

Carers

news

2020 Edition

*Understanding
the Carer Gateway*

*Carer
Stories*

*Getting Back on
Track After Trauma*



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Message from Scott

This edition marks a significant milestone of change in the landscape of carer services nationally. With the roll out of the new integrated service model for carers, for us as an organisation we are also on the precipice of change. To remain agile and current, we are adapting our strategic direction to meet the challenges of the new funding structure.

At the end of last year, we held our AGM and a vote decided Carers Victoria will transform from being an incorporated organisation to a company limited by guarantee. This has triggered off a series of very positive changes. It has enabled us to review our membership model and our branding to fortify our strategic direction for the future. Coupled with the roll out of the Integrated Carer Support Services by the Federal Government, this is a prime opportunity to review our approach to meeting the needs of our carer community. Along with our commitment as peak body for all carers across Victoria, we also join a consortium of *Regional Delivery Partners* providing services in the Western Region of Metropolitan Melbourne.

Our state-funded services, including the *Support For Carers Program* and our *Education Workshops*, continue to evolve. We have also embarked on several research projects and programs with key partners across the sector.

Change is not easy to navigate and I would like to acknowledge the team at Carers Victoria for their expertise and commitment in fortifying our future. I appreciate the trust the team has offered me to steer the ship as we embark on the combined changes ahead. A result of these changes means a new direction for our Carers News magazine.



We will continue to produce publications and material of value; however, we are exploring ways we can reach out and engage with you in a more streamlined and cost-effective manner.

This final Carers News edition, in my opinion, is a demonstration of the direction we are heading as an organisation. We aim to be a strong voice in the political sphere, forged from strong community engagement. We strive to make a difference to carers in Victoria through service delivery, innovative programs, education and information.

You may notice a campaign will be launched in the coming months, entitled *Truly Incredible Care*. Through this campaign we are building our profile in the public and urging everyone to sign up as members of Carers Victoria. Thank you for your ongoing support of Carers Victoria and may I encourage you to spread the word on our work and mission.

Happy reading,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Walker', written in a cursive style.

Scott Walker
Chief Executive Officer, Carers Victoria

Understanding the new Carer Gateway Services

From April 2020 the Commonwealth government is providing one easy to use access point for tailored services for carers in their own right, no matter who they care for under a new Australia wide network.



The new Carer Gateway system has been developed over two years and is based on extensive research and consultation with carer support service providers, peak bodies and carers to re-design services and supports for carers.

The new Carer Gateway system sees Commonwealth funding for existing services being merged into a single service point for services to provide carer support and skills development. The Carer Gateway will give you the choice of online or in-person supports. Some supports are similar to how they are now and some will change.

The new network of Carer Gateway service providers will use a mobile work force to bring services to carers in their local area and will work alongside a range of local providers to provide tailored services to carers.

There are no changes to State Government funded carer services or to My Aged Care or the NDIS.

Key New Terms

Carer Gateway

This is the new website carergateway.gov.au and **1800 422 737** number that allows carers to access services and supports.

The key difference between existing services and the new system accessing supports under the Carer Gateway is to make it easier to access all supports.

With only one provider – instead of different numbers and organisations – you will call one number and use one website to make contact with the carer supports you need.

Carer Gateway Service Provider

These are the organisations the Commonwealth government has contracted to deliver supports to carers. In Victoria the Carer Gateway service provider is Merri Health.

Accessing Carer Supports through the Carer Gateway

Online supports

The Carer Gateway gives you the choice of online or in-person carer supports. Some supports are similar to how they are now and some will change.

Online services include:

- **Counselling** – up to six sessions with a counsellor (Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm).
- **Online Community** – a 24/7 discussion forum with many topics of interest to carers.
- **Coaching** – carer-focused modules to support you in your caring role (from 2021).

- **Training** – short modules on useful topics (eg stress management).

You can access these services now. Call **1800 422 737** or go to carergateway.gov.au.

In-person supports

The in-person supports will be delivered by a network of Carer Gateway Services to deliver support to carers in their local area including:

- **Carer Support Planning** – understanding your specific caring circumstances and helping build an action plan to improve your wellbeing.
- **Counselling** – up to six sessions face-to-face, on the phone or over Skype.
- **Peer support** – access to facilitated or self-managing groups of other carers in a similar situation.
- **Financial Assistance** – one of two types of financial support will be available for carers. Carers can only be allocated one of the two packages within a 12-month period.
 - One-off Practical Support – to assist carers access education and employment up to \$1,500.
 - Carer Directed Package – general supports, for example planned respite, assistance with cleaning, transport up to \$3,000.
- **Emergency Respite** – where the care relationship is under high stress.

