organisation. We were also fortunate to have Carers Australia President Peter Langkamp and Carers Australia CEO Ara Cresswell attend the event.

Merger

Carers Tasmania and Carers Victoria spent much of the last 12 months exploring the possibility of a merger to strengthen opportunities for carers in our two regions. Just prior to a Special General Meeting in September 2017, the board became aware of a potential risk of reputational harm in relation to the proposed merger. The Special General Meeting was adjourned to undertake further due diligence.

While the risk has now been averted, during the intervening period the Carers Tasmania board came to believe there was a strong possibility 75 per cent of members present at a Special General Meeting would not vote 'yes' to the merger, so they reluctantly withdrew from the proposed merger.

This aside, both boards are committed to building on the positive relationship forged over the past 12 months and will continue to explore collaborative ways of working to strengthen the voice of carers in advocating for and providing ongoing support services.

Governance

In July 2018 the board announced the appointment of a new CEO, Scott Walker, who had joined Carers Victoria as General Manager, Business Support in April 2016 and served as Interim CEO for 10 months. Scott has more than 20 years' experience in community-based organisations and the board has absolute confidence in his ability to lead Carers Victoria's future success representing, advocating and providing services on behalf of Victorian carers.

Wesa Chau resigned from the Carers Victoria board in August 2018. Wesa joined the board in 2012 and has provided invaluable guidance and leadership over the years. Carers Victoria thanks Wesa for her contribution and wishes her all the best.

Just as we were signing off this Annual Report we received some sad news about the recent and unfortunate passing of our past President and Board member, Wolfgang (Ben) Chodziesner. Ben joined the Carers Victoria Board in 1997 and became President of Carers Victoria in 2004. Ben retired from the board and Presidency of Carers Victoria in 2010 and became an Honorary Life Member of Carers Victoria. Ben also joined Carers Australia's board in 2000 and was President of Carers Australia from 2005 – 2007. Ben retired from the Board and presidency of Carers Australia in 2007.

Ben guided Carers Victoria from its small beginnings to the vibrant and growing organisation it is today. On behalf of the board and staff, we would like to thank and acknowledge Ben's tireless passion, enthusiasm, commitment and drive for leading Carers Victoria over many years. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Honorary Life Members

Honorary life membership recognises special contribution to Carers Victoria and this year the board has great pleasure in nominating board member Mary Anne Noone and carer Maree Grover.

Mary Anne Noone has been a member since 15 November 2002 and

Annie Hayward, General Manager – Policy, Strategy & Public Affairs at Carers Victoria (left) with nominated Carers Victoria Honorary Life Member and former Chair of Carers Victoria Carer Advisory Group, Maree Grover (right).

a board member since 2005. In these roles she has provided strategic advice on a number of board/committee issues over the past 12 years, most recently the National Transformation project and the proposed merger of Carers Victoria with Carers Tasmania.

Maree Grover has been a member since 12 May 2014 and Chaired the former Carer Advisory Group from October 2014 to December 2017. Maree was a member of the Speakers Bank, now Carer Champion program, and has participated in carer research, spoken on behalf of Carers Victoria at the Office of Public Advocate launch of Supported Decision-Making resources, provided real life experience input to Carers Victoria policy submissions and participated in media engagements.

In closing

Across Victoria, more than 736,600 carers give their time, effort and love to look after a family member or friend who needs them. Carers make a significant contribution to the Victorian economy and community, and to replace them would cost an estimated \$15 billion per year.

We acknowledge and thank our volunteer board and the 91 members of staff who work tirelessly to support carers so they can participate socially and economically and have the best health and wellbeing possible.



Carer and Community Services

Strong demand continues for specialist carer support

Carers Victoria believes in building capacity and improving carer wellbeing. By adopting a positive, strength based empowering model of service delivery we aim to ensure carers receive support which reflects their choice and is appropriate to their circumstances. Carer services are delivered on a short to medium term basis, with referral pathways to local services providing opportunity for ongoing supports within communities.

During the 2017/2018 financial year Carers Victoria received more than 20,000 calls from carers across the State. Our local partnerships and our *Carers ID* referral program continue to support us in reaching out to more than 3,000 new carers this year. Demand for specialist services remains strong with over 1,000 carers seeking support in the Western Metropolitan region and nearly 5,000 counselling sessions delivered across Victoria.

Focusing on carer mental health and wellbeing

Inaugural Carer Counselling Conference

Carers Victoria was proud to host the first *National Carer Counselling Conference* in Melbourne in October 2017. The theme was 'Diverse Work in a Specialised Field – Counselling Carers in Practice' and featured keynote speaker, Susan Beaton, a psychologist with 30 years' experience in suicide prevention. Counsellors, support practitioners, researchers and policy-makers came together to explore carer issues, common themes and diversity.

Delegates shared practice, ideas and case studies through plenary sessions and interactive workshops; received sector-specific updates on systems change affecting carers, such as Aged Care, Mental Health reforms and the NDIS and increased their knowledge about counselling carers.

The Conference was a resounding success, with strong counsellor support to make this a regular, biannual event. Carers Victoria thanks the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Carers Australia for sponsoring the Conference.

Carer Sanctuaries

Carers Victoria's specialist Carer Counselling team has been delivering Carer Sanctuaries every year since 2013.

