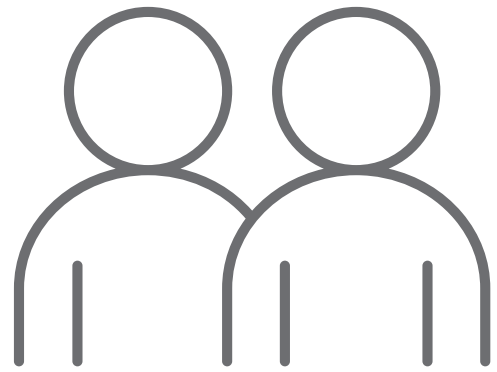


Care for Victorians

CARERS VICTORIA POLICY PLATFORM 2022 SUMMARY



Why care about carers

- › There are currently over 700,000 Victorians in unpaid caring roles.
- › Estimated that the economic cost of the support provided by Victoria's carers is equivalent to over \$19 billion every year.
- › All of us will be, or need, a carer at some point in our lives.
- › Carers play a critical role, but that role can be complex, time consuming and can be really lonely and isolating.

To sustain a carer friendly future and ensure carers can transition to COVID normal, we need to build a system based on the following priorities:

PRIORITY 1: SUPPORT CARER MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The challenge

76% of carers reported increased levels of loneliness (substantially above the 54% rate reported for the general public).

The opportunity

- › Fund dedicated carer mental health and wellbeing staff in at least 20% of locals so that all carers can access timely mental health and wellbeing support.

PRIORITY 2: SIMPLE AND FLEXIBLE SUPPORTS FOR CARERS

The challenge

Its time consuming and hard to find the things carers need, when they need them.

During the pandemic, carers were providing more care, including more complex care - over 80% of carers reported they spent more time in their care roles over the pandemic and over 50% were providing complex care that would usually be provided by trained professionals

The opportunity

- › Establish a state-wide carer advisory service that can help carers navigate complex systems.
- › Sustain and grow flexible funded support for carers so that 112,000 additional Victorians are receiving this support each year by 2026.

PRIORITY 3: SUPPORT CARERS IN CRISIS

The challenge

When a crisis occurs, solutions for people in care relationships are hard to find.

The opportunity

- › Establish a carer focussed crisis line to provide practical advice to carers in crisis situations.
- › Embed specific consideration of the needs of carers into statewide emergency planning and response activities.
- › Equip carers with practical resources to plan for the future.

PRIORITY 4: SUPPORT MORE CARERS INTO EMPLOYMENT AND STUDY

The challenge

47% of respondents changed their employment arrangements to accommodate their care relationships during the pandemic, 12% resigning or retiring to do so. Of respondents, 9% wanted help finding paid employment.

The opportunity

- › Ensure young carers are proactively supported to remain engaged in education and training.
- › Consolidate and recurrently fund local pathways and architecture to support carers into employment and training.
- › Support programs that encourage employers to recruit and retain carers.
- › The Victorian Public Service become a leader in carer employment, including the establishment of statewide targets.

PRIORITY 5: INTEGRATE CARER EXPERTISE AND INPUT INTO KEY SERVICE SYSTEMS

The challenge

Carers regularly tell us that they are excluded from key meetings that impact their ability to provide that unpaid care, or struggle to get the basic information they need to support their loved one, or that their perspectives and advice is ignored.

The opportunity

- › Recognise the role and expertise of carers in legislation governing health care, disability, mental health and other relevant areas.
- › Ensure carers are actively involved in government advisory structures to shape program design, implementation, and review.
- › Establish a program to support carers in taking up an active role across key service systems.

The good news is that there is already strong foundational work in place with work progressing to implement the recommendations of the mental health royal commission, foundational investments in carer employment and training initiatives, and the Support for Carers program.

Building on the strong whole of Victorian Government platform provided by the Victorian Carer Strategy, and leveraging the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of Carers Victoria, its members and partners, we can create a system that will sustain and empower carers as we transition to COVID normal and look to the longer term.

For more information about these priorities, go to www.carersvictoria.org.au/PolicyStatements