

MEDIA RELEASE



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VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT BUDGET 2019-20 BOOSTS CARER SUPPORT

Carers Victoria welcomes a budget demonstrating the Victorian Government's commitment to unpaid family and friend carers and the Victorian Carer Strategy.

This budget includes a \$49.5 million package in additional funding for carers over the next four years. This package will fund an extra 100,000 hours of respite care each year and expand eligibility to include carers of people with a mental illness and younger carers. This will enable an extra 5,000 Victorians to access respite care, knowing that their relative or friend is receiving quality care.

Within the \$49.5 million package, there will be \$4 million in grants for carer support groups. These grants will focus on support for carers in regional areas, as well as under-recognised groups such as young carers and LGBTIQ+ carers.

Carers Victoria will support these initiatives by assisting with community grant applications and working with other peak bodies to investigate appropriate respite services for diverse communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, rural and regional, mental health carers, young carers and LGBTIQ+ carers. This will guide a way forward to best help these diverse carer groups.

Victorian Carer Card holders will be able to access half priced public transport all year round and free travel during Carers Week. Carer Victoria encourages all carers to apply for the Victorian Carer Card to receive this benefit.

These funding commitments come after the release of the first Victorian Carer Strategy last year. Carers Victoria played a pivotal role in the development of the strategy, which highlighted the unique and specific needs of carers across areas such as employment, health, education and financial disadvantage.

Carers Victoria CEO Scott Walker says the government's ongoing commitment to the Victorian Carer Strategy is critical to ensuring carers can get the support they need.

"On behalf of the board and Carers Victoria, I'd like to thank the Andrews Labor Government for their ongoing commitment to supporting carers in our community," he said.

"The Victorian Carer Strategy acknowledges the diversity of carers including rural and regional carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, culturally diverse carers, mental health carers, young carers and carers and/or care recipients who identify as LGBTIQ+."

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