– continued ...

Timelines

- 6 April 2020 – Carer Gateway services commence across Victoria.
- Between 6 April and 31 May 2020 – existing providers will continue to provide current services.
- 1 June 2020 – Transitional period complete.

From April 2020

Access the Carer Gateway after the 6 April through one single number

1800 422 737 and one website **carergateway.gov.au**.

When you call the Carer Gateway phone number you will be directed to the relevant local service provider.

Carers in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne will continue receiving direct supports from Carers Victoria.

Existing Carers Victoria services that are funded by the State government, local governments and philanthropic sources will continue as

they are. Services include education workshops, policy and advocacy work, mental health community support services, respite and carer projects.

As the peak body for carers in Victoria, Carers Victoria will continue to be the statewide voice for carers and caring families.

Get in touch

Contact Carers Victoria directly on our new number **1800 514 845**.

Carers Victoria funded to establish carer hubs throughout Victoria

In early February the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, Luke Donnellan, announced an additional \$3.9 million for four new state-wide partnership projects and more than 90 local community projects to benefit carers.

Each carer organisation which received funding will partner with other groups to trial new approaches that improve conditions and opportunities for carers.

Under the package, Carers Victoria is receiving a grant to work with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and local councils to set up community resource centres and hubs to support all carers.

The Financial and Consumer Rights Council and Carers Victoria will also work together to lessen the financial stress for carers through financial counselling and education.

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan announced:

"We want carers in all parts of Victoria to access support in their community and have the opportunity to connect with others and improve their health and wellbeing."

"Our hard-working carers deserve our support, which is why we've invested almost \$50 million for extra respite, transport concessions and grants for local carer groups across Victoria."



Above // Luke Donnellan at the February announcement.

Receive updates

You can receive updates by subscribing to Carers Victoria's monthly e-bulletin The Voice. Subscribe here **carersvictoria.org.au/voice**.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update

The Coronavirus pandemic has dominated all forms of social commentary over recent weeks, and understandably, many of us are feeling overwhelmed, stressed and fearful about what is to come.

As the peak body for carers we are taking advice from leading health professionals and continually monitoring the situation,

in order to tailor our work practices and deliver the most relevant information to carers. We recommend you keep an eye on our website and social media pages for the most up-to-date information.

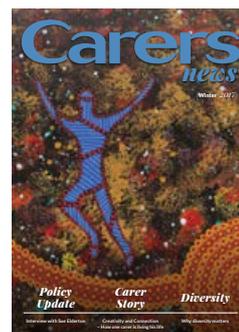
In the meantime, we recommend you to take care of yourself and those around you by practicing good hygiene and self-isolating wherever possible.

Stay up-to-date

To regularly get the most current advice and tips on self isolation visit the government health site health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert.

Carers News Magazine

This is the final edition of Carers News in this format, as we move on to innovative ways of informing and engaging our community of supporters and carers. Looking back over the years, here are some of our favourite covers.



Getting back on track after trauma

When you experience a traumatic event, it can be difficult to imagine what life will look like in your new reality. You may have lost a loved one, your home, or a job. No matter what it is, you probably feel overwhelmed and uneasy about what the future may hold.

Everyone copes with traumatic events differently and there is no blueprint for getting your life back on track. Nor is there a suggested amount of time for doing so.

The following suggestions are broad and can be applied to most situations. The most important thing to do is that you listen to yourself and be mindful of what you need during this difficult time.

Acknowledge

Reflect upon the trauma you have experienced and acknowledge how it has made you feel. You may be experiencing a mix of emotions — sadness, anger, humiliation — it can help to name them and explain why you are feeling that way.

Straight after the traumatic event, you will probably be experiencing shock

and an acute feeling of loss. While you may not believe it now, the heightened feelings you are experiencing will fade over time. If possible, avoid making big decisions during this time as your judgement may be clouded by your emotions. In situations where decision-making is unavoidable, take the time to talk through your decisions with loved ones or a professional.

Just because a traumatic event does not directly affect you, it does not mean you will not be affected by what has happened. This may be the case when, for example, a friend loses a loved one, or you hear about horrific world events in the news. Vicarious trauma is “the negative transformation in the helper that results (across time) from empathetic engagement with trauma survivors and their traumatic material, combined with a commitment or responsibility to help them.”¹

This form of trauma often occurs in people working in the health and mental health system, housing, law enforcement, legal system, emergency services and family services. Workers in these fields either continuously experience traumatic events while trying to help others, or hear stories of trauma from people seeking help.

