

Annual Report 2015–16



21,985

carers connected with services and supports through the Carer **Advisory Line**

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Victorian Carer Support Groups

3,865

counselling sessions provided to carers

48,907

interactions between carers or others on behalf of carers and Carers Victoria support services

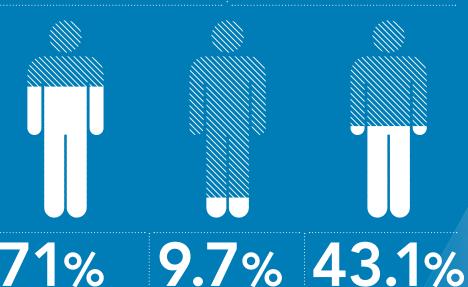
6,925 **Carers Victoria members**

7,957 carers attended Education Services events

Carers in Victoria

774,000 217,800

carers in Victoria providing unpaid care to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, addiction or who is an older person with care needs Victorian carers are considered primary carers



of all Victorian carers are under the age of 25 years over the age of 65 years

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of Victorian primary carers

are female with 432,100

women and girls having caring responsibilities

> Carers Victoria Inc (Carers Victoria) is incorporated under the Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC).

of all Victorian carers are

Supported by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Visit www.dss.gov.au for more information. Carers Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria is recognised and funded as the leading body for carers and caring families in Victoria.

We work collaboratively with Carers Australia and the other State and Territory-based Carer Associations to represent, advocate, and provide services on behalf of carers throughout Australia.

CEO & President's Report for 2015-16



There has been major change and transformation within the social services sector during the last financial year as a result of the Australian Government's reform agenda. The focus has largely been on preparing for the phased rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) from 1 July 2016, as well as moves to consumer directed care in aged care.

The Australian population is ageing. The 2015 Intergenerational Report cites the number of Australians aged 65 years and over will more than double by 2054-55 compared with today; this means that by 2020 there will be fewer people to provide care, as well as a declining propensity to care.

As Victoria's peak body representing the voice of Victoria's 774,000 carers to State and Federal Governments, we know there is much uncertainty among carers regarding the changes to service delivery.

To address growing anxiety, confusion and uncertainty, Carers Victoria has boosted carer engagement programs and service delivery during the reporting period.

Carer Engagement

One highlight of the year has been the delivery of Carer Information Roadshows in five regional and rural centres, aimed at promoting NDIS-readiness and preparing carers for consumer directed aged care.

Over 400 carers attended 10 information sessions in Shepparton, Ballarat, Horsham, Benalla and Mildura. We invited local service providers and arranged exclusive briefings from senior National Disability Insurance Agency representatives to provide current information regarding the Scheme and also respond directly to carers' questions.

Since late 2015 Carers Victoria has been helping carers prepare for the NDIS through our Disability Support Organisation peer support workshops. 18 peer support groups meet monthly to actively plan and prepare for the NDIS. In total we have run 127 sessions and the program has been attended by 312 carers. A pleasing 96 per cent of carers report they feel better prepared to exercise choice and control in accessing services and supports after participating in the program.

In other major community initiatives, over 1,000 carers attended our popular Mingle events in Mildura, Caroline Springs, Ballarat, Cranbourne, Bairnsdale, Bendigo, Wangaratta, Geelong, Warrnambool and Melbourne. With the theme of health and wellbeing, carers were treated to a relaxing and fun day of respite.

Carers Victoria also established the inaugural Carer Advisory Group this year. The group comprises 10 carers with a variety of 'lived caring experiences' who provide feedback to the Leadership team regarding Carers Victoria's services and supports to ensure we are fully focused on being current, authentic and relevant in all we do for carers.

As this Annual Report goes to print, a concerted membership drive has resulted in growing the membership base to 6,925 carers. In addition, we continue to map Carer Support Groups across Victoria and have identified 516 groups, of which 269 groups are members and receive regular updates about our work.

Strategic Priorities

Carers Victoria remains focused on the five priorities set out in our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan:

- 1. Creating the place to go for all carers
- 2. Supporting more carers and building their capacity to care
- 3. Maximising and leveraging our expert knowledge of carers and caring
- Increasing community awareness and engagement to improve outcomes for carers
- 5. Being viable, sustainable and able to grow.