The Carer Sanctuary is an intensive two-day residential which provides a safe place for carers to express and explore the varied and unique experiences and impacts of the caring role. The program aims to:

- Enhance carers' self-awareness and sense of connectedness through sharing personal experiences with peers in similar situations
- Improve carers' confidence and capacity to promote and protect their own mental health and wellbeing.

In 2017-18 a Counselling Sanctuary was delivered in collaboration with Alfred Health Carer Services. Common themes included identity, life's purpose, self-care and wellbeing, and relationship conflict.

"Personally, my mental health has not been good. Too much grief, loss, sadness, frustration to manage for one person. I honestly believe the strategies that we have shared have been beneficial, listening to each person's account of their experience. I can return home to my caring role, parent, spouse, family member with renewed energy, greater focus, new strategies and a belief that I've made a new association with Carers Victoria and Australian Home Care Services that will continue."

One hundred per cent satisfaction was reported from participants, with carers reporting the following outcomes:

- I have given myself permission for one hour's rest daily
- I'm delegating tasks
- I have put support people in place
- I have extra skills in my kit bag like Mindfulness
- Since the Sanctuary the change for me was having a coffee by myself for the first time ever in 29 years.

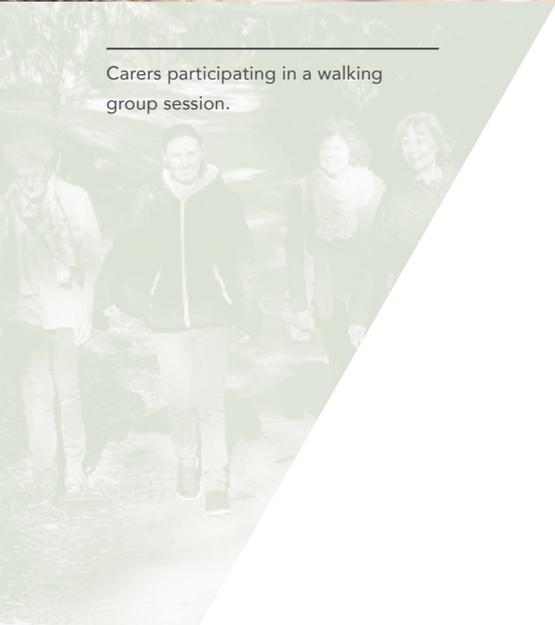
"Great to be so specifically focussed - means I actually learnt and thought a lot (more than other broader conferences)."

"Congratulations on such an excellent conference! I found the day professionally enriching and enlightening. The focal points of best practice, relevant research, and celebrating our shared wisdom enabled us to embrace ways to make a difference to clients."

"Thank you guys. It was educational and it gave me so (much) insight to what is out there to be more relaxed and how to look after myself better ... I've really enjoyed these."



Carers participating in a walking group session.



My Daily Dose: Self Care for Carers

My Daily Dose, Self Care for Carers is a new online community hosted in Facebook. Established in February, the online community has grown to over 300 members and offers practical ideas and advice on how carers can find ways to take care of themselves while maintaining their busy lives. Using a combination of live videos, discussion, links and resources, *My Daily Dose: Self Care for Carers* provides a supportive community and a gentle reminder that carers need to look after themselves too.

Mind the Step – an early intervention group program

Carers Victoria is working in partnership with the West Victorian Primary Health Network and a wide range of regional and local services to develop, trial and evaluate an early intervention program for carers at risk of poor mental health resulting from stress, anxiety or depression. *Mind the Step* is a three-session group program which will run in October and November in the regional towns of Geelong, Ballarat, Horsham and Warrnambool.

Strengthening Carer Peer Support Groups

Carer Support Group Facilitator Network

Peer support forms a backbone of the supports available to carers across Victoria. While many groups are run by services, the vast majority are dependent on volunteer peer facilitators. Countless carers work tirelessly to keep their groups in operation, providing a space where carers and families can connect with others on a similar journey.

Carers Victoria's connections with hundreds of Carer Support Groups across the State reveal many facilitators operate their groups in isolation, without the benefit of a network of peers to collaborate and share ideas experiences and successes. To address this gap, Carers Victoria launched the Carer Support Group Facilitator Network initiative early in 2018. The State-wide Network aims to connect group leaders with each other and with a central hub of information and resources.

Group leaders representing more than 150 Carer Support Groups across Victoria came together through a series of informal lunches, 'Peer Possibilities Carer Conferences' and the 'Carer Peer Support Collective' online community.

Partnering with local communities

Carers Victoria has developed collaborative partnerships with local councils in Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Melton, Werribee and Moonee Valley. These partnerships provide the opportunity to raise awareness of carers in these municipalities and develop engaging activities to support carers and provide respite in their caring role.

Five-week carer activity program

Highlights from the year include the co-design of a five-week activity program for carers with Brimbank City Council which comprised gardening, yoga and cooking classes. This program enabled carers to learn new skills, develop connections, reduce social isolation and improve their overall wellbeing.

Walking groups promote physical health, new learning and social connections

Development of walking groups in partnership with local councils in the Werribee and Moonee Valley regions has supported the promotion of monthly physical activity, along with the opportunity for carers to link in with guest speakers and gain knowledge on their chosen topic. Fourteen walking group sessions have occurred with 89 carers attending. These walking groups are established and have regular attendees which demonstrates the value these groups have in reducing social isolation.