“You may be experiencing a mix of emotions — sadness, anger, humiliation — it can help to name them and explain why you are feeling that way.”

¹ [blueknot.org.au/Workers-Practitioners/For-Health-Professionals/Resources-for-Health-Professionals/Vicarious-Trauma](https://www.blueknot.org.au/Workers-Practitioners/For-Health-Professionals/Resources-for-Health-Professionals/Vicarious-Trauma)



Be realistic

Be realistic about how long it will take you to feel better or 'back to normal' again. Everyone grieves differently and there is no such thing as a correct way to grieve. Some people may choose to 'bottle up' their grief, while others are happy to discuss it openly. It might take you months to feel 'normal', or even years.

While it might feel better to lay or to assign blame on someone for something which has taken place, it is unlikely to achieve anything. Instead, keep open conversations going with your loved ones. If you feel anger is stopping you from having a constructive conversation with someone, take your distance from them until you feel ready to start the conversation.

Take care of yourself

In the aftermath of a personal crisis, taking care of yourself is probably the last thing on your mind. By eating well and exercising regularly, you're setting yourself up to feel the best you can. In addition to being a healthy distraction, regular exercise can also help to relieve stress and give you small, achievable goals to strive for.

When friends, neighbours and family members offer help, perhaps a chat over a cup of tea or a meal cooked for your family, accept it. It can be easy to isolate yourself in times of grief, but connecting with others can greatly improve your state of mind. In particular, talking with your loved ones about the traumatic event can help you begin to process what has happened.

Leaving the comfort of your home might be the last thing you feel like doing after something terrible has happened however, once the initial shock of the event has passed, it is important to resume the everyday activities that make you feel like yourself again. Whether it's pushing yourself to take a walk once a day, going to see a friend twice a week or attending a regular support group meeting, setting yourself achievable goals can do wonders for your mental health.

In addition to talking with your loved ones, speaking to a counsellor or psychologist is a good idea if you have experienced trauma. Speak to your GP first about setting up a mental health plan.

Talk to a professional

If you or a loved one has experienced a traumatic event and would like to talk it through with a professional, call:



1300 224 737



1300 657 380



1300 845 745



13 11 14



Healthy Habits, A Family Affair

When she joined Carers Victoria's Young Carer program in 2018, Anna* was feeling the pressure of her caring role. At 16 years old, Anna is the primary carer for her Mum who has diabetes.

A typical day for Anna includes reminding her Mum to take her medication, translating for her Mum during medical appointments, tending to her needs at home and completing household chores. In addition to providing emotional support. Anna's life is a constant juggle as she negotiates these tasks with going to school, completing her homework and being a regular teenager.

After speaking with a carer advisor, areas where Anna needed support were identified. Anna's stress was impacting her ability to sleep and concentrate at school. She also struggled with her own health issues, including managing her weight and an intellectual disability. As a result, Anna would attend regular specialist appointments for herself on a regular basis.

Supporting Anna to make healthier lifestyle choices was identified as a priority. The Carers Victoria's

Young Carer Program funded a six-month swimming membership and a 12-month gym membership. A Young Carer support worker, Tiffany*, accompanied Anna to her first swimming lesson to provide emotional support. Outside of supporting Anna's healthier lifestyle, Tiffany would also provide emotional support through regular catch-ups at a café to discuss any issues Anna might be having.

Socially, the Young Carer Program gave Anna the opportunity to attend regular events where she was able to connect with other carers her own age. Anna was an active participant at these events and enjoyed helping others when she could.

Recognising the difficulty in attending medical appointments, as neither Anna nor her mother could drive, the Young Carer Program also funded taxi vouchers to get Anna and her mother to their individual medical appointments.

One year on from the program, the change in Anna is remarkable. A healthy and more active lifestyle has seen her lose 20 kilograms and inspired Anna's mother to lead a healthier lifestyle herself. As a result, Anna's mother is now able to self-manage her diabetes more effectively.

Improvements to her own health, as well as her Mum's, has reduced Anna's stress levels, helped her focus on improving at school and led to the development of new, healthy habits. Anna graduated from the Young Carer Program in October 2019 and continues to go to the gym most days after school.

