



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



National Carer Strategy: Discussion paper



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Respect for Country



We respect the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** living in Australia.

They were the first people in Australia and have **different cultures**. This means they have:

- Different ways of living.
- Speak lots of languages other than English.



We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still have a special relationship with:

- Their land.
- Their water.
- Their culture.
- Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



We thank their leaders now and from a long time ago.

About this paper



The Department of Social Services wrote this paper. When you see the word 'we', 'us', or 'our', it means the Department of Social Services.



We wrote this paper in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.



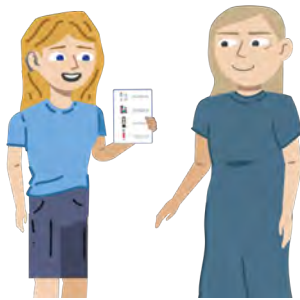
This paper has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word:

- We will write it in **bold**.
- We will explain what the hard word means.



This Easy Read paper tells you the most important ideas from another paper.



You can ask for help to read this paper.
A friend, family member or **support person** can help you.

A support person is someone who helps you with things you find hard to do by yourself.

This paper is for the **National Carer Strategy**.



This is a plan that the Government is making to help carers in Australia.

In this paper, we call it 'the Plan'.



This paper is about people who are unpaid **carers**.



A carer is a family member or friend who looks after someone most days because they need lots of help.

Carers help:



- Children with extra needs.



- People with disability.



- People who have a body or mind that is very sick.



- People who are older and need help to move around.

If you need help



You may read information in this paper that upsets you.

If you need help to feel better after reading this paper, you can get help from these free services.



Carer Gateway

They can help you to find services and supports for carers.



You can talk to them on the phone from Monday to Friday between 8 am and 5 pm.

Their number is 1800 422 737.



You can visit their website at:

<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>



Beyond Blue

You can talk to them if you feel very sad or upset and the sad feeling does not go away for 2 weeks or longer.



You can talk to them on the phone anytime everyday of the week.

Their number is 1300 224 636.

You talk to them online between 3 pm and 12 am everyday of the week.



You can send them an email to ask about free appointments with someone who can help you with feelings that are upsetting.



You can visit their website at:

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Lifeline Crisis Support



They can help you if life feels like too much and you want to hurt yourself.

You can talk to them on the phone anytime everyday of the week.

Their number is 13 11 14.



You can send them a text message anytime.

The text number is 0477 13 11 14.



You can talk to them online anytime.



You can visit their website at:

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/>

1800 RESPECT



You can talk to them about someone who has hurt you or touched you in a way you do not like.



You can talk to them on the phone anytime everyday of the week.

Their number is 1800 737 732.



You can talk to them online anytime.



You can visit their website at:

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>



13 YARN

This is a service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



You can talk to them on the phone anytime everyday of the week.

Their number is 13 92 76.



You can visit their website at:

<https://www.13yarn.org.au/>



QLife

This is a service for people who are **LGBTQIA+**.

LGBTQIA+ means:

- Lesbian.
- Gay.
- Bisexual.
- Transgender.
- Queer.
- Intersex.
- Asexual.
- Other sexually and gender diverse people.



You can talk to them on the phone between 3 pm and 12 am everyday of the week.

Their number is 1800 184 527.



You can visit their website at:

<https://qlife.org.au/>

What this paper is for



This paper is a way for carers to tell us:

- What is important to them.
- What should be in the Plan we are making to help them.



We want to hear from carers from different backgrounds so we can help all of them better.

This includes:



- People from cities and who live far away.



- Young carers.



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



- People from different cultures.



This paper tells you about the problems we already know about.

It is a way for you to think about what you want to tell us about being a carer.



You can tell us what you think by writing answers to our questions.

You can also tell us what you have found hard instead. We want to know what you think should be in the Plan.

We will tell you where to send your written answers at the end of this paper.