Aspiring Artists Calendar

The Aspiring Artists Calendar 2018 showcased the artwork of carers from a local art group. The Calendar promotes monthly social, educational and counselling workshops organised by Carers Victoria.

Carers want to 'live local'

Caring responsibilities frequently leave little time for carers to connect with their own communities. The *Living Local* program was developed in response to feedback from older carers residing in the Wyndham region. *Living Local* provides carers over 65 years of age with an opportunity to take a break from their caring role, while being introduced to local facilities they may not know about. This group has enjoyed 10-pin bowling, laughter therapy, cooking and art classes, gardening and the informal peer support that comes with shared activities and experiences.

"Thank you very much for organising an event like this – I love that someone thinks of us carers and I love having a break like this and I love meeting other carers."

Building on this success, we look forward to establishing a similar program in Brimbank in the coming months.

Talking Taboo

Following the success of Carers Victoria's inaugural *Women's Forum* in 2017, Carers Victoria held a *Talking Taboo Forum* for women, hosted by Sally Cockburn (aka Dr Feelgood).

The Forum was well attended by 64 carers who had the opportunity to hear guest speakers from the following organisations – No to Violence, Thrive Rehab, Relationships Australia Victoria and Family Planning Victoria. Difficult and confronting topics were presented and discussed in a thoughtful and considerate way.

Carer education needed more than ever

Carers Victoria's Education Services Team has developed and delivered approximately 30 different education workshops to carers over the last 12 months. The aim of the workshops is to increase carers' resilience, capacity and knowledge to support them personally and in their caring role.

With over 470 workshops attended by 11,871 participants, the workshops have successfully ensured carers are supported and informed about the ever-changing nature of the caring landscape.

The range of workshops included programs to educate carers on accessing and working with systems such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and My Aged Care.

With the roll out of the NDIS and the changes to the aged care system, our practical and informative programs have been well attended. The knowledge and skills gained have ensured carers and their families are well prepared and best placed to maximise the opportunities offered by our services. Along with other individual workshops, such as 'Relax and Unwind', 'Music and Self Care' and 'Surviving Carer Stress', the carers' feedback shows the design and execution of these workshops has provided interesting and engaging content while socially connecting participants.

Feedback shows our workshops consistently achieve our aim to improve the wellbeing of carers. Carer comments such as 'feel empowered', 'very helpful and I will put it to use', 'very informative',

'felt uplifting', 'useful to share with other people's experiences' and 'thought provoking' are regularly seen on feedback forms.

Our Education Service Team also provides training and education to leading service providers to increase awareness of carer issues and build sector capacity to respond to carers' needs. During 2017-18 we continued our partnering with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to inform and support carers prepare for and transition to the NDIS. We continued our education in-services for Department of Health and Human Services group home staff, building awareness of the family perspective, strategies for effective and sensitive communication and strategies to manage their own wellbeing, professional boundaries and work stress. These workshops are an important means of building staff expertise and commitment to the welfare of residents/clients by developing a partnership approach with families.

"This workshop got the message to the whole group and was fantastic. I now have an understanding of what is required when dealing with families."

"I feel more confident about putting into practice what I learnt today at work. It is vital to help me perform well at work."

Our comprehensive training and attendance at community events and exhibitions ensures the voice of carers is being heard, recognised and valued, both in the community service environment and in the community.



Carers Victoria staff hosting an information stall at the VCOSS Conference.

L-R: Service Manager – Aged and Older Families Programs Anita Craike, Service Manager – Operational Support & Service Development Sheri Tedesco, Carer & Community Services Advisor Vivienne Ritsikos.

Everything Carers has been superb at promoting many of the things happening in Wyndham. This is a great avenue for promotion for any of your events/activities.
– Wyndham Disability Support Network

Thank you, it's like a breath of fresh air. BTW (by the way), we received the Plans for both our lads yesterday 😊😊

Everything Carers

Everything Carers is a website which brings together local caring news, information about peer support groups, local service providers and information and advice about the topics carers need to know about.

Everything Carers makes it easy for carers to find out about the services, supports and events available in their local area. With news contributed by over 200 organisations across Victoria, this year Everything Carers has cemented its role as the online place to go to find carer specific supports. It is also proving to be an exceptional tool to enable our partner organisations reach the carers in their community:

Supporting carers to navigate the NDIS

NDIS Carer Advisory Service

As the NDIS Rollout has progressed, Carers Victoria identified an emerging need among families transitioning to the NDIS. While workshops provide valuable information to assist hundreds of families prepare for the NDIS, we found many families needed more in-depth support, particularly those who have English as a second language or have low literacy skills. In response to this need and with the support of the Victorian Government's Transition Support Package, Carers Victoria has developed the NDIS Carer Advisory service. The specialised service, staffed by two people with lived experience of supporting a family member transition to the NDIS, provides individual support to carers who are having trouble navigating transition to the NDIS. Since launching in December of 2017, the service has supported 176 carers.

NDIS Carers Online Facebook Group

Carers who are supporting someone to transition to the NDIS now have access to the NDIS Carers Online community. Hosted in a Facebook group this community has brought together over 1700 carers and families of people with disability. The Group offers both a structured online learning program that has been conducted twice in the year, and ongoing discussion, peer support and advice from those that have walked the road before.