Anna is thrilled with her progress since she first joined the Young Carer Program and rated Tiffany 10 out of 10 for the positive impact she made on Anna's life.

If you know a young carer who may need support, contact us to find out what supports are available.

*Names changed

Connecting the dots



As a health professional, Nicole Dunn's job is to connect her clients with appropriate health services. However, when she unexpectedly became a carer in her early 30's, Nicole found herself struggling to navigate the system. Drawing on this difficult time, Nicole has used her own experiences to help others.

When Nicole's grandmother, Roma, was rushed into the emergency department where Nicole was working, with a large mass on her pancreas, Nicole knew her grandmother's prognosis would not be good.

Roma was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer, with a prognosis of one year. She would require an intense course of chemotherapy and a live-in carer. Nicole, just 32 at the time, put up her hand without hesitation.

Growing up, Nicole had always been close to her grandmother. Before her health deteriorated, Roma was an astute and fiercely independent woman. Nicole remembers summers running around her grandmother's house with her brother and learning to drive on her grandparents' ride-on mower.

Within two weeks of the diagnosis, Nicole had moved out of her own home and become a live-in carer. Nicole juggled work commitments with her grandmother's medical appointments, preparing meals, liaising with service providers and managing her medication. Roma's reliance on Nicole was a stark contrast to her former independent self.

Ritual became an important part of Roma and Nicole's lives as they settled

in to living together. Nicole smiles as she remembers her grandmother's astute comments about the reality TV shows they watched during their regular happy hour.

While these moments brought some relief, Nicole struggled to watch her grandmother's rapid deterioration. Friends provided some support, but most did not understand the physical and emotional challenges of being a carer.

Nicole had always enjoyed playing netball and football. When her grandmother was diagnosed, she suddenly found carving out the time to pursue these activities as important as ever, as they became a great outlet for the emotional trials she was experiencing.

As a healthcare professional, Nicole had more insight into her grandmother's condition than most, but this was not always comforting.

"Working in health was both a blessing and curse. It's a blessing because you know what to do, but sometimes there is bliss in ignorance," she says.

Six months after her diagnosis, Roma started to rapidly deteriorate. After several near-misses, the decision was made to move her into residential aged care where she could be monitored more closely. Nicole continued to

act as Roma's carer; taking her to appointments and spending as much time with her grandmother as possible.

After her grandmother passed away, Nicole started to reflect on the difficulties that she, as a health professional, had experienced in attempting to connect her grandmother up with appropriate services. If Nicole struggled, how would someone with no prior knowledge of the health and aged care sectors navigate these systems?

It was these ideas that led Nicole to establish her own consultancy business to help older people and their families connect to systems and services. Outside of work, Nicole has also made time to advocate for the needs of older people and their carers. Last year, she addressed the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety at a hearing in Mildura. Nicole spoke about her own experiences as a carer, and advocated for the provision of flexible respite options and pre-counselling to better prepare carers for the caring role.

Not content to watch others undergo the same trials she did, Nicole's story is a wonderful example of how the skills and experiences acquired as a carer can be harnessed to help others throughout their caring journey.

Meet Anne Ruston

— Minister for Families and Social Services



Above // Anne Ruston spoke at the National Carers Week, Carers Australia Breakfast in October 2019.

Q. Minister, one in eight Australians is an unpaid family and friend carer. Has giving or receiving care affected you, or your family or friends?

I am fortunate that I have not been in a situation where a close family member or friend has needed care. I have, however, seen friends who have not hesitated to offer and provide care.

Through their efforts it has been clear to me that caring for a loved one can be tough and emotionally difficult but they have found the strength to support their loved ones in their time of need. There is no doubt in my mind that Australia's 2.7 million carers are this nation's unsung heroes.

Q. What do you identify as the contribution of family carers to the community and economy?

Our unpaid carers make a very significant contribution to our community and the economy at large. The work they do is part and parcel of the fabric of this country. Their dedication to support their loved ones, often at the expense of

their own health, wellbeing, work or study, is a selfless and important contribution to our community.

A report by Deloitte Access Economics from 2015 valued the role of unpaid carers was more than \$60 billion – more than \$1 billion per week.

By any measure, the contribution by carers is very significant.

Q. Australia has an estimated 2.65 million carers. What do you think are their biggest challenges?

No two caring roles are ever the same, nor are the demands or short-term or long-term effects of providing care. I think this is important to recognise. While some carers might need someone to talk to in the form of a professional counsellor, or help adjusting their lifestyles and future goals, others may require more practical supports such as financial packages or access to emergency respite.