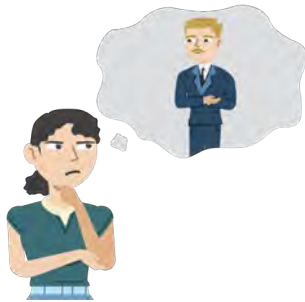
What is the Plan?



The Plan will help carers and their families in Australia over 5 years.



It will tell us about the different problems of carers and what help they get at the moment.



Carers have told us that it takes too long to get help because the way the Government does things is too hard.



We want to make it easier for carers to get help by doing things the same way in all areas of Government.



To understand how Australia helps carers at the moment, we want to hear about how carers are different.



We will look at:

- The needs of each carer.

This includes:

- Their age.
- Their gender or sexuality.
- If they have a disability or health condition.
- If they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- If they are from a different culture.
- How many people they care for.
- How many people are in their family.



- The needs of the people getting care.

This includes:

- Their physical needs.
- Their mental health needs.
- Their emotional needs.
- If they get care because they will die soon.
- How long they have needed care.



- What help carers can get if they live in the city or far away.



- What services carers get help from.

This includes:

- Veterans affairs.
- Aged care.
- Disability.
- Mental health.
- Health or **palliative** care.

Palliative means helping people who are very sick feel less pain if their illness cannot be cured.



We want to better understand the problems of:

- Young carers who are under 25 years old.



- Older carers who are over 65 years old.



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.



- Carers from different cultures.



We want to know:

- How the Plan can improve your everyday life.
- Whether changes to services you get help from made it harder to be a carer.
- What we can do to make it easier for you to get help from services.

How we are making the Plan



We are making the Plan with a group of people called the **National Carer Strategy Advisory Committee**.

People who are part of this group include:

- Carers from different backgrounds.
- Other people that carers have asked us to talk to.



This group will help us make the Plan by telling us:

- What the Plan should include.
- What information will help us understand carers better.
- What questions we should ask carers.
- What are the most important things we should talk about.



Everyone in the group will get to talk about what it is like to be a carer.

This will make sure that the Plan includes different problems that unpaid carers have.



If you would like to find out more information about this group, you can visit our website.

[National Carer Strategy Advisory Committee | Department of Social Services, Australian Government \(dss.gov.au\).](https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-carers/national-carer-strategy-advisory-committee)

<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-carers/national-carer-strategy-advisory-committee>

What we mean by ‘carer’



In this paper, we only talk about carers who are unpaid. This includes both children and adults who are carers.

Carer



We know that not everyone thinks of themselves as a 'carer'.

This may be because:

- They see their bond with the person they care for to be the same as before the person needed more help.



- They think that it makes the person they care for feel bad and like they cannot make choices by themselves.



- It is hard for them to see that they have less time to:

- Work.
- Talk to their family.
- Look after themselves.



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from different cultures use other words for someone who cares for another person.



If you do not call yourself a carer, we want to know if you use another word instead.



We know that some people take turns with someone else to look after the person they care for.

If you look after them the most without getting paid for it, then we call you a **primary carer**.



When we talk about carers, we do not mean people who already look after children every day.

This includes people who are a:

- Parent.
- Grandparent.
- Family member.
- **Foster carer.**

A foster carer means someone who looks after a child when the parents of the child cannot. This could be for a short time to a few years.



When we talk about carers, we mean people who look after children who need extra help.

This includes if they have a:

- Disability.
- Health condition.
- Mental illness.



If you are a carer of a child who does not need extra help, you can get help by talking to the **Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Adviser**.

You can talk to the Adviser on the phone.

Their number is 1800 245 965.



You can also find more information on our website.

[Where to get help.](#)

<https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-programs-services-children-protecting-australias-children/where-to-get-help#a2>

Why we need a Plan



Carers have told us about the problems they have.

They have told us that:



- We need to look at the needs of all unpaid carers.



- We need to make sure that paid and unpaid carers work better together. This is so people who need help get the right care.

