



FY2024-25

Annual Review

For all carers: whoever you are,
wherever you are, whoever you care for.



Our Vision

That all unpaid carers
are recognised, valued
and supported.

Our Purpose

To advance understanding
of Victoria's unpaid
carers, and improve their
access to assistance.

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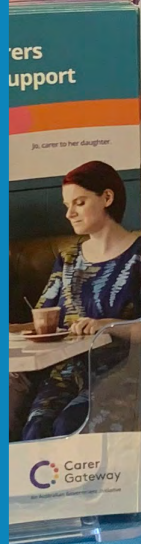


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Message from Chair

Callum Ingram

This marks my final year on the Carers Victoria Board after ten years, and I am so very proud to present the Carers Victoria 2024-25 Annual Review.

This report showcases just how far Carers Victoria has come as an organisation – in the number of carers it is reaching and assisting across the state, in continuously adapting its models to better meet carer needs, and in actively seeking the insights and wisdom of carers and translating this into strong advocacy for practical change. In the last three years alone Carers Victoria has significantly expanded our reach into regional Victoria, and also evolved the mix and ways in which we provide assistance, advice and funded support and activities for carers.

As a carer myself, knowing that there is expertise and support available has been an important thing. One of the things I am particularly proud of this year is how we have changed our Statewide Carer Advisory phone service so that around 90% of the time, a carer calling that number will get immediate advice and help from a qualified, experienced staff member without having to wait. For people like us, who can be time poor and over-stretched, this is a game-changer (and it's always good to have one less thing on the list to follow up)!



We could not do our work without support from many quarters. I extend my heartfelt thanks to every person who has worked alongside me on the Carers Victoria Board and its Committees, as well as all the Carers Victoria staff. I also thank the Victorian and Australian Governments and donors for their valuable financial contributions, as well as all our partners who support our activities.

I feel very positive about the way ahead for Carers Victoria, as it continues to fight for a future where carers are recognised, included and supported.

Thank you, all.

Callum Ingram
Chair, Carers Victoria

Message from CEO

Judith Abbott

We're here for carers – to ensure their voices are heard, their role understood and their needs supported.

In this reporting year, Carers Victoria continued to proactively grow its engagement with carers and ensure that their priorities and needs were reflected in policy and program design.

Thank you to the almost 4,300 carers who participated in surveys, focus groups and the like as the information and insights you shared are building a compelling picture of not just why carers are important, but the case for change. This shaped our input to the National Carer Strategy and a refreshed Victorian Carer Strategy, and also shaped our advocacy in areas such as disability, aged care and elder rights.

We also continued to evolve what, where and how we offer support for carers and I am really proud that in the reporting year, 50% of our support went to rural and regional carers and that we were able to provide more immediate advice and assistance to carers contacting us from across Victoria.

It's a great time to be at Carers Victoria, where we have strong and positive relationships with our funders, supporters and partners; an expert and enthusiastic governing body; and a staff group who genuinely want to change the world for Victorian carers. Thank you to all of them.



But perhaps my greatest delight for the year has been the opportunity to engage with carers at our events and other activities, and the generosity they have shown in sharing their own experiences and insights. Thank you – for what you do, and for how you keep doing it.

And rest assured, we'll keep working hard to support and advocate for you – wherever you are, wherever you live, whomever is in your care relationship. Because that's what Victoria's carers deserve.

Judith Abbott
CEO, Carers Victoria

About us

Carers Victoria is an organisation that exists to advance the understanding of Victoria's unpaid carers and improve their access to assistance across the state – regardless of who they are, where they live, or who they care for.

We provide a wide range of assistance to carers, including provision of government funded respite and support, education and training, events and other activities. We also equip carers with ongoing information and advice tailored to their needs and interests.

Alongside this, Carers Victoria is the leading voice for Victoria's carers. We generate data and analysis, we build and share evidence and insights into who carers are, what they need, and how they can be better supported and recognised.

We work with a diverse mix of partners in Government, not-for-profit and the private sector to raise overall understanding, recognition of, and support for Victoria's unpaid carers.

The Victorian Carers Recognition Act 2012 sets out care relationship principles that shape the work of Carers Victoria, and over the reporting year, we continued to deliver a diverse mix of assistance for carers in line with these principles.