Q. How is the Government addressing or planning to address these challenges?

It is vital our new service delivery model works and meets diverse public expectations and needs. That is why the Morrison Government has ensured these new reforms provide a diverse range of services and support, tailor made for carers.

This is why the Morrison Government has developed this reform to carer services following an extensive co-design process with carers and the carers sector over the past four years.

It was developed by carers for carers.

This will ensure that carers, irrespective of whether they live in regional, rural or remote areas, will have access to some form of support to ensure they get the help they need before reaching crisis point.

Q. Minister, you mention the Integrated Carer Support Service. Under this reform, how will you ensure that carers continue to receive the support they need in their caring role?

The Morrison Government is investing nearly \$700 million over five years to introduce a new nation-wide system of supports for carers through Carer Gateway.

This reform has been the result of an extensive co-design process with carers and the carers sector over the past four years.

It has been developed on the premise that carers will not only continue to receive the support they need, but also provide access to early-intervention supports, when and where they need them, before reaching crisis point.

From April 2020, a new network of Carer Gateway service providers will use a mobile work force to bring services to carers in their local area.

To ensure a smooth transition, we have extended the funding of existing service providers until 31 May 2020. This will ensure continuity of support to carers during the important transition to the new Carer Gateway service providers.

This means that carers will have access to multi-faceted carer supports including planning; targeted financial support packages with a focus on employment,

education, respite and transport; in-person and phone-based counselling and peer support; emergency and short term respite and assistance with navigating relevant, local carer services.

It is the single biggest reform in more than a decade to better support our carers where a new regional network of providers will deliver more than five times the number of services currently available.

Our reforms also promise to deliver a suite of support services on a more geographically equitable basis which will be easier to navigate and less fragmented than has previously been the case.

Q. What are you most proud of since becoming Minister?

With respect to helping carers, I am most proud of being able to sign-off on the roll-out of the new Integrated Carer Support Service.

Q. In terms of your own self-care, what are your top tips to share with carers?

Eat well, try and get some regular exercise, keep in touch with your friends and always have a good book to read.

Q. What personal message would you like to send to carers?

Our nation is indebted to the work you do. I commend the tremendous work carers do on a daily basis. I encourage all carers to look after themselves and if needed, seek support for themselves. Support is available. Being a carer can be hard but getting help early, through the Carer Gateway, can make a big difference.

Pushing *the Boundaries*

As we get older and our lives grow busier, it is natural to sink into a comfortable daily routine. As a carer, routine is often critical to ensuring the person you care for is happy and healthy, and for the carer themselves, routine means making sure all the tasks you cram in actually get done.



Just as routine helps the world go round, being flexible and open to new experiences can help you feel more fulfilled, creative and refreshed. Leaving some time in your week to push your own boundaries, whether by trying a new hobby, learning something new or meeting new people, is a way for you to break free of the constraints of your daily routine and bring new excitement and energy to your day.

Finding the time in a busy week for extra activities can be challenging, especially for carers. Before dismissing the idea of changing your routine, consider where you could find more time. It might mean getting up earlier, dropping something that is no longer meaningful or necessary, or swapping a regular activity for something new.



(Don't) get comfortable

Use this guide as a springboard. While this article makes some suggestions about how you can bring some positive change into your life, you may have your own ideas about hobbies you'd like to pursue or personal goals you'd like to achieve. Remember by testing your assumptions about which activities you enjoy, you might surprise yourself and find a hobby you never thought you would pursue.

Learn something new

Learning something new is the ultimate way to mix things up. Depending on your motivation, interests, time and budget, you may choose to gain a new craft skills, learn to cook your favourite food, build upon your professional skills or learn a language.

▲ To find out more

Visit our website to find out about carer-specific events and workshops near you.

Keep a journal

Journaling can be very cathartic for some people. It can be both a way to express yourself and let go of stressful events. Journaling doesn't have to be a written recount of whatever you've done that day or week. You may choose to write a brief dot-point summary of what you're doing or thinking, or you might like to keep a more focused journal, such as a 'gratitude journal' where you write down three things you are grateful for that day. Those who are more artistically inclined might like to draw pictures instead of writing, or you might enjoy writing poetry. Whatever way you choose to express yourself, your journal should be your private space to make sense of the world.