Supporting the transfer of disability respite

DHHS Support for Respite Families Program

Carers Victoria is working with the DHHS to assist and support carers through the transition of Short Term Accommodation Assistance from DHHS to the new providers.

Through the second half of 2018, families impacted by the transfer will be able to attend tailored workshops exploring how respite services will work under the NDIS. They will also have access to individual advice through the NDIS Advisory service and an online resource hub hosted on Everything Carers.

Case Study

Carers Victoria has been supporting Mary* over a five-month period. Mary first presented in great distress over her experiences with trying to understand and access the NDIS for her 8-year-old son. She indicated a reluctance to proceed with the NDIS. Low literacy levels, no computer or internet access and limited transport options impacted on Mary's capacity to access and understand information and complete the written documentation required by the NDIA.

The NDIS Advisor provided intensive support to Mary, including how to access the NDIS, lodge a complaint and connect with a specialist advocacy service.

Through the assistance of Carers Victoria's NDIS Advice service Mary was able to gain early access to the NDIS for her son. This resulted in Mary having the opportunity to engage community access support for her son so he could begin to develop social connections outside of the family home while Mary had more time to attend her own needs. Mary was also supported to access carer specific supports such as counselling and respite to assist her rebuild her capacity.

*Mary is a fictitious name to protect the carer's privacy



Community Engagement



Young carer Sofia with her award certificate.

Mildura Carer Blueprint Pilot

The highlight of the second year of the Mildura Carer Blueprint pilot project was the December opening of Carers Victoria's first regional office by the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, Gabrielle Williams.

With an 18-month Work Plan underway to respond to gaps in carer services and supports in the areas of information provision, transport, housing and community initiatives, other program highlights included:

- Engagement of a Mildura Carer Blueprint Project Coordinator
- An average of 28 carers per day visiting the 'Carers Hub' – open two days a week – for meetings and seeking information about local carer supports and services
- The appointment of two volunteers
- An on-site meeting with the Nationals Member for Lowan, Shadow Minister for Country Health and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Emma Kealy MP and the Nationals Member for Mildura, Peter Crisp
- Six meetings of the Steering Group
- A professional development workshop for the Steering Group, and
- A bi-monthly newsletter to local carers in the Mildura region.

Carers Victoria thanks Bendigo Health for sponsoring the pilot project and the volunteer members of the Steering Group – carers Sandra Summerton, John Purcell, Jan Cecchi and Don Laity; service providers Leanne Rahmel, Amanda Kilaris, Suzette Toepfer, Shane Johnston and Sharon Lavery; Jeni Snadden and Belinda Fitzgerald from Mildura Rural City Council; and Bertilla Campbell from Dementia Australia Vic. We also thank our dedicated volunteers, Lee Farmilo and Wendy Vanek.

Membership

Carers Victoria's current membership is 7,489, an increase of 4.9 per cent from the 2016/17 financial year. The continued growth of 895 new members is attributed to marketing and promotional activities.

National Carers Week Activity Grants

The National Carers Week Activity Grants were awarded to 142 Carer Support Groups across Victoria. The Grants help over 3000 carers participate in celebrations or activities during National Carers Week, ranging from outings for carers to relax and have a day off to activities which raise awareness of carers and caring in local communities.

Young Carer Scholarships

The 2018 Young Carer Scholarship Program awarded 184 scholarships totalling \$51,750 to young people with caring responsibilities. Young carers are empowered to utilise their scholarships in a variety of ways to positively impact their lives. Community-based activities to provide respite, peer networking and support opportunities are crucial to sustain the mental health and wellbeing of young carers.

Carers Victoria hosted the Young Carer Scholarship Award Ceremony in July. Ninety young carers and their families attended the Ceremony at The Mantra Bell City in Preston. Carers Victoria Board President Sue Peden and Good Shepherd Microfinance Innovation Project Lead Jo Baldwin awarded the certificates and Carers Victoria Ambassador and former young carer, Michael Casha, made a speech.

Carers Victoria thanks The Barr Family Foundation, Sue Fincham, Carers Victoria members and major gift donors for supporting the Young Carer Scholarship Program.

Mingle Program 2017/18

The 2017/ 2018 Mingle Program saw 650 carers come together at events in Werribee, Geelong, Bendigo, Phillip Island, Burwood, Sunbury and Sale.

The theme was 'Ride the waves of life and discover some magic at Mingle'. Carers were entertained by Carers Victoria staff who explored the concept of 'riding the waves' and managing stress using Mindfulness. Carers were also treated to some magic with acclaimed female magician and mentalist, Cath Jamison.

Over a light lunch carers met and mingled with other local carers and chatted to Carers Victoria staff and local service providers. The Mingle Program is designed to help carers learn about

services and supports, meet new carers, learn about health and wellbeing strategies and feel recognised and valued as carers.

We were delighted to have VIP guests, Gabrielle Williams MP, State Parliamentary and Secretary for Carers and Volunteers Julia Banks, Federal Member for Chisholm at the Burwood Mingle event; Rob Mitchell, Federal Member for McEwen at the Sunbury Mingle; and Maree Edwards MP, State Member for Bendigo West and Chris Kelly, Manager Community Wellbeing from City of Greater Bendigo at the Bendigo Mingle.