Our commitment to listening to the carers voice and our deep commitment to meeting the needs of carers shapes everything we do.





Our impact FY25

Delivering timely and practical information and assistance to a diverse mix of carers



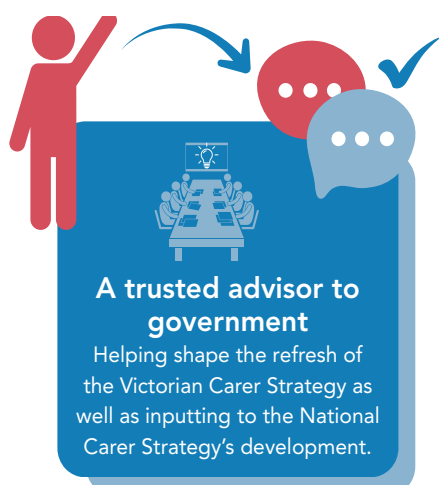
Building local networks and supports



Helping carers navigate complex systems



Advocating for meaningful change for carers



Assistance for carers

In the reporting year, Carers Victoria supported thousands of carers across the state with around 50,000 hours of funded respite, education and events, creating meaningful opportunities for carers to recharge, connect with others, and access the support they choose.

With funding and support from the Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Department of Health Victoria, we delivered a diverse mix of programs including additional respite, mental health supports and practical assistance for carers.

Our approach centered on flexibility, choice, and cultural inclusion, with offerings such as emergency respite, overnight breaks, wellbeing activities, and information sessions, all based around the needs and preferences of carers.

Support reached those who needed it the most:

- › 50% reaching carers in rural and regional areas
- › 46% of additional respite activities to carers coming from non-English speaking backgrounds.

These outcomes reflect our commitment to ensuring carers across diverse communities and locations feel seen, supported and included.





Assistance for carers

Taking time away from the caring role is an important way for carers to maintain their wellbeing.

Carers Victoria is proud to offer a range of opportunities across the state that give carers the chance to rest, recharge and connect with others.

Feedback from participants has been very positive, with many sharing that these opportunities have improved their wellbeing and helped them more supported to manage the ongoing demands of their caring role.

Through the Flexible Respite program, funded by the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), Carers Victoria delivered more than 20,000 hours of respite to older care recipients and their carers over the past year.

These service provide carers with planned breaks while ensuring the person they care for continues to receive high-quality support. This approach helps both carers and care recipients maintain their wellbeing and continue their caring relationship in a sustainable way. the person they care for continues to receive high-quality support. This approach helps both carers and care recipients maintain their wellbeing and continue their caring relationship in a sustainable way.





In the reporting year, we enhanced our Statewide Carer Advisory Service by refining our phone-based model to ensure carers could get faster, easier access to advice and support. Over the 12 months, we answered 6,705 calls and by end June 2025, around 90% of calls were being answered in real time by qualified staff.

Through these calls, carers received direct help navigating the NDIS, aged care and other complex services, reducing stress, saving time, and helping them get the services they needed, when they needed them most.

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The Carer Getaway gave all of us an opportunity to take a breath. We allowed ourselves space to explore and worked through whatever emotions came up. It was hard to slow down, to not always be on the go. Enriched our bonds/connections and we learnt a little more about each other.

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Influence

The reporting period was a busy one for engaging with parliamentarians and their departments at both a state and federal level.

Carers Victoria was pleased to contribute to the development of the National Carers Strategy through the conduct of focus groups, and feedback via the National Carers Network. It also contributed to national submissions and advice in relation to aged care quality indicators, elder abuse, national disability reforms, aged care reforms.

At a state level, Carers Victoria was actively involved in shaping the refresh of the Victorian Carer Strategy, including the conduct of focus groups and partnerships with a range of other carer sector organisations. It also made a State Budget submission, as well as a submission to the state inquiry into community consultation processes.