Raise your voice

What better way to push the boundaries and step out of your comfort zone than by becoming an advocate on an issue you are passionate about. Whether you use your lived experience to advocate for the needs of carers, or you choose to raise your voice about another issue close to your heart, advocacy is a meaningful way to create positive change, while building skills such as relationship building, community organising and lobbying.

Get physical

Finding the energy to get to the gym or go for a run can be a challenge, particularly as the weather takes a turn. If solo exercise isn't for you, consider joining a local sports team to get fit. Leave your stress behind for an hour or so, improve your strength and endurance, and best of all meet new people and connect with your local community. To stretch yourself a bit further, try a sport you've never played before.

Join a group

If meeting new people is your goal, start by checking out local social groups in your area. These groups are often centred around a theme, for example book clubs, film discussion groups, walking groups and board games groups. Check in with your local council to find out what's available near you.

If you'd like to connect with other carers, visit our website to find Carer Support Groups in your area. These groups are an opportunity for you to meet other carers and share common experiences and useful resources.

Carers in School: A Principal's Perspective

We recently spoke with a principal of a state primary school located just 50 minutes from downtown Hobart to understand issues facing students, particularly those caring for family members.

The semi-rural school currently enrolls less than 200 students. Of these, the principal notes more than 40% of students are affected by complex trauma, with ABS census figures showing that students in the area have above average rates of mental-illness, as well as above-average rates of single-parent households. When coupled with an increasing rate of family violence, these challenges lead to a unique set of challenges for educators, as children as young as five are being actively treated for depression and anxiety.

The principal believes part of their leadership role is to know not just the children but their family context too, as this is important to interpreting and understanding student behaviour. It is through this approach that more than 10 young carers have been identified between the ages of five and twelve years old.

When asked how he knew children were in caring roles he answered, "I get to know the families and

the children intimately," and he recommends that others in education take a similar approach.

"I've had students as young as grade four who are in caring roles. Taking care of their little siblings — getting them up, making food and getting each other to school."

"In many cases educators need to see beyond children's behaviour — sit down, take the time to talk and find out their story."

You may be forgiven for thinking that the school has all the support it needs for these students. Not so. In this case, the school is funded for a social worker and psychologist for half-a-day per week. The principal has diverted funds to increase social work to one day per week and psychology to two.

The school wishes they could do more for their children, but recognise that some things are out of their control.

While they recommend that parents seek additional support for their children, many parents don't see this

as an option — and services are just not there. Being located rurally, with many struggling to make ends meet, travelling for therapy and counselling is often considered impossible.

He noted that at times the school has felt helpless. "It's hard not feeling supported in this ... there's so much that we need to help care for these little people."

This principal's experience shines a light on the reality for Australia's young carers. In Australia there are more than 270,000 carers under the age of 25, comprising nearly 10% of the nation's carer population. Many of these young people fail to identify as carers, which in turn excludes them from accessing support services and resources available to them.

I've had students as young as grade four who are in caring roles. Taking care of their little siblings — getting them up, making food and getting each other to school.

Productivity Commission

– Inquiry into Mental Health

This national inquiry commenced in November 2018 with the purpose of understanding the effect of mental health on people's ability to participate and prosper in the community and workplace, and the effects it has more generally on our economy and productivity.

The Inquiry has been looking at how governments across Australia, professional and community groups in healthcare, education, employment, social services, housing and justice can contribute to improving mental health for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

The Carers Associations have been working to ensure the Productivity Commission (the Commission) understands the needs of carers, in terms of their role as a carer, but also relating to carer's own health and wellbeing.

In December 2019, the Commission published its Draft Report. Carers Victoria has just submitted its response.

The response focuses on carers in mental health settings, at schools, in workplaces and the financial impacts of providing informal or unpaid care. Carers Victoria recommends the Commission further considers the needs of carers

from diverse communities; issues relating to psychosocial disability and the NDIS; and issues of affiliate stigma experienced by many carers, especially mental health carers.

Carers Victoria's submission to the draft report contains fifteen recommendations. The following are a selection of these recommendations.

- As every classroom is likely to contain two or three young carers, mandatory training is required for all teachers regarding the role played by young carers and the support they need to succeed at school.
- The Productivity Commission undertakes research into the most appropriate method of introducing a payment solution for unpaid carers within Australia's superannuation system.
- The Australian Government to mandate 'portability' of personal leave and carers' leave in the National Employment Standards.

- All State and Territory mental health services to adopt guidelines on working with families and carers as 'partners in care'. Where they don't exist already, the Victorian Chief Psychiatrist Guidelines are to be considered as an example. Relevant government departments to evaluate their implementation to ensure inclusion of families and carers becomes standard practice.

