



CARERS VICTORIA

# Truly Incredible Care



OUR STORY

2019

Carers Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation that helps families and friends in our community who are caring for someone who needs support due to ageing, disability, mental illness, or other significant health issues.

# We are the state-wide peak body for all unpaid family and friend carers

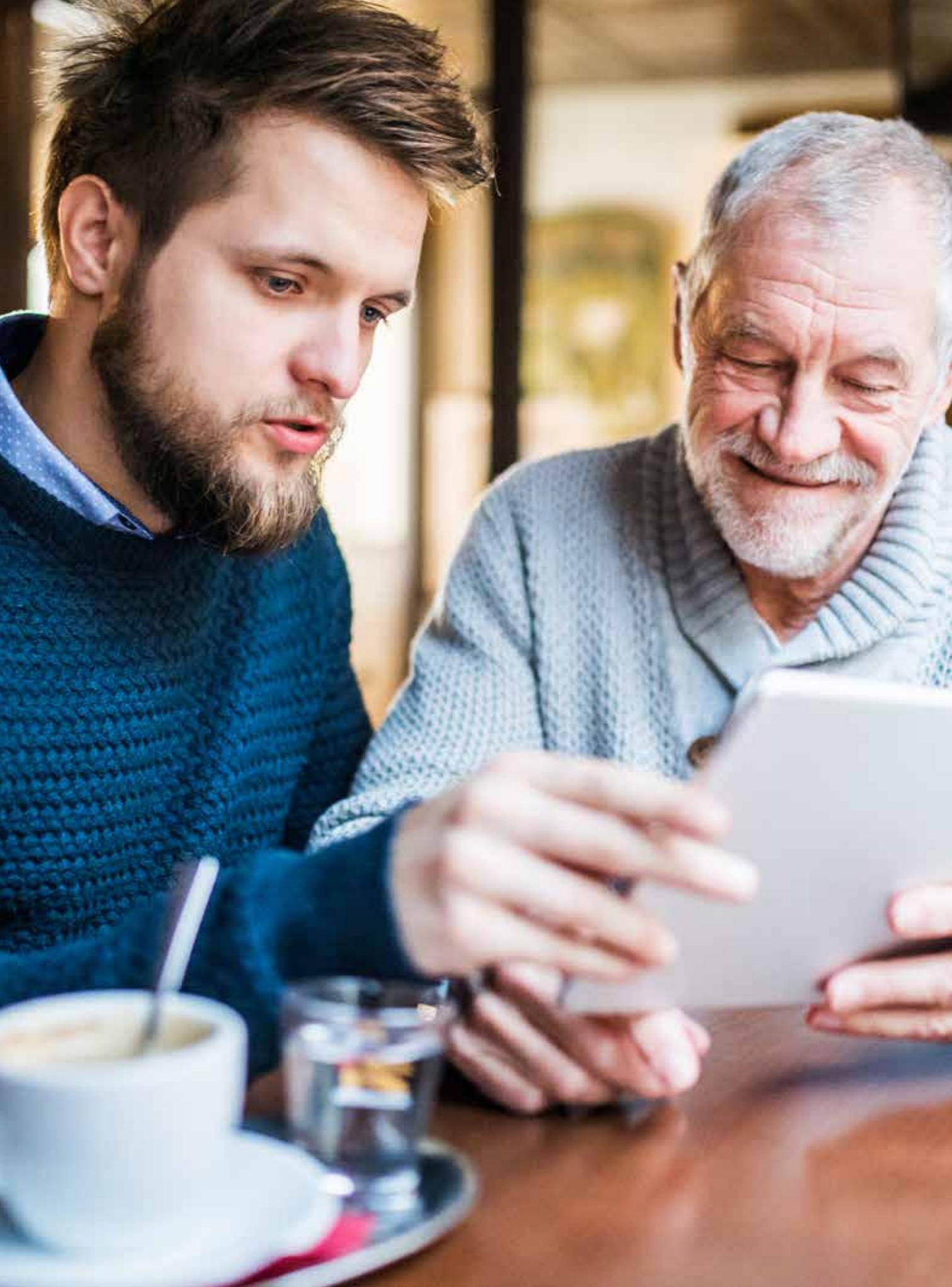
Carers Victoria Inc.

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

Carers Victoria receives funding from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Department of Social Services.



# Contents

02

Who is a carer

---

04

What is Carers  
Victoria and Why We  
Need to be Here

---

05

Fulfilling our purpose,  
meeting demand

---

06

Support Services

---

08

Education

---

09

Supporting Young  
Carers

---

10

Our Community

---

11

Outstanding  
Achievements

---

13

Notable Projects  
and Partnerships in  
2019 and beyond

---

12

Financial Viability

# Who is a carer

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic health issue or age-related condition. Receiving a government allowance payment does not qualify a carer as being paid.