CEO Judith Abbott meeting with our stakeholders



Lorraine Langley, Senior Manager Policy and Insights at Carers Victoria
Tim Bull, MLA Member for Gippsland East
Shadow Minister for Disability, Ageing & Carers



Anasina Gray-Barberio for Greens
MLC for Northern Metro



Ros Spence, Minister for Carers and Volunteers
Callum Ingram, Chair at Carers Victoria

One of our goals is to make carers everybody's business, so maintaining strong relationships with a wide range of organisations has been an important part of achieving this long term goal.

Over the reporting period, this included collaboration with organisations such as Council on the Ageing Victoria, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Mental Health Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, Palliative Care Victoria, the Victorian Council of Social Services and a wide range of other carer-focused and carer- interested organisations.

It also included participating on a diverse mix of advisory groups, including:

- › Aboriginal Services Network of the West
- › Brimbank Council Carer Hub establishment committee
- › Carer Help Rural Connect, Centre for Palliative Care
- › Disability Portfolio Reference Group – Victoria Police
- › GreenConnect Dementia Project Heathcote Dementia Alliance
- › LaTrobe University Carer Economy Collaborative Network
- › Melbourne Ageing Research Collaboration
- › Melton Mental Health Network
- › National Policy Advisory Group (convened by Carers Australia)
- › Older Road User Stakeholder Reference Group (Road Safety Vic)
- › Planet Puberty Advisory Group, Family Planning NSW
- › People at Higher Risk from Fire Statewide Reference Group
- › Residential Aged Care Research Network, Monash University
- › Deakin University Carer Hub steering group
- › Victoria Police Seniors Portfolio Reference Group
- › Victorian Electoral Commission Advisory Committee
- › Victorian Youth Mental Health Policy Community of Practice
- › Wangaratta Supporting Carers Locally Network
- › Statewide Young Carer Network
- › Victorian Palliative Care Alliance

Influence

National Carers Week

In October 2024, Carers Victoria celebrated National Carers Week at a signature event attended by the Hon. Ros Spence, Minister for Agriculture, Community Sport, Carers and Volunteers and the Hon. Tim Bull, Shadow Minister for Disability, Ageing, Carers and Volunteers. It was a genuine demonstration of bipartisan government support for Victorian carers.

The event included the announcements of second round recipients of Connecting Carers in their Community Grants. Funded by the Victorian Governance Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Carers Victoria administered these grants, enabling 41 community-led projects to connect more carers to supports within their communities.





Influence



Connections remained a key focus for the reporting year, with Carers Victoria continuing to support peer networks across the state.

- › 377 Carer Support Groups registered with Carers Victoria, a 10% increase over the reporting period.
- › 22,000 individual carers have benefited from Carers Victoria's increased reach and support.

With a focus on building local capacity, Carers Victoria delivered:

- › 8 education sessions for Carer Support Group facilitators to develop key skills.
- › 146 Carer Support Groups received funding from Carers Victoria to facilitate activities for their members, reaching more than 3,300 carers.

We ran over 150 education sessions, including sessions designed to help carers navigate support systems. Carers Victoria also launched the "Ask an Expert" series, inviting carers to hear from a range of industry experts on topics such as the NDIS, financial support for carers, accessing aged care support, and mental health.



Carers Victoria awarded 134 Young Carer Scholarships, with 100 of the scholarships funded by the Collie Foundation, and 34 funded by Carers Victoria.

- › 36% of recipients were in rural and regional Victoria
- › 70% of recipients were caring for a sibling
- › 95% of recipients felt more valued as a young carers as a result of the grants.



36%

of recipients lived in rural and regional Victoria



70%

of recipients were caring for a sibling



95%

of recipients felt more valued as a young carers as a result of the scholarship

Innovation

Throughout the year, we invested time and effort in understanding how we could better support carers, both now and into the future. Much of this year was focused on planning, listening and building the foundation for improvements that will roll out across 2025 – 2026.

Innovation is not just about technology or big changes. It's about listening to carers, learning from their experiences, and adapting the way we work – so that every carer, no matter where they live or what their circumstances, can access the support they need.

The Statewide Carer Advisory Service continues to be one of the primary ways carers across Victoria access information and guidance. This year, we focused on strengthening the service through upgraded infrastructure and enhancements to service delivery, so carers continue to receive timely, clear and relevant information.

These developments ensure every carer who contacts the Advisory Service feels heard, understood and better equipped to navigate their caring role.