Following the timely and necessary investment in our ICT systems and processes in previous years, Carers Victoria has delivered a planned surplus of \$253,316 as at 30 June 2016.

While the tight fiscal situation experienced in FY15 continues in FY16, we are pleased to report we will maintain the majority of our Commonwealth and State funding until 2018. However, we remain in no doubt some of the key national reforms in disability, mental health and aged care will impact on both Carers Victoria and the National Network of Carer Associations.

We will continue to monitor this situation closely and look for new ways to diversify our funding model, alongside planning for the expected decreases in funding at the end of June 2018 as the Government changes or ceases contracts.

Further Highlights

In addition to strengthening carer engagement, we are pleased to report we have made significant progress on key programs:

- Interacting with carers and others on behalf of carers 48,907 times through our support services
- Linking 21,985 carers to our support services through the Carer Advisory Line and Helpdesk model
- Lobbying State Government to develop a whole-of-government Statewide
 Victorian Carer Strategy to recognise and support carers in the aged care, disability and mental health reforms
- Contributing to the National Network of Carer Associations' submission on Integrated Carer Supports
- Delivering nine policy submissions
- Completing the first phase of an online Carer Portal, 'Everything Carers'

- Expanding our eLearning modules to six, including 'Communicating with Professionals', 'Supporting Your Ageing Parents', 'Give Me A Break', 'Young LGBTIQ Carers', 'Planning in a Changing Environment' and 'Carers ID' – a video for service providers
- Awarding 135 Young Carer Scholarships
- Signing a lease agreement for a Carers Cottage in Officer, Victoria, to provide respite opportunities for carers
- Maintaining accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence and DHS Standards
- Offering No Interest Loans to 31 carers across Victoria.

Increasingly, information systems for carers are transitioning to a digital format, with more and more information only available online. We are responding to this by developing online tools to supplement face to face contact and to assist carers in navigating the complex carer support system.

As part of a national network, Carers Victoria works closely with Carers Australia and the State and Territory Associations to strengthen and support our governance, advocacy, policy and research, program delivery, marketing communications, operating systems and national tender applications. This year we have been meeting more regularly to ensure carers remain at the forefront of everything we do.

Finally, thank you to the Board members and 123 members of staff who work tirelessly on your behalf.





David Bartlett President Carers Victoria

Cushin Mula

Caroline Mulcahy CEO Carers Victoria



Services



Carers Victoria continues to deliver services across Victoria, collaborating with regional and rural service providers to ensure all carers can access as much support as possible.

In 2015/16 Carers Victoria continued to provide support to carers through information, advice and emotional support, practical services such as respite, equipment, activities, counselling, financial support and education.

Across the year we had 48,907 interactions with carers and others contacting us about carers, from across the State. We registered 4,022 new carers who had not previously received support from us, and provided services to 3,086 of these new carers.

The year has seen carers needing information, support and guidance regarding the major reforms underway in the disability, ageing and mental health sectors. In response to this, we have developed new education programs and resources to ensure that we can meet the needs of carers in relation to these changes.

Carer Advisory Line

Carers Victoria's Access team responded to 21,985 calls to our Carer Advisory Line (1800 242 636). Our streamlined model of support has seen call response times lowered, with the majority of calls being answered in under 45 seconds.

The line continues to be staffed by tertiary qualified advisors who provide professional, empathetic and considered support to carers requesting help.

Counselling

Carers Victoria's counselling program continues to be in high demand. We have provided 3,856 sessions of counselling to carers – through individual and group sessions – face to face, over the phone and by video. We also delivered our Counselling Sanctuary again this year, with excellent outcomes. The Sanctuary is a three day intensive residential counselling program for a group of up to 12 carers. The program is delivered in a relaxing location combining intensive sessions with relaxation and wellbeing sessions, silent bush walks, art activities and other entertainment. The feedback is consistently excellent.

Education Services

Carers Victoria's Education Services team delivered 436 education sessions across Victoria to carers and service providers. We continue to enhance and refine the workshop material to ensure relevance and effectiveness in our workshops. The feedback from carers and service providers alike is overwhelmingly positive and indicates strong learning and development though participation in our programs.

Western Respite Services

In conjunction with our Statewide services, Carers Victoria delivers the services of the Commonwealth Respite Centre and State-funded 'Support for Carers' program in Melbourne's Metropolitan West.