Carers Victoria would like to acknowledge and thank the Bass Coast Shire Council, Wyndham City Council, City of Greater Geelong, Hume City Council, Wellington Shire Council, Whitehorse City Council and generous donations from our members and supporters for their support of the Mingle 2017/2018 Program.

Carer Holiday Program

Carers Victoria's Holiday Grant Program was developed in response to the generosity of two anonymous donors who specifically requested the funds be directed towards giving some deserving carer families a holiday.

Carers Victoria members and current carers were asked to explain in 300 words or less their caring role and how they would benefit from a holiday. We received an overwhelming 310 applications from carers who generously shared their stories. The Carer Holiday Program Selection Panel nominated 15 successful applications worth \$2,000 grants.

Carers Victoria CEO Scott Walker (centre) with Julia Banks, Federal Member for Chisholm (left) and Gabrielle Williams MP, State Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers (right) at the Burwood Mingle event.

Odonate Gala Ball

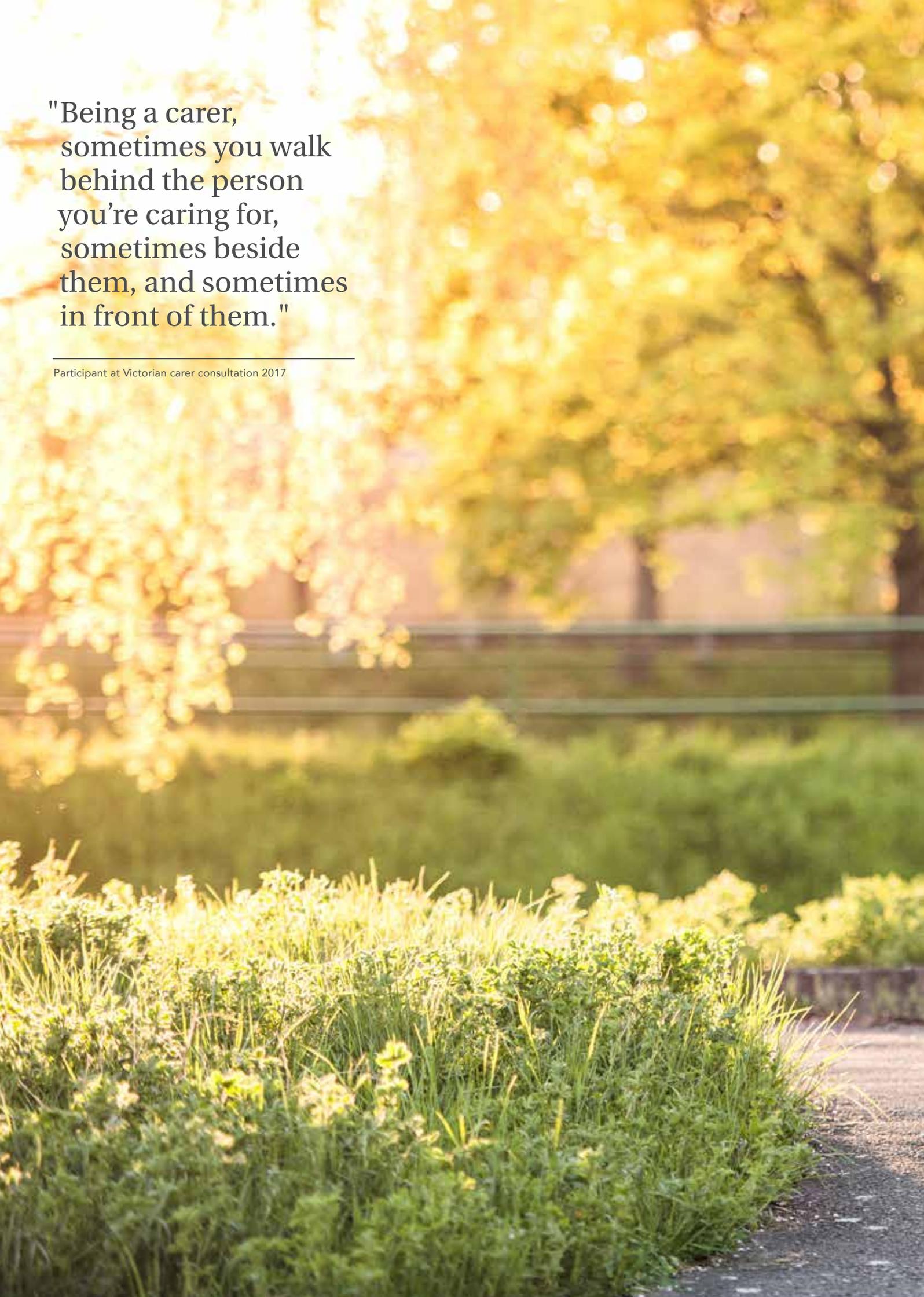
The Odonate Gala Ball was held on Saturday 26 May 2018 in Ivanhoe. The Ball was initiated by the Odonate Foundation with the goal of raising funds to support and assist young carers. Collingwood Football legend Tony Shaw performed as MC and Auctioneer. This included an on-stage discussion with Victorian Young Carer Action Team member Shaan D’Rosario to help the audience understand the role of young carers. The Odonate Gala Ball was a resounding success much enjoyed by all.