We also reviewed how our services are delivered in regional and remote areas, where carers can face additional barriers to accessing support. Building on this work, in the next financial year we will have representation across the state, with Regional Carer Navigators working closely with carers in six regions and collaborating with local community services to raise awareness of the supports available. This approach will make it easier for carers outside metropolitan areas to access information and assistance, helping them feel connected, supported, and confident in their caring role.

Innovation was also visible in the way we delivered events and activities. Our events now include more practical information to help carers in everyday life. A great example being our Mingle events, which featured new sessions on educating carers about financial scams and fraud, which many carers had told us they were concerned about.

We partnered with Beyond Bank, who provided expert advice and clear, easy-to-understand information. Feedback from carers was overwhelmingly positive, with many saying they now feel more confident spotting scams and protecting their finances.

This is just one example of how we are incorporating carer feedback and capacity building into our programs, strengthening carers' knowledge and skills for better outcomes in their everyday lives.

February 2025 saw the publication of the longitudinal evaluation impact report on Carers Victoria's In Touch Online Carer Wellbeing & Connection program, supported by the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN). The evaluation by The ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation & the Primary Care Mental Health Research Program, University of Melbourne found the program significantly decreased levels of loneliness, and psychological distress and increased the level of support carers felt.

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It's been reassuring to know that there's someone to turn to during challenging times. The staff have been kind and understanding, and the resources shared have made a real difference. Thank you for being a reliable source of help.

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Our Purpose

Advance understanding
of Victoria's unpaid carers,
and improve their access
to assistance



Intelligence

In the reporting year, Carers Victoria expanded its focus on evaluation and gathering carer insights. This allowed us to develop and share richer insights about who carers are, what they need, and what's changing for them.

In the period, almost 4,300 Victorian carers completed surveys, participated in focus groups or provided feedback and insights through other mechanisms. We were pleased to see a 16% increase in the number of Victorian carers completing the annual Australian Carer Wellbeing survey strengthening our evidence base in this important area.

Carer focus groups represent one stream of this work, providing an opportunity to both hear whatever issues carers wish to raise, and to 'deep dive' into areas that other data sources cannot readily inform. Over the past year, we have held conversations with carers from regional, rural and metropolitan areas and from a range of age groups and backgrounds. This included dedicated focus groups with young carers in July 2024 to ensure their voices were elevated in the Commonwealth Government's process to develop a National Carer Strategy.

A survey of carers who had received support from Carers Victoria over 2024-25 provided valuable insights into how carers experienced their engagement with Carers Victoria, and the impact it had.

We also asked carers to express their interest in focus group participation to inform the Victorian Government's refresh of the Victorian Carer Strategy, receiving over 700 applications for an initial 40 places.

To enable more carers to participate, we provided a second round of focus groups, enabling over 120 carers to take part in focus groups conducted by Carers Victoria over the period November 2024 – February 2025. Nine focus groups, held both online and face-to-face, were facilitated by experts with extensive knowledge about carers and care relationships, covering themes which carers told us were of interest:

- › supports for carers,
- › personal health and wellbeing,
- › employment and education, and
- › older carers/carers of older people.