Our Carer Support teams provide planning, practical and emotional support, arrange respite and provide other services to ensure carers can take time out and receive the assistance they need to maintain their caring role.

We have provided a number of group events for carers across the year also. Our movie clubs, education workshops and outings all provide opportunities for peers support, learning and respite for those who attend.

Young Carers

The guidelines for the Young Carer Respite program were reviewed this financial year, refocussing the program on supports that assist young people with caring roles to remain in secondary schooling. Our program is adapting to this change – and finding ways to ensure that the flexible range of supports available to Young Carers is not negatively impacted.

Our Victorian ANYCAT (Australian National Young Carer Action Team) representative attended the ANYCAT meeting in Brisbane in May 2016. Young carers came together to consult on plans for the National Young Carer Information and Support program for the coming year.

Better Start

We continue to provide the Registration and Information Service for the Better Start for Children with a Disability initiative. Children under six years who are eligible for the initiative are registered with the program and receive funding for therapies and equipment to assist them to reach their potential. We also provide 'Moving Forward' workshops for parents of children due to exit the Better Start program – to assist them to identify next steps for support for their child and themselves. This is becoming increasingly important as the program and clients transition across to the NDIS.

Operational Support and Information Distribution

Our Operational Support team assist service delivery by providing specialist administrative support to the programs. Operational Support staff coordinate events, arrange the purchase of respite and external counselling services, ensure invoices are processed, and maintain service provider information in our client management system.

We provide information resources to carers in hard copy – and increasingly by electronic means. Our Information Distribution team conducts research to identify new resources that may be helpful to carers and are able to provide a tailored information pack to meet specific requests. As we further develop 'Everything Carers', our new Victorian carer portal, we will be able to provide much of this information as self-serve for those carers who prefer this method of obtaining information.

Membership

Carers Victoria's total current membership is 6,925, an increase of 5.5 per cent with 750 new members since last year. This growth is attributed to marketing and promotion at various events throughout the year.

Communications and Social Media

Carers Victoria maintained regular communication with the community, service providers and carers through our well-established quarterly 'Carers News' magazine, monthly 'Voice' ebulletin, our website and via social media.

Our social media engagement continued to gain momentum with an increase across all platforms over the past 12 months.

- 2,566 Facebook Likes
- 2,989 Twitter Followers
- 342 LinkedIn Followers
- 53 Young Carers Facebook Likes
- 83 LGBTIQ Facebook Likes

A total of four enewsletters were distributed to 270 Carer Support Groups across the State during 2015/16.

Mingle Events

10 Mingle events were held across Victoria in Mildura, Bendigo, Wangaratta, Cranbourne, Bairnsdale, Caroline Springs, Geelong, Warrnambool, Ballarat and Melbourne. A total of 1,073 carers attended Mingle events in 2015, which is an increase of 25 per cent from the 858 carers who attended one of the 10 Mingle events in 2014.

A major emphasis of the Mingle program was to promote health and wellbeing for carers and to reduce social isolation. The Mingles again proved extremely successful. Most were completely booked out in advance and carers had to be placed on waiting lists. The majority of carers who attended Mingles rated the events positively and identified the following as benefits; increasing connectedness, learning about new services and supports, meeting new carers and feeling valued and recognised as a carer.

Information Roadshows

In 2015/16 our Engagement team undertook a restructure which included the development and introduction of two new positions. Our Carer Consultation Coordinator and Events Officer were pivotal in developing and rolling out the Information Roadshows. From April to June, 10 Information Roadshow events took place across regional Victoria. Locations included Shepparton, Ballarat, Horsham, Benalla and Mildura.

These events were designed to explain upcoming disability and aged care reforms to carers. The morning events focused on readiness for the NDIS and included a keynote speaker from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). The afternoon events dealt with aged care and consumer directed care.

Over 400 carers attended these Roadshow events and excellent feedback was received. Carers felt the events were beneficial and were pleased to have the opportunity to speak directly with members of our Leadership team. Carers were also grateful for the opportunity to ask questions of the NDIA representative.

Young Carer Scholarships

135 Young Carer Scholarships have been provided to deserving young people with caring responsibilities. These scholarships provide young carers an opportunity to participate in activities that enhance skills and educational abilities or help them participate more fully in their community.