Carers Victoria would like to thank the major sponsors of the Odonate Gala Ball, Ability Financial Planning, Magic Hand Car Wash and Secon Freight Logistics, as well as all those businesses and individuals who donated and attended this fantastic event. We would especially like to thank the Odonate Foundation Board for their tireless work, volunteering many hours to aid young carers – Chairman Brian McKenzie, Tiziana McKenzie, Mardi Solomon, Paul Barbuto, Rosemary Assetta, Craig Ryan and Kristopher Meuwissen.

Thank you to our volunteers

- Community Engagement volunteer and Carers Victoria Life Member – Veronica Hassing
- Carers Victoria, Mildura Carers Hub volunteers – Lee Farmilo and Wendy Vanek
- No Interest Load Scheme volunteers
 - Nhi Lam
 - Prithi Bharati
 - Lynn Trinh
- IT volunteer
 - Sai Pavan





"Being a carer,
sometimes you walk
behind the person
you're caring for,
sometimes beside
them, and sometimes
in front of them."

Participant at Victorian carer consultation 2017



Policy and Research

The Policy & Research team had a year of both constancy and change, preparing 16 State Government submissions and participating in consultations on key issues for carers. As a member of the National Network of Carers Associations' Policy Working Group, the team was a key contributor to a number of national submissions.

July 2017 commenced with team members on the road in regional Victoria, conducting the final carer consultations to prepare a comprehensive report for the State Government. At the time the findings were to inform the development of a Victorian Carer Statement; however, last October the State Government announced the findings would inform a whole-of-government Victorian Carer Strategy. The Strategy, launched by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Martin Foley and Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers, Gabrielle Williams in July, sets out a framework to better recognise and support carers over the next four years.

Greater access to carer support groups, financial services and transport, and better identification and help for young carers are the key pillars of Victoria's first whole-of-government strategy recognising the important role of carers.

At the launch Minister Foley announced the Labor Government will invest an initial \$1.2 million for extra respite, school holiday programs and support for young carers, as well as more support for carers of people with a mental illness.

Carers Victoria welcomes the five priorities outlined in the Strategy:

1. Carers have better health and wellbeing
2. Carers are supported in school study and work environments
3. Carers can access support and services that meet their needs
4. Carers have less financial stress, and
5. Carers are recognised, acknowledged and respected.

Pleasingly, elements of these priorities are closely reflected in the priorities which Carers Victoria advocated for in the 2018 pre-budget submission:

1. Invest in a whole-of-government Victorian Carer Strategy
2. Maintain unique Victorian carer support services and address unmet need, and
3. Ensure carers of all ages have equitable access to education and workforce participation.

Research

The policy team responds to many requests for carer participation in research. Shaping the future direction of research concerning carers and care relationships remains a priority.

Carers Victoria's first Research Agenda – 'Valuing Unpaid Care' was launched in July 2017. The Research Agenda 2017-2020 outlines three broad research themes:

1. The social contribution of care
2. Quality of life for carers
3. Supporting carer capabilities.

Carers Victoria welcomes approaches by prospective research partners with project proposals addressing these three themes. Carers Victoria is currently working with Deakin University to validate three carer Quality of Life measures in the Australian context.

Projects

Carers Victoria received funding under the Family Violence Initiative to develop resources and strategies for elder abuse prevention within care relationships. Once signed off by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), we hope to launch these resources later in 2018.

Systemic Advocacy

Consumer-directed care and supported decision-making continued to be major themes of our policy work. The team continues to actively participate in the National Network of Carers Association Policy working group and hosted a two-day face to face meeting at Carers Victoria in July. Carers Victoria presented on emerging issues in NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation and on carers of older people and consumer-directed-care.

In preparation for the Victorian Election on 24 November 2018, the team prepared an online survey to inform our election platform. Over 700 carers responded. The team also supported partner organisations in the development

of pre-election platforms, including COTA Victoria, Mental Health Victoria (formerly VicServ) and VCOSS.

Conference presentations

The Policy & Research team presented at a number of conferences during the 2017/18 reporting period:

- Monash University seminar on 'Overcoming the challenges of managing chronic diseases in persons with dementia'
- The 7th International Carers Conference in Adelaide 4-6 October 2017 on:
 - Literature review: Carers of older people and consumer directed care
 - Experiences of carers of LGBTIQ people living with mental illness
 - The challenge of Australia's NDIS for carers – obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and comparisons with the UK and Norway.
 - A Caring Mildura – a partnership approach to creating a town that cares
 - Panel presentation on the NDIS and carers with senior staff of the National Disability Insurance Agency
 - Pre and post conference symposia on Conceptions of care: feminist approaches and gendering care with Professor Sue Yeandle (RMIT University) and Social Justice & Caring in Later Life with Dr. Alisoun Milne (Swinburne University).
- The Australian Association of Gerontology conference in Perth in November 2017.

Early in 2018 the team prepared several abstracts and has received confirmation of presentations at the following conferences:

- Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference in Melbourne, July 2018
- National Ageing Research Institute Annual Seminar, October 2018
- Australian Association of Gerontology Conference, November 2018.

With outcomes of the legislated review of aged care reforms, ongoing issues with NDIS implementation and planned call for tenders for the Integrated Carer Support Service model, our team work plan for 2018/19 promises to be just as full as this year.