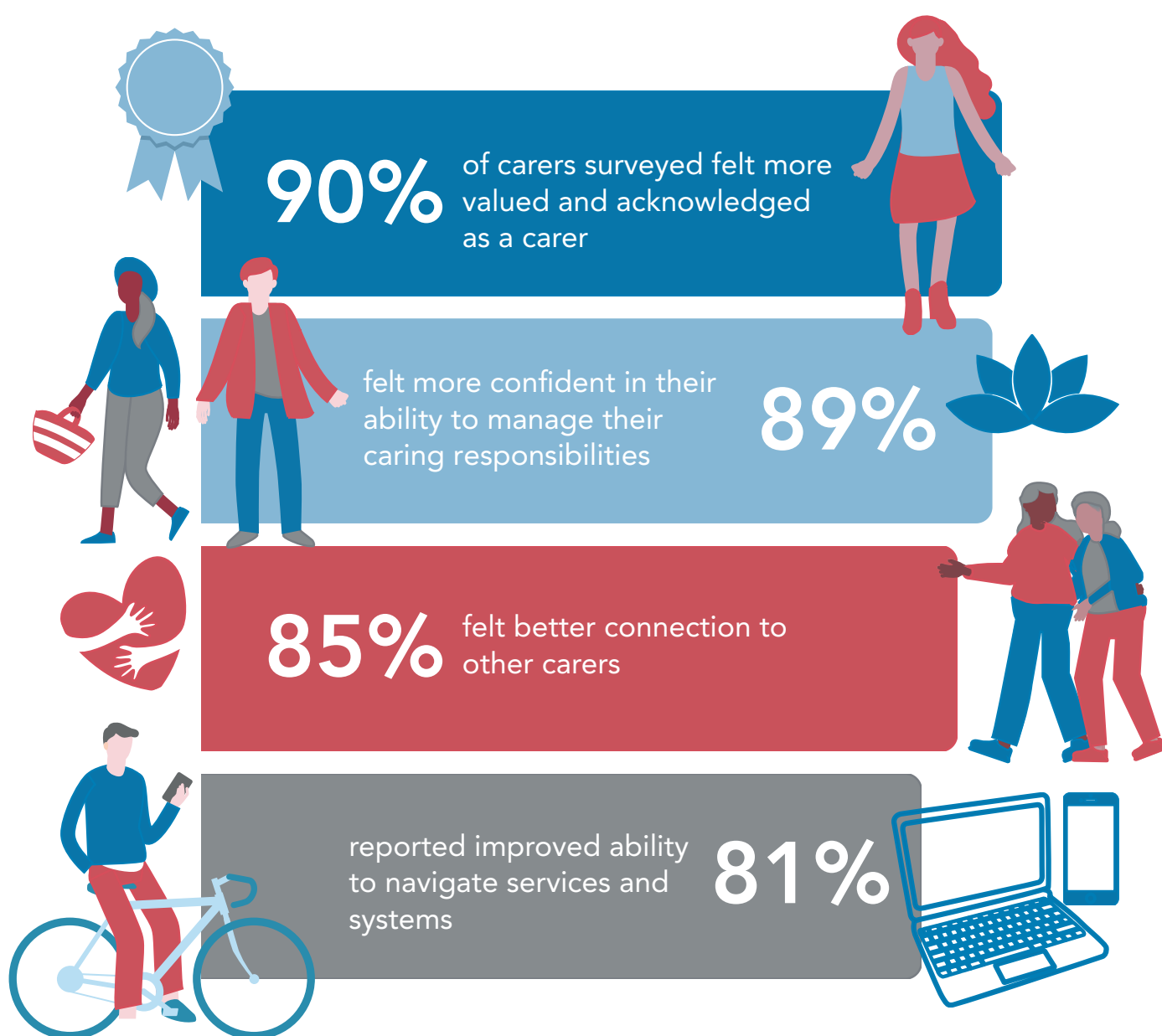
We focused on carers' experience with Carers Victoria, their perceptions of how contact with us contributed to improved outcomes, including feeling supported and connected to other carers, and their suggestions for improvements we could make to our support.

A large majority of carers reported that their experience with Carers Victoria contributed to improved outcomes, including:

- › 90% of carers surveyed felt more valued and acknowledged as a carer
- › 89% felt more confident in their ability to manage their caring responsibilities
- › 85% felt better connection to other carers
- › 81% reported improved ability to navigate services and systems

Major growth in the number of Victorian carers sharing their insights and feedback:

- › Almost 4,300 Victorian carers completing surveys, participating in focus groups, providing other feedback
- › 16% increase in the number of Victoria carers participating in the annual wellbeing survey
- › More than double the number of clients completing the annual Carers Victoria survey



Independence and partnerships

Our work is underpinned by the generous support of government funders, private donors, corporate partners and sponsors. This is critical to extending understanding and recognition of carers more broadly across our community, while the additional revenue generated through these efforts supported a range of assistance for carers across the state.