People receiving care could be a parent, child, spouse, grandparent, other relative, or friend.

## **THE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF CARERS**

Carers are the 'social glue' which binds together relationships between formal service providers, volunteers and people receiving care. There is a broader and multi-dimensional definition of care beyond the labour dimension which cannot be measured solely in monetary terms.

Direct and indirect costs incurred because of caring impact on a carer's own standard of living. There have been several studies which find caring has a major impact on carers, with many needs remaining unmet.

Anyone at any time of their  
life could find themselves  
in a caring role.

72%

live in major cities

23%

live in regional areas

5%

live in rural Victoria

41%

care for their partner

29%

care for their child  
(including adult children)

21%

care for a parent



55%

are women



45%

are men

VALUE PROPOSITION

*Our Vision* is to work for an Australia that values and supports all carers.

*Our Purpose* is to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of family, community and government. We want to support carers better; we want to make carers' lives better.

# What is Carers Victoria

## WHY WE NEED TO BE HERE

Carers Victoria is a resource for all people and especially those who identify as unpaid family and friend carers. It serves as a destination to guide and simplify the complexities which may arise with the role of caring.

With over 25 years of experience and service in the industry we hold our trusted brand status with pride.

Starting as a small group of carers meeting in a church hall in the early 1990s,

Carers Victoria has been located on Level 1, 37 Albert Street Footscray since 2004.

Carers Victoria has grown into a peak body representing and supporting people across Victoria who are fulfilling a caring role.

**Carers Victoria is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) and is governed by a board elected by the members.**

# Fulfilling our purpose, meeting demand

## ADVOCACY

Our high-level connections with government and community leaders positions Carers Victoria to successfully represent and advocate on behalf of carers. As members of the National Network of Carers Associations Policy Working Group, our team is a lead contributor to Federal and State government submissions and consultations on key issues for carers.

National advocacy programs, events, and government liaison drives change to improve the lives of carers across Victoria and Australia and represents the interests of Victorian carers to decision makers.

The four key focus areas of advocacy for carers are:

1. Recognition and value
2. Health and wellbeing
3. Education
4. Financial security

## SUPPORT IN A COMPLEX WORLD

Carers Victoria's advocacy work informs the development of many resources and strategies, in collaboration with government initiatives and programs available to carers. Carers Victoria is a channel and reference point for access and support. We aim to simplify the complexities emerging as a result of the systemic changes with the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the introduction of consumer-directed aged care.

## RESEARCH

Our highly qualified and experienced team respond to many requests for carer participation in research, shaping the future directions of research affecting carers and care relationships. Carers Victoria welcomes approaches by prospective research partners with project proposals addressing the social contribution of care, quality of life for carers, and supporting carer capabilities.

## CREATING CHANGE WHOLE OF VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

In 2017, Carers Victoria conducted a stakeholder engagement program to inform the whole of Victorian Government Carer Strategy, recognising and supporting Victoria's 736,6000 carers. Over 30 consultation workshops and special interest focus groups were held with carers, service providers and peak agency representatives – speaking to over 300 carers in person across the State. We also consulted with service providers and peak bodies and coordinated an online survey which reached over 1300 people.

Carers Victoria played a pivotal consultancy role in the development of the Strategy which aims to improve supports and recognise carers for their important role in the community.

# Support Services

## COUNSELLING

Carers Victoria has been offering a specialised counselling service to carers for over 15 years. We provide short-term individual counselling and group counselling, with the aim to provide support, information and resources in a safe and confidential setting.

Our qualified counsellors work across metropolitan and rural regions of Victoria with a unique understanding of the challenges people in a caring role often face.

### **We pride ourselves as the peak carer counselling body.**

In 2019 Carers Victoria will be launching a unique *Carer Counselling Framework*, the first of its kind in the industry. We are also creating a professional training model within the sector for carer specific counselling by utilising accredited training opportunities, such as online tools, face to face training deliverables, teleconference programs, and peer clinical supervision.

Last financial year  
we provided

# 4,727

counselling sessions to

# 1,250

carers.

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Each session is an hour.