Planning for the Future



Throughout 2015/16, Carers Victoria continued to develop new products, programs and services to support carers and to raise awareness of and respect for carer roles in the wider community.

Phase One development of our Victorian Carer Portal 'Everything Carers' was completed and Phase Two commenced with funding from both State and Federal Governments. 'Everything Carers' is due to be launched in early 2016/17.

Carers Victoria was successful in bidding to become funded as a Disability Support Organisation through the NDIA to support carers to transition to the NDIS through peer support and education. In 2015/16, we identified 10 initial carer groups who would participate in a 10-part peer support program. The program combines formal education workshops and informal peer support discussions to assist in developing the knowledge and skills required for smooth transition to the scheme. It is anticipated that following these 10 planned sessions, the carer groups will continue to meet, provide and receive peer support and be able to assist new group members in their own preparation for the NDIS. Interest in the DSO groups and the workshops is tremendous.

Our Carers ID program continues to grow with 30 referring partners generating 689 referrals through the Carers ID webpage across the year. We have trained an addition 100 service provider staff in the identification and referral of carers.

We received funding from the Victorian Electoral Commission to deliver training to carers of people with a disability who are eligible to vote in Government elections. This training teaches carers how best to support the person they care for when exerting their right to vote. The program is being delivered in the lead up to the local council elections in October this year and will be evaluated subsequently.

"Thanks so much for your organisation. One does not feel isolated."

Burnie R. Carer

"Your organisation has done such a wonderful job and been so supportive over many years. For this we all thank you."

Alice D. Carer Support Group Facilitator

Policy & Research

In early 2016, Carers Victoria delivered our Pre-Budget Submission 'Take Action for Victorian Carers' to the Victorian Government in the midst of ongoing reforms across the services sector. Roll out of the NDIS, moves to consumer directed care in aged care and recommissioning of community mental health services continue to demand advocacy for the needs and concerns of carers. The enduring commitment of Victorian carers amidst these service delivery changes deserves both recognition and respect.

Carers Victoria identified three priorities for the 2016-17 Victorian budget:

Priority 1: Development of a whole-ofgovernment Statewide Victorian Carer Strategy.

Priority 2: Ongoing investment in carer identification, tailored information and advocacy.Priority 3: Continued support of carer specific services and programs.

Carers Victoria was pleased to see funding in the budget for:

Continued work with universities and researchers. Research projects included:

- A \$2.0B increase in health funding including mental health services
- \$132 million to assist people with a disability and their families to get ready for the NDIS.

This additional funding will assist some Victorian carers in their caring role. However, once again the Victorian Budget contained no additional funding for carer-focused supports. Carers Victoria persisted in our advocacy with members of parliament and departmental staff to support a Victorian Carer Strategy to guide carer focused services and programs.

In June 2016 Carers Victoria was a major contributor to the National Network of Carer Associations submission to the Australian Department of Social Services Draft Service Concept for Integrated Carer Supports. Further consultations on development of a national service delivery model will occur throughout 2016-17.

Our advocacy continued in 2015-16 through written submissions and representation at public forums, conferences, advisory panels and committees. Carers Victoria continued to work closely with universities and researchers. Research projects included:

- Supporters of people diagnosed with MS
- Survey of older people's understanding of epilepsy and epilepsy management
- Caring for people diagnosed with bipolar/substance use disorders
- Investigating needs, gaps and barriers to mental health care for mothers of children with a disability
- Ageing well at home: caring for the carers of individuals with dementia
- Health literacy in residential aged care
- RACV mobility beyond driving project
- RDNS enabling wellbeing by providing choice project
- Role balance among working women with multi-generational caring responsibilities
- COTA consumer engagement in aged care project
- Supporting female carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- Processes that facilitate selfdetermination for people with intellectual disability
- Resilience in the face of parental mental illness
- Older women's right to be safe at home and in care
- Physical activity and mental wellbeing of older carers
- Self-stigma in parents of children with emotional and/or behavioural disorders
- Equitable support for individuals with mental and intellectual impairments in consumer transactions
- Investigation of NDIS implementation through the roles of the organisations involved
- Survey to estimate a replacement cost for mental health carers in Australia
- Engagement of older people with consumer directed care
- Development of a smartphone application for carers of people with cancer.