Carers Victoria gratefully acknowledges:

- › the significant funding support of the Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Victoria, the Department of Health Victoria, and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- › the support for the InTouch program provided by the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network
- › our partnership with cohealth, which supports delivery of carer focused services at the Brimbank Mental Health and Wellbeing Local
- › the support of organisations providing pro bono or in-kind support over the reporting period, in particular the pro bono assistance provided by MinterEllison Lawyers
- › individual donors whose generous support enabled important initiatives to continue, such as our Carer Getaways program
- › The Collie Foundation for its support of the Young Carer Scholarships program

A range of organisations contributed to our carer activities, as exhibitors or through the provision of other financial and/or in-kind support:

- › Accor
- › Alfred Health
- › Beyond Bank
- › CareChoice
- › Carer Gateway
- › Each
- › Estia Health
- › Julie Fisher Advocate / Author
- › Little Dreamers
- › LiveUp
- › Mind Australia
- › Moira Connect
- › Satellite Foundation
- › Silverchain
- › The Garage Studio Photography
- › Whitehorse City Council



In addition, Carers Victoria recognises the contribution of a wide range of program partners, who nominated staff to assist in grants assessment processes as well as the linking of carers to targeted supports:

- › Alfred Health
- › Amaze Australia
- › Aspire Support Services
- › Brimbank Community and Civic Centre
- › Centre for Participation
- › Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House
- › Down Syndrome Victoria
- › ermha365
- › Grampians Community Health
- › Grampians Health
- › Heathcote Dementia Alliance
- › Hume Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect / Gateway Health
- › Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS)
- › Mpower
- › Orygen - Youth Health Australia: Parkville Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
- › Royal Melbourne Hospital - Waratah Clinic
- › Tandem
- › Uniting Vic.Tas
- › Upper Murray Family Care (UMFC)
- › VMCH



Supporting diversity and inclusion

In the reporting year, we supported community projects that focused on neurodiversity, disability, and a range of cultural groups:

- › Indian
- › Filipino
- › Vietnamese
- › African
- › Sri Lankan
- › Congolese
- › Syrian
- › Bhutanese / Nepalese
- › Fijian
- › Pakistani
- › Chinese
- › Egyptian
- › Iraqi
- › Palestinian
- › Australian First Nation peoples
- › Deaf community.



Carers Victoria is committed to inclusion and diversity both in our work and in our workplace.

Continuing the reconciliation journey

Carers Victoria sustained a strong commitment to progressing on our reconciliation journey with First Nations community, and in the reporting period we progressed development of our next Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. We also continued to build our relationship with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, including continued support for community controlled approaches to supporting care relationships in Aboriginal communities.

Fostering an inclusive workplace

Carers Victoria is a Rainbow Tick accredited organisation, and over the period continued to progress practical actions to provide a warm and welcoming environment for its LGBTIQ+ staff alongside exploring strategies to better support LGBTIQ+ carers.



Supporting diversity and inclusion



We delivered support and connection across over 10 languages:

- › Afghan – Dari
- › Arabic
- › Auslan (Australian Sign Language)
- › Cantonese
- › Chin languages – Karen
- › Congolese
- › Farsi
- › Indian languages (multiple)
- › Mandarin
- › Peek Whuurong language (Aboriginal language of southwestern Victoria)
- › Spanish