### **Demand for our specialist counselling services is strong, delivering approximately 5000 counselling sessions across Victoria.**

*"He's the first person I have talked with who actually understands what challenges a carer faces."*

*"At a time of great stress and financial strain yours was one of the only simple, quick means of getting help...counselling helped me feel supported and that my feelings/responses were valid."*

*"I couldn't have survived the past five months without it...a mother with dementia, a suicidal son...family violence...oh and the diagnosis of my own life-threatening illness...it is too much for one person alone."*

*"The counselling service provided was of the highest order. I felt secure in the knowledge that my counsellors listened actively, interpreted and designed action plans for me."*

*"It gave me the tools to evaluate my situation and offer helpful guidance. It offered a different way to look at and assess my situation which was extremely insightful."*

### ADVISORY

Every year Carers Victoria receives more than 20,000 calls from carers across the State. Our team of experts carefully helps people seeking advice and support. This is a critical referral pathway to local services providing opportunity for ongoing supports within communities.

### RESPIRE SUPPORTS

There are many different types of respite support available for carers. As an organisation we recognise every situation is different. Some common types of respite include: in-home, facility or residential based, community based, alternative family care, recreation based and emergency respite.

*“I get such peace of mind knowing I can make a call and someone will answer. It’s what I need some days that helps me push through”.*

9.40min

Average call length

60min

Average call length for referrals such as counselling

4,000

Average calls on a monthly basis

# Education

Carers Victoria offers a range of carer workshops and educational programs which aim to increase carers' resilience; develop capacity and knowledge to support carers in their caring role; and offer practical advice on how to navigate the health and community sector. The range of workshops includes programs to educate carers on accessing and working with systems, such as the National Disability Scheme and My Aged Care.

Our Education Services 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. These workshops are an important means of building staff expertise and commitment to developing a partnership approach with families.

270

How many education programs we have run from HQ

1,268

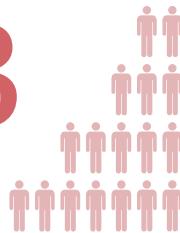
How many sessions we have run around the State

189

How many training sessions were offered to service providers

20,563

How many people participated in total



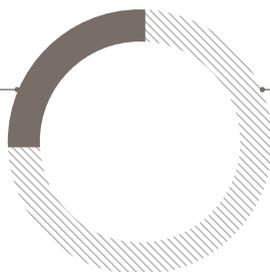
3,908



How many people participated in total

25%

Regional Reach



75%

Metro Reach

128

Exhibition attendance



# Supporting Young Carers

Young carers are children and young adults under 25 who provide care to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, chronic health condition or an older person with care needs. There are more than 71,600 young carers in Victoria, representing 1 in 10 carers. Many young carers are unidentified.

Our aim is to support young carers by identifying each young carer's needs and referring them to appropriate support services. We support those in the community who work with young people to ensure young carers continue to be identified and are well supported in their caring role.

Carers Victoria is committed to raising awareness of young carers in the community and to supporting schools and services to better provide for their needs. Our Young Carer State-wide Program Coordinator liaises with various

sectors and service providers across the State to better equip them to identify and cater for young carers' needs.

Carers Victoria coordinates a Young Carer Service Provider Network (YCSPN) consisting of people who work with young carers, including social workers, youth workers, school counsellors, wellbeing workers, mental health workers and disability support workers.

**This network has over 75 members from 46 different organisations across the State and serves to keep members informed of services and supports for young carers in Victoria.**

*"I felt sad if I got sick...there was no-one there to look after me."*

*"I don't get time off...always cooking, homework, housework."*

# Our Community

## ENGAGEMENT

Carers Victoria has a strong support base and utilises contemporary channels to engage with the community, including an alliance with the National Network of Carers Associations' Communications Working Group. We use web-based platforms to inform, consult and update members and supporters of the organisation on developments aimed to support the vision and purpose of Carers Victoria.

With active engagements on social media, Carers Victoria's Community Engagement Strategy enables and supports all facets of the organisation. Launching a new website in 2019, Carers Victoria will also roll out its *Communications and Marketing Strategy* in late 2019, with an intention to inject a much needed and healthy boost of raising awareness in all sectors and corners of social justice spaces.

We have a database of over 70,000 supporters of Carers Victoria and are developing a Customer Relationship Management System to consolidate the various data entry points.

## MEMBERS

Carers Victoria is a member-based organisation. Caring is more widely recognised in the community and we continue to work hard with governments, medical and health professionals and the community sector to make sure the needs of unpaid family and friend carers are kept on the agenda. With many benefits on offer, our marketing and promotional activities support the growth and strength in increasing our membership base.

**Our current membership is over 8,000 with an increase of 8 percent per annum on average.**

## STAFF

Carers Victoria draws on the skills and talents of its staff, board members, key supporters and volunteers to work towards the vision and purpose of the organisation.