List of submissions

Title of Submission	In Response to
Carers Victoria Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS): Adult Change Facilities Response sheet	Australian Building Codes Board Consultation RIS that considers the impact of the inclusion of adult change facilities in new Class 6 shopping centres and new Class 9b assembly buildings
Carers Victoria submission on Unintended consequences of the NDIS for Victorian carers	Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet NDIS Implementation Taskforce
Carers Australia submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry on National Disability Insurance Scheme Costs	Productivity Commission Inquiry on National Disability Insurance Scheme Costs
Carers Victoria submission on Integrated Carer Support Service: Regional Delivery Partners: A draft regional delivery model	Department of Social Services Discussion Paper on Integrated Carer Support Service: Regional Delivery Partners: A draft regional delivery model
Carers Australia Submission to the Aged Care Financing Authority on Respite Care	Submission to the Aged Care Financing Authority Respite Care Consultation
Carers Australia submission on Specialist Dementia Care Units	Submission to the Department of Health Consultation Paper: Specialist Dementia Care Units
Carers Victoria's Pre-Budget submission 2018-19	Victorian Government Budget
Carers Australia submission on Redesign of Dementia Consumer Supports	Department of Health Consultation Paper: Redesign of Dementia Consumer Supports
Carers Australia submission on Future Reform – an integrated care at home program to support older Australians	Department of Health Discussion Paper: Future Reform – an integrated care at home program to support older Australians
Carers Australia submission to the Joint Standing Committee inquiry into NDIS Transitional Arrangements	Parliament of Australia Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS
Carers Victoria and Carers Queensland joint submission on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Quality and Safeguards Commission and Other Measures) Bill 2017	Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
Carers Victoria submission on Rights in Specialist Disability Accommodation	DHHS Rights in Specialist Disability Accommodation Consultation Paper
Carers Victoria's submission on Development of Victorian Health Complaint Handling Standards	Health Complaints Commissioner Discussion Paper on Development of Victorian Complaint Handling Standards
Carers Victoria Issues paper on Recognising Carers as Service Users in Mental Health Data	DHHS revision of guidelines on data collection via the Carer Experience Survey and the Your Experience of Service survey
Carers Victoria submission on Young Carers and Career Advice Activities in Victorian Schools	Victorian Parliamentary Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee inquiry into Career Advice Activities in Victorian Schools
Carers Victoria submission on NDIS Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA) Pricing and Payments Framework	NDIS Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA) Pricing and Payments Framework Review

Financial Report

Carers Victoria continues to monitor changes to the funding landscape as both the Federal and State Governments review distributions to the community sector.

Changes which have and are expected to have a direct and material impact on future revenue streams include the NDIS and Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS). While the NDIS transition is taking longer than first expected, the ICSS tender process for the new Regional Delivery Partner model – an important carer services component of the ICSS – has been announced as a 1 September 2019 start up.

Carers Victoria’s net operating result for the 17/18 financial year was a surplus of \$695,655.

Total revenue for Carers Victoria increased for the year from \$12.2 million to \$12.4 million. While overall Government grants saw a slight increase, other non-grant income was constant.

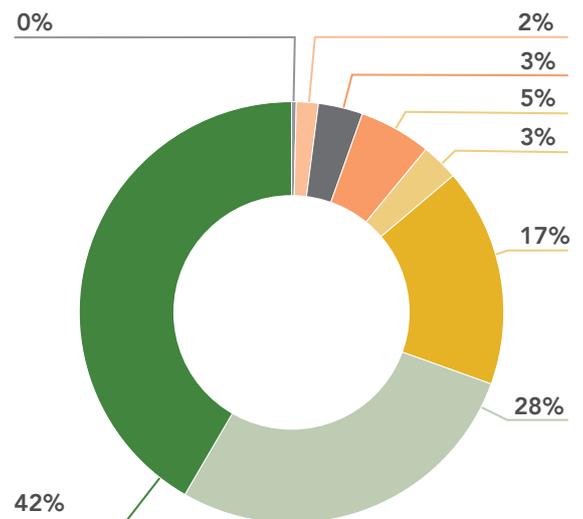
In response to this uncertain environment Carers Victoria has instigated some cost saving initiatives but more importantly structured the organisation to better cope with the possibility of a reduced funding base.

In the next 12 months Carers Victoria will tender for new services as they become available, including the Regional Delivery Partner component of the ICSS, and also look to develop new and different ways of raising revenue.

The Carers Victoria financial report is available upon request. Please email finance@carersvictoria.org.au

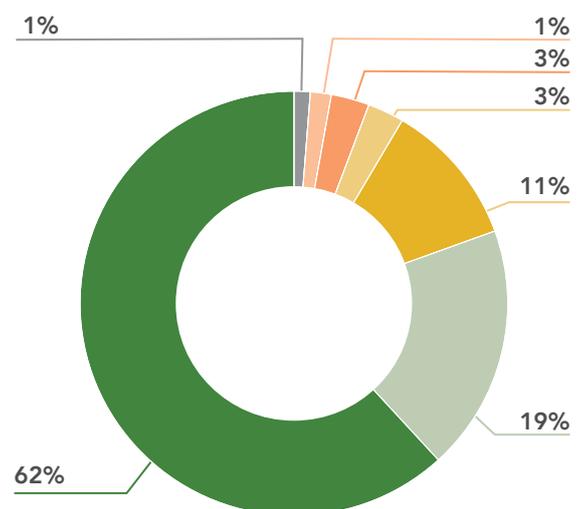
Income

Donations	44,577
Sponsorships	207,245
Grants for Special Projects	420,302
Other Income	681,245
State Brokerage Income	353,788
Federal Brokerage Income	2,078,025
State Government Grants	3,455,244
Federal Government Grants	5,162,107
Total	12,402,533



Expenses

Vehicle and Travel Expenses	143,976
Consultants Fees	185,238
Rent and Rates	338,973
State Brokerage Expense	322,001
Other Expenditure	1,287,751
Federal Brokerage Expense	2,194,177
Salaries, Wages and Oncosts	7,234,762
Total	11,706,878



Committees, Groups and Acknowledgements

Carers Victoria is committed to being a strong voice on behalf of carers within the community. We are active members of the following groups and committees.

