



Research reveals toll on older carers | Carers Week Oct 11 – 17

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To coincide with National Carers Week October 11 – 17, National Seniors Australia (NSA) has released new research that highlights the critical care older carers provide and the impacts caring has on them.

Around 800 current older carers informed the report *[Older Australians' Experiences as Carers](#)*.

"Caring is often an invisible financial, mental, and physical contribution that takes its toll. Yet, it is also often underestimated and unappreciated by society," NSA Head of Research Dr Diane Hosking said.

"The carers we surveyed included significantly higher numbers of women, averaged more chronic health conditions and felt tighter financially compared to non-carers. Most cared for people aged 70 and older, with spouses and parents making up the largest proportions of care recipients."

Key Findings:

- 58% of current carers reported negative impacts from caring
- 89% had not accessed respite care – only 29 individuals mentioned the government's Carer Gateway when asked about carer support
- Over 60% provided care to someone nearly full time or daily
- 23% provided care to more than one person
- 34% were the sole carer for the care recipient (person receiving care).

Carer's reported various negative impacts on their lives because of the caring role. Fifty-eight percent of participants said their mental health was impacted, 46% said their physical health was affected. And sadly, 44% indicated their relationship with the person they care for had been impacted negatively.

Several older carers mentioned it was difficult to provide care when they themselves had disabilities, chronic pain, or other limitations due to ageing. Many despaired at the inability to ever be spontaneous and the loss of their sense of self. Others felt grief about losing opportunities to fulfill long-held retirement plans and aspirations due to their caring responsibilities.

"These negatives are a serious problem for the individuals affected and the community. Heavy caregiving burden contributes to the [projected 'carer gap'](#) between the increasing need for care in the population and the availability of informal carers who support the viability of the care economy," Dr Hosking said.

"Those who have intense care responsibilities without adequate support or respite often don't have the time or resources to look after their own wellbeing. Consequently, the physical and mental demands of providing care contribute to carers' poor health. Essentially, carers become unable to care for others and are more likely to need care themselves.

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“This year, as we mark National Carers Week October 11 to 17, let’s talk about what older carers do, and what older carers need. Let’s champion better support and recognition for Australia’s unsung lifelines to those in need.”

NSA recommends the Federal Government:

1. Implement recommendations of the 2023 [Parliamentary Inquiry into the recognition of unpaid carers](#), and legislate carers’ rights, following international examples such as the UK.
2. Intensify communications campaigns to promote existing carer supports including Carer Gateway, recognising the enormity of what carers do and the barriers they face to access help.

Please read the full report [here](#).

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