The Commission will provide a final report to the Australian Government on 23 May 2020.

More information

For further information and to subscribe for updates see the Commission's website [pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health#report](https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health#report).



10 Ways to a healthier mind and body

Now we are well and truly into the new year, it is likely well-intentioned new year's resolutions have taken a back seat. If you need a hand to get back on track, use the tips below as a checklist to help you feel the best you can.

1 Drink more water

It's an obvious one, but for good reason. If you struggle to stay hydrated, there are apps available which remind you to drink water. Many will allow you to set your own daily hydration goals and some will even tell you how much water you should be drinking based on your body mass.

2 Take a break

The caring role is consuming, so it can be easy to forget the importance of taking time out for yourself. Whether it's a walk or taking half an hour to properly enjoy a cup of tea and read the newspaper, this time to yourself is essential to performing your caring role to the best of your ability. If you're finding it too hard to take time out, call us to discuss respite options that may be available to you.

3 Exercise when you can

The general consensus is we should be doing at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day.¹ If you really are unable to carve the time out of your schedule, consider how else you might meet this goal. Perhaps it's riding your bike to the shops, choosing to take the stairs wherever possible, going for a walk in the park at lunchtime, or searching YouTube for a free exercise class you can do from your living room.

4 Eat lighter

This is perhaps the most difficult new year's resolution to stick to! By swapping your usual burger for an interesting salad, or your afternoon chocolate snack for some fresh fruit and almonds, you'll find you have better concentration, more energy and feel healthier within yourself. Turn to page 18 for one idea to add to your healthy recipe collection.

5 Keep your friends close

Prioritise the friends who make you feel good about yourself. If you have any 'friends' who constantly put you down or make you feel bad about yourself, consider cutting them loose, they're probably not worth your time.

6 Try something new

Feel like you're too stuck in routine? Try mixing things up by meeting some new people, learning a new skill or going on an adventure to somewhere you've never been before. If you need some ideas to get you started, turn to page 12.

7 Fresh air

Don't underestimate the value in getting outside. Whether it's a hike in a national park or a short walk around the block in your lunch break,

getting some fresh air can re-energise you and help you to reset for the tasks ahead.

8 See a doctor

Remembering to schedule medical appointments can be difficult, particularly when you're busy scheduling appointments for someone else. Regularly check in with your doctor to keep on top of any existing or potential medical issues. How often you should visit your doctor depends on your health, age and medical history, so ask your doctor how often is appropriate for you.

9 Slip, slop, slap

A downside of living in our beautiful country is our exposure to harsh UV rays, so remember to wear a hat and sunscreen if you're outside. It doesn't take long for sunburn to occur, so always take precaution, even in the cooler months.

10 Self-care: your way

Whether you like to take a bubble bath, meditate, call a friend or family member, or relax with your favourite TV show, it doesn't matter what your preferred form of self-care is so long as you're taking time out for yourself.

¹ [mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/expert-answers/exercise/faq-20057916](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/expert-answers/exercise/faq-20057916)

Delivering for Victorian Carers

Carers Victoria

Pre-Budget Submission

2020-2021

Carers Victoria's latest pre-budget submission proposes a comprehensive education and jobs package for Victorian carers.

The launch of the Victorian Carers Strategy in 2018 was an important milestone for Victorian carers. Carers Victoria was engaged by the State Government to lead state-wide consultations to inform the five priority areas of 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.

Investment in the Delivering for Victorian, Carers – Education and Jobs Package directly addresses Priority 2 of the Victorian Carer Strategy 2018–22: Carers are supported in school, study and work environments. The level of investment called for will also support Priority 4: Carers have less financial stress.

Carers Victoria's submission outlines a suite of initiatives to improve economic opportunities for Victorian carers, at every stage of their life. The 'Delivering for Victorian Carers Package' will enable more Victorian carers to develop the skills needed for their first job, stay in work while caring

or successfully return to work after caring. It will also support Victoria's employers, large and small, to retain skilled staff by supporting employees with care responsibilities.