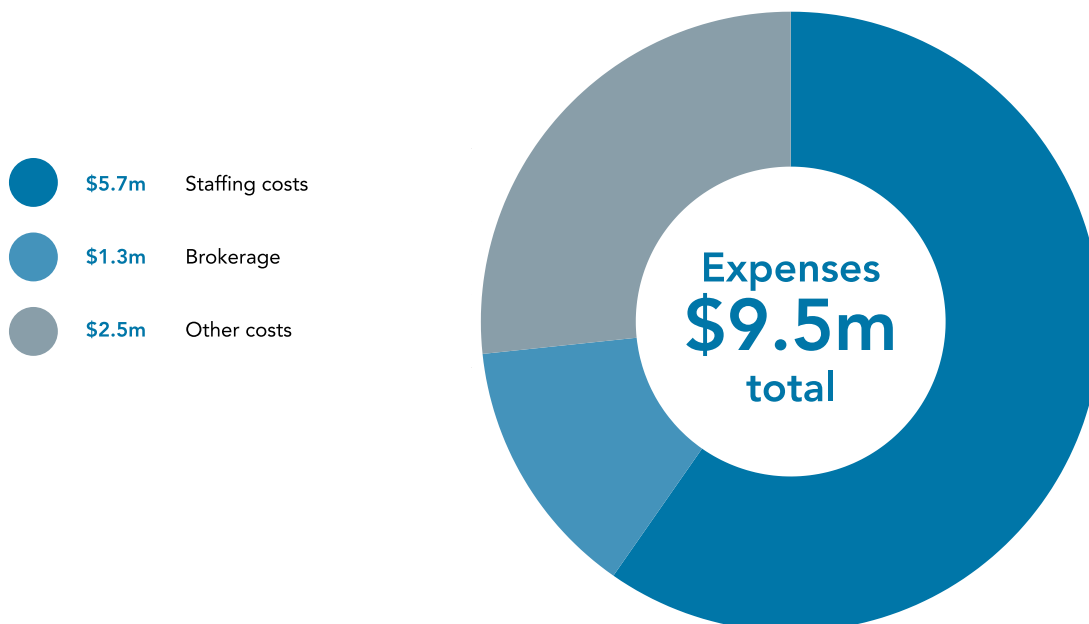
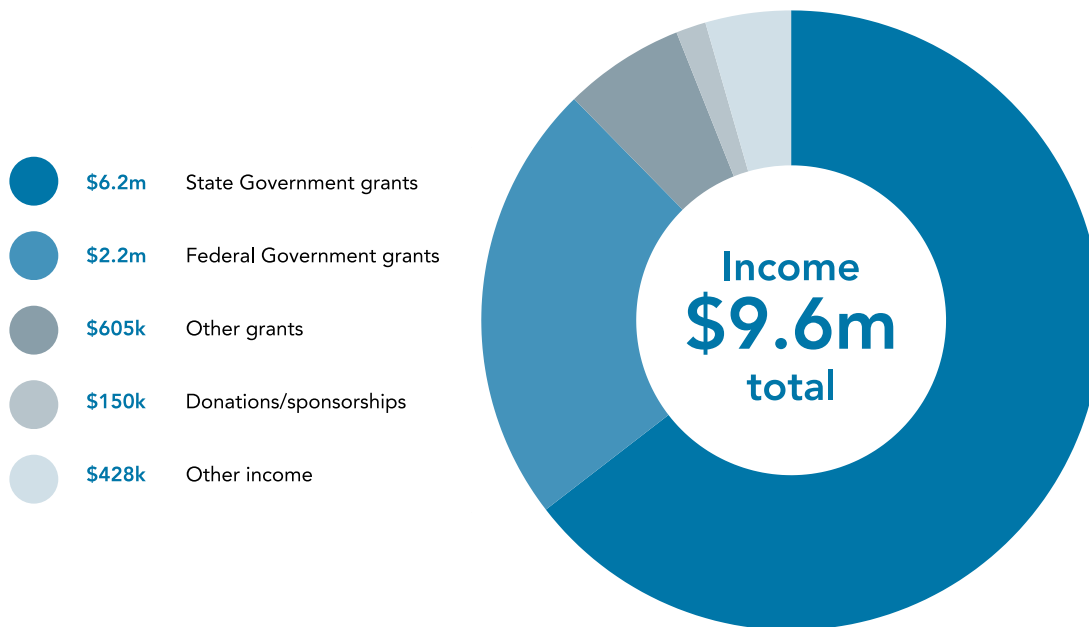
Financial report

As per previous years, operating income for 2024–25 primarily comprised Victorian and Australian Government funding, in addition to funding sourced through project grants, donations and sponsorships.

The income and expense figures below do not include unrealised gains of \$314K from investment activities. Cash generated through investment activities is utilised to fund strategic projects to the benefit of carers, in line with Carers Victoria's purpose and objects.

The breakdown of operating income and expenses on the following page reflects the figures confirmed via external audit following the close of the financial year on 30 June 2025.







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Carers Victoria is supported by the Victorian Government and the Australian Department of Health and Ageing.

ABN 12 533 636 427 ACN 143 579 257



Carers Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the continuing connection to land and waters. Sovereignty was never ceded.