We are the voice for carers on a State and Federal level; working towards an Australia that values and supports carers.

Our 2015/2016 Submissions

Title of Submission	In response to	
Carers Australia's Submission on Behalf of the National Network of Carers Associations on Designing the New Integrated Carer Support Service, June 2016	Australian Department of Social Services Draft Discussion Paper Service Concept for the Delivery of Interventions to Improve Outcomes for	
	Carers	
ILC Commissioning Framework Consultation Draft, April 2016	The NDIA's Draft ILC Commissioning Framework	
Victorian Gender Equality Strategy Consultation Paper, March 2016	Victoria Government's Consultation Paper 'Gender Equality Strategy'	
Laying the Foundations: Setting Objectives and Identifying Needs for Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy, March 2016	Infrastructure Victoria's Paper 'Laying the Foundations: Setting Objectives and Identifying Needs for Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy', February 2016.	
Take Action for Victorian Carers Pre-Budget Submission 2016–17, February 2016	Victorian Budget	
Multi Purpose Taxi Program Review, December 2015	Victorian Taxi Directorate Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP)	
Carers Victoria's Response to Victorian Government's New Youth Policy Discussion, November 2015	Victorian Government's New Youth Policy Discussion	
Carers Australia's Submission: AHA Review of Commonwealth Aged Care Advocacy Services Options Paper, September 2015	AHA Review of Commonwealth Aged Care Advocacy Services Options Paper	
Carers Victoria's Submission: Victoria's Next 10-Year Mental Health Strategy Discussion Paper, August 2015	Victorian Government's Discussion Paper 'Victoria's Next 10-Year Mental Health Strategy'	
Carers Victoria's Submission: Inquiry into End of Life Choices, August 2015	Parliament of Victoria Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues Inquiry into End of Life Choices	
Carers Victoria's Submission: Residential Tenancies Act Review 'Laying the Groundwork' Consultation Paper, August 2015	'Laying the Groundwork' Consultation Paper released in June 2015	



Financial Report



Carers Victoria braved a financially challenging year with lowered interest rates and continued pressure on labour and non-labour costs. However, our net operating result for the 2015-16 financial year was a surplus of \$253,316.

Total revenue for Carers Victoria increased for the year to \$11.8 million. Government grants were retained and a slight gain in brokerage funding and other non-grant income was received.

Both total revenue and total expenditure grew over the year, however expenditure increased at a slower rate. This was due to stringent cost saving initiatives and efficiencies for non-labour expenditure.

Carers Victoria will continue to monitor possible changes to the funding landscape as both the Federal and State Governments review distributions to the community sector. The recent move toward consumer directed care within the disability, aged care and mental health sectors is likely to have a significant material impact on revenue.

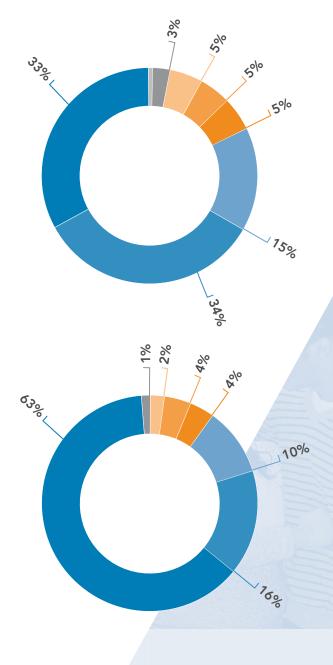
It is anticipated government funding will be shifted from Carers Victoria and given directly to care givers and their care recipients. As a result, Carers Victoria will need to respond to carer needs in new ways and with new, innovative products and services.

Carers Victoria is establishing strategies such as connecting with business partners, to support proposals that will tender for new services as they become available.

