

NEW RESEARCH - UNPAID CARERS AND COVID-19 CHALLENGES

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A major investigation into the care that older Australians provide at home has been released today by National Seniors Australia.

The peak consumer advocacy body for older Australians has found that unpaid carers are facing challenges looking after their loved ones whilst being poorly supported, and almost unrecognised. These people are now providing care through the COVID-19 crisis.

The key findings of the Report “Who Cares? Seniors Do” were:

- Of 4,139 participants aged 50+ in the survey, 22% were providing care to partners, parents and adult children
- They did this, unpaid, out of love
- They spent an average of 26 hours a week caring and some were full-time, 7-days a week
- Over half of these unpaid carers provided high to medium levels of care
- Most did not have care plans nor had they accessed government support
- They had more health problems than others who were not providing care, and
- More practical, psychological and informational support is needed to maintain this essential workforce.

“We’ve found that older carers provide care to loved ones at no expense to the economy, but it’s at the expense of their own health, wellbeing and finances,” says National Seniors Australia CEO, Professor John McCallum.

“This care work is continuing on through the pandemic but without the recognition that volunteer firefighters received during the bushfires. They are truly unsung heroes when you look at the statistics.”

“As we accumulate debt stopping the spread of COVID-19, this volunteer care workforce will become even more important, so it makes sense to support and recognise their service. They are the care workers who we haven’t yet applauded,” said Professor McCallum.

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