HealthWest Partnerships Management meeting	National Network CEO Meetings (teleconference)
West Metro Alliance	National Network President & CEO Meetings
Aged Care Quality Agency Liaison Group (Vic)	NDIS Expert Advisory Group
Commonwealth Home Support Program Carer Programs Victorian state-wide Network	RMIT Partnership
North West Metropolitan Region Primary Care Partnership Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Project	Victorian Council Of Social Service (VCOSS) / RMIT Future Social Service Institute Board
Committee of Management of the Chronic Illness Alliance	State Trustees Australia Foundation Ageing, Disability and Mental Health Collaborative Panel
Commonwealth / Victorian Governments CHSP Community Care Advisory Committee	Supporting Cross-Sector Learning and Development Steering Committee
DHHS Victoria's End of Life and Palliative Care Framework Implementation Advisory Group	VCOSS Peak & State-wide Networks Forum
Ethic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) aged care and policy sub committee	NDIS Expert Advisory Group
Family Safety Victoria Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group	VCOSS Ageing, Disability and Mental Health Collaborative Panel
National Ageing Research Institute START online research project advisory group	DHHS Mental Health Carer Partnership Dialogue
National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) advisory group – Care at Home Reform Advisory Group	ECCV Health Policy Subcommittee meetings
NACA advisory group – My Aged Care Gateway	Tandem (Mental Health Carers) Network meetings
National Supported Decision-Making Network	Tandem NDIS and Mental Health Working Group
Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Group	Ten Year Plan Lived Experience Leadership Reference Group – Lived Experience, Engagement and Integration
Victoria Police Seniors Portfolio Reference Group	Safewards Community of Practice (commencing 2018) – Office of the Chief Mental Health Nurse, DHHS Carer and Consumer Guidelines Working Group
DHHS Mental Health & Carers Victoria	Working with Families and Carer Practice Guidelines Working Group – Mental Health Branch – Health and Wellbeing Division, Department of Health & Human Services
Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee	Victorian Transcultural Mental Health Working Group
	North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network LGBTI Suicide Prevention Trial Working Group

NWMPHN Voice of the Consumer Advisory Group	Wyndham Network Meeting
State Trustees Foundation Collaborative Panel Promoting the Exercise of Consumer Control & Choice Project	Western Health Education Best Practice, Clinical learning environment framework Working Group
Chronic Illness Alliance Peer Support Workers Network Meeting	Aged Care Teachers Network
Department of Health and Human Service's Participation Advisory Committee	Northern Dementia Alliance
Department of Social Services Subject Matter Expert Working Group re Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services (SME)	Subject Matter Expert Group for Service Skills Organisation – Skills IQ
Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership Executive Management Group Meeting	National Policy Working Group
National Carer Counsellor Register Working Group	National Commonwealth Ombudsman Disability Complaints Handling Forum
National Programs Network Meeting (Carers Australia)	National Road Trauma Institute Invite only Forums
State Trustees Stakeholder Reference Group	Office of the Public Advocate Policy and Research Advisory Group
Victorian Carers Services Network	TAC / WorkSafe Disability Service Reform Working Group
National Quality Working Group	Victoria Police Disability Portfolio Reference Group
No Interest Loan Scheme Provider Network	NDIS Implementation Taskforce (ITF)
HealthWest Community Engagement Network	NDIS ITF Housing Working Group
Living Positive Victoria, Senior Voices Project Reference Group	NDIS ITF Complex Needs Working Group
Matrix Guild – LGBTIQ Youth Service Providers Network	Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia (GALFA)/ VALID: LGBTIQ disability self-advocacy project advisory committee meeting
National LGBTI Carer Services Network	NDS Research Advisory Group
National LGBTI Health Alliance – LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care Advisory Committee	'Thanks a bundle': Making telecommunications services more accessible for people with decision-making impairments Advisory Board
Rainbow Network – LGBTIQ Youth Service Providers Network	Hobson's Bay Inter Agency Network
Val's Café – Aged Care Service Providers Network	Hobsons Bay Communities That Care Steering Group (youth specific)
Maribyrnong Network Meeting	Melton Service Provider Network
	Western Dementia Action Alliance
	Health Literacy Alliance (HealthWest)
	Space4Us Young Carers Working Group
	Young Carers Network (Carers Australia)



Board

Sue Peden – President
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Guy Carvallo
Charles Hardman
Callum Ingram
Mary Anne Noone

Contact details

ABN 12 533 636 427
ARBN 143 579 257

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

Carer Advisory Line: 188 242 626

Email: reception@carersvictoria.org.au

Social Media: @CarersVictoria

carersvictoria.org.au

