



WA Carers Strategy



Carers in WA

An estimated 320,000 West Australians are providing unpaid personal care to family and friends who require assistance with everyday living. However, very few members of the community are aware of the role and contribution of carers.

As the population ages the need for carers will grow. Many of us will need care or become carers ourselves.

320,000 – estimated number of West Australians providing unpaid personal care.

Carers assist the people they care for to:

- maintain their independence and remain in their home for as long as possible
- stay connected with and involved in the community
- have choice and control over their own lives
- live with dignity
- continue to live with their families and friends
- achieve and maintain quality of life.

\$60 billion – estimated annual replacement value of care to the Australian economy.

By putting the interest of the person they care for ahead of their own needs, carers may be at an increased risk of:

- social isolation
- disconnection from education and employment
- poor physical and mental health
- limited opportunities to pursue life goals.

Recognising and supporting carers is critical to the future of carers and the people they care for.

Recognising and supporting carers is everyone's responsibility: government, non-government organisations, the private sector and the whole community. We need to recognise the important role of carers and take the necessary steps to ensure that carers can access the support they need.

Many of us will need care or become carers ourselves.

Vision

West Australian carers will be:

- recognised and valued for making a positive difference to the lives of families, friends, the community and the people they care for
- able to access support to build their capacity to care as well as maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities, their own wellbeing and pursuing life goals
- able to access the same life opportunities as all West Australians and participate in the community as full and equal citizens
- included as key partners in care and their knowledge and experience will be respected.

Priority 1 - Awareness, Identification and Recognition

What carers told us

“It was about two years into looking after him that I realised I was a carer – and that was when I was asked if I was the primary carer.”

Outcomes

Carers' contributions will be recognised and respected by the community.

Carers' diverse situations, circumstances and backgrounds will be respected and accommodated.

Strategies

Support people to self-identify as carers, including carers from diverse backgrounds.

Develop and implement specific initiatives to improve carer identification.

Raise awareness to support early identification of carers.

Promote and celebrate carers' valuable contribution to the community.

Support service providers to meet the specific needs of carers from diverse backgrounds, particularly carers who identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, older carers, young carers, carers of diverse sexual orientations, and carers living in regional and remote areas.

Priority 2 - Respected Partners in Care

What carers told us

“Why don't they listen more to the carer? We have a lot of knowledge about her condition, but they don't ask.”

Outcome

Carers will be respected and included as partners in care.

Strategies

Ensure and/or encourage respect for carers' knowledge and experience.

Ensure and/or encourage the inclusion of carers in care and discharge planning, and their engagement in decision making.

Facilitate the inclusion of carers and carers' needs in planning and decision making across all levels of government.

Priority 3 - Supporting Carers

What carers told us

“The information is there, but the problem is linking it to carers. They need to be made aware that it exists.

“Carers need to develop their own care plan.”

Outcomes

Carers will have access to appropriate services and information that support them to care with confidence and maintain their personal wellbeing.

Carers will be able to balance their caring responsibilities, personal wellbeing and life outside of caring.

Strategies

Ensure carers can easily access information, advice and support.

Support carers to remain physically and mentally well.

Support carers to pursue life opportunities alongside their caring responsibilities.

Support carers to perform their full range of daily care responsibilities.

Priority 4 - Participation in Education and Employment

What carers told us

“The company has been good to me, but I really put my career on hold over the last five years.”

Outcomes

Carers will have the same life choices and opportunities as other members of the community.

Young carers will be supported to learn, develop and thrive, and enjoy positive childhoods.

Strategies

Support carers to participate in education.

Support carers to return to or remain in employment.

Support employers and education providers to understand carers roles, responsibilities and needs.