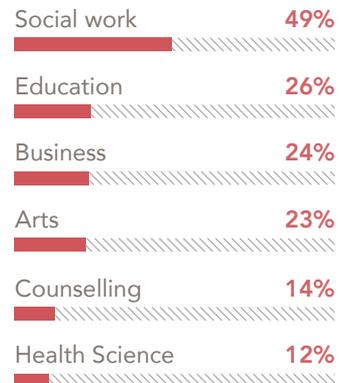
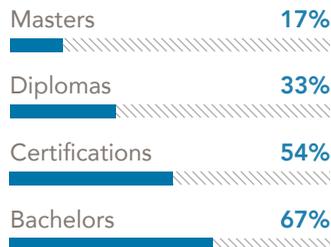
With a diverse range of qualifications, expertise and experience, Carers Victoria comprises a collection of highly specialised teams committed to supporting, advocating and educating people in the caring role.

88

Number of staff

81%

Retention rates



# Outstanding Achievements

## PHILANTHROPY WORK

### MILDURA CARER BLUEPRINT PILOT PROJECT

In 2016 a Carers Hub was opened in Mildura growing Carers Victoria's mission to service and support carers in regional Victoria. The Hub was supported by the VV Marshman Trust and Bendigo Health. The aim of the Mildura Carer Blueprint pilot is to develop sustainable caring in the region.

### ON-GOING DONATIONS, BEQUESTS AND APPEALS

Carers Victoria has several established relationships with donors and philanthropists who contribute to special projects and initiatives for carers. The Carer Holiday Program has run for three years and provides an opportunity for a select number of carers to take an annual 'getaway'. Our Young Carer Scholarships Program and some mingle programs are also funded via generous donations from philanthropists. The organisation has an established bequests program which will be enhanced by the Communications and Marketing Strategy launching in late 2019.

### WHOLE GOVERNMENT CARER STRATEGY

In July 2018 the Andrews Labor 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

sets out a framework to better recognise and support carers. The Strategy outlines ways carers, peak organisations, service providers and communities will work with the State Government to address five key priorities. Funding has been committed to Carers Victoria and other organisations to provide extra respite, school holiday programs and supports for young carers, and extra supports for carers of people with a mental illness.

### ESTABLISHED CARER CHAMPION PROGRAM

A Carer Champion is someone Carers Victoria can call upon to share their caring story with other carers, the media, and public. The role is entirely voluntary and Carer Champions are not paid for their time or story by Carers Victoria or the media.

Stories have been published in leading newspapers, The Age and Herald Sun, and other local papers, as well as our 'Carers News' magazine. Champions have featured on television and radio segments. Carers Victoria currently has 25 active Carer Champions ready to share their story.

### DIVERSITY WORK

Carers Victoria has a demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement in working with carers from all communities, based on national and state diversity guidelines. Carers Victoria is working towards achieving Rainbow Tick and a Reconciliation Action Plan in 2019.



# Financial Viability

Carers Victoria continues to monitor changes to the funding landscape as both the Federal and State governments review distributions to the community sector. Carers Victoria works towards bi-partisan supports in the political landscape, exploring tender opportunities and creating secure alternative funding streams through philanthropic partnerships. The over-arching priority is to continue the organisation's viability as a thriving not-for-profit organisation with a staunch approach to continue supporting unpaid carers in our communities.

# Notable Projects and Partnerships

IN 2019 AND BEYOND

## VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT

*National Disability Insurance Scheme Transition*  
Extensive collaboration and community engagement activities to support family carers with industry transition.

Resource development and support of respite services for not-for-profit organisations, as well as peer support activities

*Benefits and Concessions project* is a community engagement project in partnership with the Victorian government to better inform and disseminate the complexities of available financial supports for carers.

*Carers Strategy* resource development project.

### TOTAL PROJECT COST

\$930,000

## PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK (PHN) ALLIANCE

*Western Victoria Primary Health Network (WVPHN)* Mind the Step program identified carers at risk of developing mental health conditions to receive early intervention and low intensity support in western Victoria. A second installation of the Mind the Step Program will be rolled out in the 2019/2020 financial year in the same region.

*North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN)* two-year project to improve social connectedness for people experiencing poor health outcomes in North West Melbourne.

### TOTAL PROJECT COST

\$1,550,000

## GOOD SHEPHERD MICROFINANCE PARTNERSHIP

*LaunchMe* program supporting Young Carers to create pathways into careers and business opportunities breaking the mould and opening doors for young carers across Victoria.

### TOTAL PROJECT COST

\$240,000

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