Carers Victoria's submission requests the following investments as part of the upcoming Victorian State Budget:

\$20 million over three years in the Delivering for Victorian Carers – Education and Jobs Package comprising:

- A new local apprenticeship program to support young carers;
- A new TAFE accreditation program for carers to recognise current skills and experience;
- A new Victorian employer accreditation program to create carer-friendly workplaces and deliver coordinated support for carers;
- Establishing a statewide education and social connectedness program for young carers, based on the Little Dreamers initiative;
- More opportunities for young carers to complete their education and participate in peer group activities;
- Expansion of the LaunchME program to support more carers to become entrepreneurs and build the skills necessary for the modern workforce,
- A new online toolkit and series of workshops to support carers to find work;

- Workplaces which recognise and support employees to balance work and core responsibilities; and
- Access to support and training for carers of all ages to remain in or re-enter the paid workforce and meet other responsibilities.

In addition, Carers Victoria is requesting a further \$250,000 to develop a fully costed roadmap to implement the Victorian Carers Strategy 2018–22.

The Education and Jobs Package is targeted across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria.

The contributions of Victorian carers have an estimated replacement value of at least \$15 billion every year. Yet one in five carers gives up work to care for someone, affecting the income of their households and in their retirement years.

This is why Carers Victoria is calling on the State government to invest \$20 million over three years to establish the Delivering for Victorian Carers – Education and Jobs Package.

To read the submission visit carersvictoria.org.au/inquiry.

Any Victorian current or former carer wanting to contribute to raising the voice of carers with government and improve services and supports for carers can join our Carer Advisory Panels by visiting carersvictoria.org.au/carerpanel.

Take a Break



Prep time: 8 mins Cook: 8 mins Serves: 4

Sudoku

7		6				8		3
							2	
5	2				4		6	
2	1		6	4			8	5
	5	7	1		2	4	3	
3	4			9	7		1	2
	8		4				7	6
	6							
4		2				3		8

Sudoku Answers:

8	5	3	6	9	1	6	3	5	8
1	6	5	3	7	8	2	9	4	4
9	8	3	4	2	5	1	7	6	6
3	4	8	5	9	7	6	1	2	2
6	5	7	1	8	2	4	3	9	9
2	1	9	6	4	3	7	8	5	5
5	2	1	8	3	4	9	6	7	7
8	3	4	7	6	9	5	2	1	1
7	9	6	2	5	1	8	4	3	3

Source: www.sudokuoftheday.com

Recipe – Healthy Honey Glazed Greens

Ingredients

- 6 cups assorted green vegetables in season
- 2 tbs honey
- 2 tbs vinegar
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp reduced-salt soy sauce
- 1 fresh ginger, finely chopped

Variations: Try garlic instead of ginger.

Instructions

1. Slice vegetables to same size for even cooking.
2. Steam vegetables for 6–8 minutes or microwave on HIGH (100%) for 3–4 minutes until crisp but tender.
3. Place dressing ingredients in a saucepan and simmer over low heat until honey dissolves, or microwave on HIGH (100%) for 1 minute.
4. Drain vegetables and toss through dressing. Serve immediately.

Hint: Good choices for green vegetables include zucchini, leek, celery, asparagus, green beans, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, green capsicums, snow peas and bean-shoots. A great way to empty your refrigerator crisper, or to introduce new varieties of vegetables to the family.

Recipe sourced from Livelighter. Recipe from Healthy Food Fast © State of Western Australia, 2012. Reproduced with permission. For more recipes see livelighter.com.

Learn *Something New*

Carers Victoria offers high quality training and workshops which aim to support you as a carer and enhance your knowledge and skills. Here's a snippet of what we offer. To find out more, or to see what other workshops are available, visit carersvictoria.org.au/training-workshops.

Caring for Yourself

Explore why your health and wellbeing are important and discover strategies to help you better care for yourself.

When Carers Over-Care

Explore what this concept means for you and the person you care for. This workshop provides an opportunity to reflect on your caring style and make changes to benefit both of you.

Carers Online: Introduction

Build skills and confidence to use the internet safely. This workshop is suitable for carers who have some computer skills but don't feel confident and want to learn more.

*Carers Victoria provides iPads for participants to use in this workshop.

Starting out with the NDIS

A three-part program about the NDIS process and how to get ready for an NDIS planning meeting. This program is designed specifically for carers of a person with a disability.

Communicating with Professionals

Gain practical skills to help build your confidence and improve your capacity to communicate with service professionals.

Relax and unwind: Improve your Wellbeing

This is a practical workshop to explore both relaxation techniques and a craft-based activity. It gives you an opportunity to get a sense of what best relaxes you and helps you unwind. (No artistic or craft skills required).





The magazine of Carers Victoria 2020

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Carers Victoria acknowledges the traditional owners of this land and pays respect to elders both past and present