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

Income	2015/2016
Donations	55,703
 Sponsorships 	322,549
Grants for Special Projects	587,418
Other Income	558,358
State Brokerage Income	598,813
Federal Brokerage Income	1,836,830
State Government Grants	3,995,133
Federal Government Grants	3,884,836
Total	11,839,640

	Expenses	2015/2016
	Vehicle and Travel Expenses	154,221
•	Consultants Fees	246,029
•	Rent and Rates	462,341
•	State Brokerage Expense	429,901
•	Other Expenditure	1,184,931
•	Federal Brokerage Expense	1,825,774
•	Salaries, Wages and Oncosts	7,283,127
	Total	11,586,324



Acknowledgements

Our advocacy and representation means that we are invited to represent carers on a number of advisory committees and working groups including the following:

- Advisory board for the project, 'Establishing equitable support models for individuals with mental and intellectual impairment/s to engage in consumer transactions'
- Dealing with it Myself Research Advisory Group (Multicultural Centre for Women's Health)
- National Policy Advisory Group
- National Road Trauma Institute (NRTI)
 Invite only forums
- National Supported Decision Making Network
- NDS Ageing and Disability Advisory Group
- NDS Barwon Implementation Group
 (BIG)
- Office of the Public Advocate Policy and Research Advisory Group
- Purple-Orange DSO Evaluation Sub-Committee
- University of Melbourne Advisory Board for Project 'Establishing equitable support models for individuals with mental and intellectual impairment/s to engage in consumer transactions'
- Victoria Police Disability Portfolio Reference Group



- Aged Care Quality Agency Liaison Group (Vic)
- COTA Vic Older People's Policy and Advocacy Network
- Deakin University/Cancer Council PROTECT Research Project Advisory Group
- ECCV Aged Care and Policy Sub Committee
- HACC ASM Client and Carer Outcomes Project Reference Group
- NARI IMPACCT Research Project Advisory Group
- National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) advisory groups representing Carers Australia on aged care reforms:
 - Home Care packages and Consumer Directed Care
 - My Aged Care Gateway
 - Commonwealth Home Support
 Program
- Palliative Care in Aged Care Special Interest Group convened by Palliative Care Victoria
- Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Group
- Victorian Government HACC
 Departmental Advisory Group
- Victorian NRCP Statewide Network
- Victoria Police Seniors Portfolio Reference Group
- TAC / WorkSafe Disability Service Reform Working Group
- DHHS Mental Health & Carers Victoria
- HealthWest Partnership Board
- HealthWest Partnership Finance
 Committee
- Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee (HSHPIC)
- Ministerial Advisory Council for the Statewide Services and Infrastructure Plan
- National Network CEO meetings
- National Network President & CEO Meetings
- Ministerial NDIS Task Force
 Implementation Committee
- RMIT Partnership
- State Trustees Australia Foundation (STAF) Ageing, Disability and Mental Health Collaborative Panel
- Supporting Cross-Sector Learning and Development Steering Committee
- VCOSS Peak & Statewide Networks
 Forum

- DHHS Mental Health Carer Partnership Dialogue
- ECCV Health Policy Subcommittee
 meetings
- Tandem (Mental Health Carers) Network meetings
- Tandem NDIS and Mental Health
 Working Group
- Aboriginal Disability Working Group (Northern Region)
- Department of Health and Human Service's Participation Advisory Committee (PAC)
- DSS Subject Matter Expert Working Group re Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services
- State Trustees Stakeholder Reference
 Group
- National Quality Working Group
- NILS Provider Network
- HealthWest Community Engagement
 Network
- Living Positive Victoria, Senior Voices Project Reference Group
- Matrix Guild LGBTIQ Youth Service
 Providers Network
- National LGBTI Carer Services
 Network
- National LGBTI Health Alliance LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care Advisory Committee
- Rainbow Network LGBTIQ Youth Service Providers Network
- Val's Café Aged Care Service Providers Network
- Maribyrnong Network meeting
- Wyndham Network meeting
- AAV Education and Advisory Committee
- AAV Lifestyle Project Expert Advisory
 Committee
- Aged Care Teachers Network
- Northern Dementia Alliance
- SMEG for Community Services and Health Skills Council
- Aboriginal Service Provider Network
 Wyndham
- Brimbank Service Provider Network
- Hobson's Bay Inter Agency Network
- Melton Partnership (Aboriginal specific)
- Melton Service Provider Network
- Wyndham Community Agencies Network

Board

President David Bartlett

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Contact details

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

Carer Advisory Line: 1800 242 636 E: reception@carersvictoria.org.au

Twitter: @CarersVictoria Facebook: /CarersVictoria Instagram: @CarersVictoria

carersvictoria.org.au

ABN 12 533 636 427 ARBN 143 579 257

