

# VICTORIAN CARER COVID19 SURVEY KEY THEMES

## DECEMBER 2021

### CARER MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPACTS

The mental health and wellbeing of carers was significantly impacted by the pandemic.

- 76% of carers reporting increased levels of loneliness, substantially above the 54% rate reported for the general population.
- 80% of respondents indicated their mental health had worsened since the pandemic started.

### COMPLEX CARE

Many carers reported the need to provide complex care as a supplement to scarce formal supports during lockdowns.

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

### IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT

The impacts of caring roles on a carers employment were highlighted in the survey results.

- 47% of all carers changed their employment arrangements to accommodate their care relationships during the pandemic.
- 12 % of carers resigned or retired to do so.

### UNEASE WITH 'COVID NORMAL' TRANSITION

Respondents identified feelings of nervousness about re-engaging in a COVID-normal environment.

- 72% carers indicated they would self-impose restrictions on their activities and engagement.
- 34% of carers felt that vaccine mandates for aged care workers were one of the main benefits arising from the pandemic.
- 9% of carers wanted help finding paid employment.

### RECOMMENDATION FROM CARERS

Carers expressed they are keen to see some of the innovations introduced during the pandemic continue.

- 65% of carers wanted Medicare funded telehealth consultations retained as these provided them with greater flexibility and saved on the time and expense of travel.

### RESPONDENTS

- 1,113 carers completed the survey over December 2021, aged from 10 to over 90 years. 87% of respondents identified as female.
- 68% lived in metropolitan and 32% in regional Victoria.
- 31% cared for a person with disability, 21% for an older person with care needs, 25% for a person living with mental illness, 23% cared for a person living with chronic illness (Some care recipients had multiple needs; total is over 100%).
- 25% had been in care roles for over 20 years; 29% for 11-20 years; <1% for less than a year, with 4% of respondents indicating they entered a care relationship because of the pandemic.