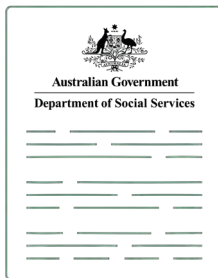


- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need services that respect their cultures.



- We need care services that fit the needs of carers who live in the same area, like for:

- Physical and mental health.
- Help with money.
- Taking breaks.



- We need to make paperwork and Government services easier to get help from.

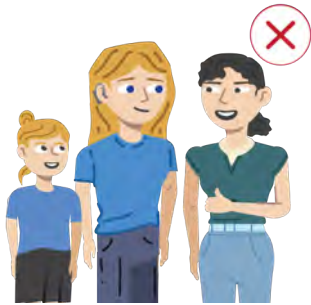


Carers have told us that that they have less time to:

- Work.



- Go to school.



- Talk to family and friends.



- Look after themselves.



Carers might think that it is more important for them to look after the person they care for than themselves.

This can stop them from:

- Going to the doctor when they are sick.



- Getting enough exercise.



- Getting enough sleep.



- Spending time with family and friends.



- Asking for help.



Carers can look after themselves better if it is easier for them to:

- Get faster help from services.
- Get help from paid carers so they can take a break.



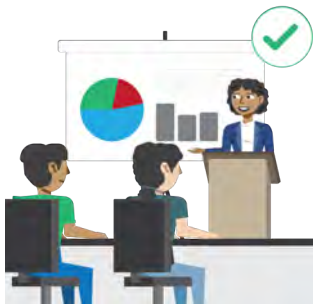
We know that different types of help are good for carers.

These include:

- Taking breaks.



- Having choices about when and where you work.



- Going to classes that teach you new skills and help you to care for someone better.



- Talking to a doctor who can help you deal with upsetting feelings.



- Talking to other carers.



We know that it is harder for some carers to get help.

You may find it harder if:

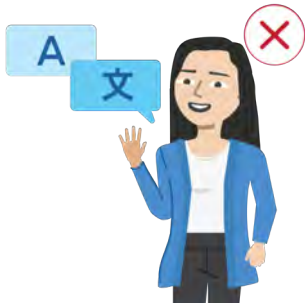
- You are a carer who lives far away from cities.



- You care for someone who needs help with lots of different things.



- It is hard for you to move between places.



- You do not speak English as your main language.

We know that some groups of carers have different problems when they try to get help.

These groups include:



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



- People from different cultures.



- Young carers.



- Carers who are LGBTQIA+ or care for people who are.



It may be harder for these groups of carers to:

- Work.



- Go to school.



- Look after themselves.



- Talk to family and friends about who they are and feel like they belong.

We can make it easier for these groups of carers to get help by:



- Finding out what we need to change.
- Giving them the right kind of support.
- Letting other people know about the changes needed.

What you think



We want to know how we can better help carers and the people they care for.



You can talk to us even if you do not call yourself a carer.



We have questions that we want lots of carers to answer.

You do not have to answer all of the questions to tell us what you think should be in the Plan.



1. What rules do you think we should have when we are making the Plan?

You might think that we should:

- Listen to carers.



- Think about what carers from different backgrounds need.



- Think about what services carers need at different times.



These rules can be things that you think we should do now or in the future.



2. What is it like for you to be a carer?

- Are you a primary carer?
- Do you have family or other people who help you care for someone?
- What activities do you help the person you care for do?

You might help them with:

- Cooking.
- Spending money.
- Taking them places.



3. What help do you need to be a better carer? Are there any skills you want to learn?

This might include:

- Learning to care for people with different needs.
- How to be safe when caring for people.



4. Do you know what help you can get to be a better carer?

- Do you know how to find and get help from services?
- Have you used carer services before?



5. If you have used carer services before:

- What worked well?
- What problems did you have?



Carers have told us that taking a break can help them:

- Feel less tired.
- Look after themselves better.



Carers can get **respite care**.

This is when carers take a break and they get someone else to look after the person they care for. This can be for a short or long time.



We know that not everyone likes the words respite care.

