

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS COVID-19 IMPACT ON GRANDPARENTING

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National Seniors Australia has today released new research on the grandparenting activities of older Australians.

The peak advocacy and consumer organisation for older Australians, released the research as part of a major report called 'Australian Grandparents Care' and follows research released last week into unpaid care.

The report has noted the impact COVID-19 has had on the care grandparents provide by the hole it's left because of older Australians having to socially isolate and therefore unable to look after their grandchildren.

National Seniors CEO Professor John McCallum describes grandparenting as being like 'intergenerational Lego'.

"It links the generations strongly and this was taken apart during the COVID-19 shutdown and is being put back together as social restrictions ease," he said.

Among the research findings were:

- About a quarter of older Australians were providing regular care for grandchildren
- The average hours spent grandparenting was 12 hours per week with women working more hours than men
- They were typically aged 60-79 years
- Those grandparenting tended to be better off and healthier than others
- 9 out of 10 men grandparenting were partnered, compared to 6 out of 10 women
- Overall women and men who were partnered were the most likely to be grandparenting
- One quarter of those grandparenting were also caring for another adult
- A group was identified as the 'sandwich group' who cared for both grandchildren and their own parents though this group was very small.

Some participants in the research gave positive descriptions of the grandparenting experience such as: 'love, 'joy', 'a privilege' and 'excitement'.

The research also found that people clearly distinguished grandparenting from actual parenting including descriptions such as: 'passing on wisdom', 'connectedness', 'financial savings for families', 'sharing life experiences' and 'feeling vital'.

However, there were negative descriptions where respondents described: 'being used', 'obligated', 'having no choice', 'excessive demands', 'feeling undervalued', "high personal sacrifice and 'financial costs of caring'.

COVID-19 has also highlighted the significance of grandparenting because the shutdown prevented it and left major gaps in childcare and education.

"Grandparenting is an intergenerational gift to families and the nation," said Professor McCallum

"It will become even more important as families face financial hardship and the Government deals with the COVID-19 deficit."

Professor McCallum says grandparenting will remain one of the many ways older people can make a social and economic contributions to new generations of Australians.

"Like Lego it can be taken apart and reconnected as we come out of the COVID-19 shutdown, but it continues to create significant economic value."

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Professor John McCallum is available for comment, call 0488 047 380 to arrange an interview

Read the full report [here](#).