We want to know why.



6. What has stopped you from taking a break? What would make you feel better about getting help from respite care in the future?



7. What do you do at the moment when you need someone else to look after the person you care for?



8. What can workplaces and schools do to help carers do better in these places?



9. What help can you get in the workplace or at school at the moment that has worked well for you?



10. What is the best way to help carers keep or get a job or stay in school?



11. What are the 3 most important problems you have as a carer?



12. How can we make life easier for carers and the people they care for?



13. Have you talked to other carers?
How did it help you? How could it
have been better?



We want to help carers from different
backgrounds who find it harder to get help.

14. If you are from a different background,
how can we make sure that the
problems you have are best
included in the Plan?



15. How can the Plan make it easier for
you and the background you are part of
to get help?



16. What are the most important
problems we need to fix to better
help carers from your same background?



The Government gives money to carers who do not get paid as much because they have less time to work.

This money is called **Carer Payment** or **Carer Allowance**.



It helps carers have more choice about how much they work so the people they look after still get the right care.



17. How well do you think the way we give carers money is working?

- How can we make it easier for carers to show that they need money from us?
- What problems have you had with showing us why you need money from us?



Many bad things have happened in Australia because of the weather.

This includes:

- Storms.
- Floods.
- Fires.
- Earthquakes.



It is hard to get help fast when you need to get to a safe place.

18. Have you ever needed help to get away fast while you were looking after someone?

- What problems did you have with getting help when you needed to get away fast?
- Were you helped in the best way for you and the person you care for?



This might include:

- Was it easy for wheelchairs to get to a safe place?



Were there quiet rooms in the safe place?

Do you want to tell us more about this?



19. What else do you want to tell us about being a carer?

Where to send your answers



You can send us your written answers online at:

[National Carer Strategy.](#)

<https://engage.dss.gov.au/national-carer-strategy/>

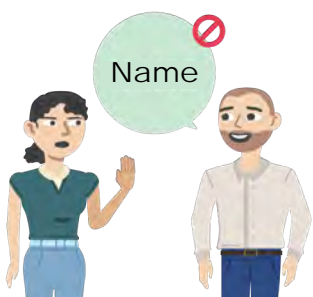


In your answers, please tell us what questions you are telling us about.

You do not have to answer all of the questions.



If you work for an organisation, please include proof from carers that shows why you think we should fix problems in a certain way.



Please do not tell us the names of these carers in your answers.

You can tell us their name if they have said that it is okay.



When you send us your answers, we will ask you if you want the information to be shared with your name on our website.

If you say no, we will not share your name.



If you want more information about keeping your name secret, you can visit this website.

[Privacy Policy | Department of Social Services, Australian Government.](https://www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy)

<https://www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy>



We know that carers do not have much time to answer questions.

If you do not have much time, you can answer a short list of questions online.

You can answer all of the questions or just the ones you think are most important.



You can find the list of questions at:

[National Carer Strategy.](#)

<https://engage.dss.gov.au/national-carer-strategy/>



You have until 11:59 pm **AEST** on 13 September 2024 to tell us what you think should be in the Plan.

AEST means if you live in:

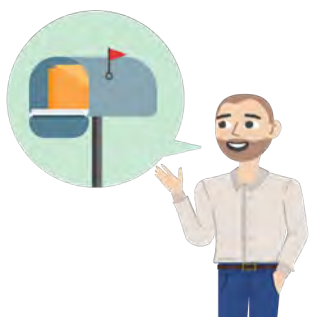
- Queensland.
- New South Wales.
- Victoria.
- Tasmania.
- Australian Capital Territory.

If you do not live in these states, you can ask a support person to help you find out the right time.



If you need help or more information, you can email us at:

NationalCarerStrategy@dss.gov.au



You can also send us a letter to this address:

National Carer Strategy GPO Box 9820

Department of Social Services Canberra
ACT 2601



If you want to know how far along we are with making the Plan, you can sign up to get more information at:

engage.dss.gov.au



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