

## 2020 National Carer Survey report released for National Carers Week

Carers Tasmania, the state's peak body for informal carers, today released the summary report for the 2020 National Carer Survey to mark the commencement of National Carers Week (11-17 October).

Over 85,000 Tasmanians are unpaid informal carers from an estimated national total of over 2.7 million carers. National Carers Week, from 11-17 October, is dedicated to celebrating their contribution to Tasmania's community and economy.

A Deloitte Access Economics report on *The Value of Informal Care in 2020* has found almost 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care is provided annually with a replacement value of over \$77 billion. In Tasmania, the replacement value is estimated at over \$2.2 billion.

To understand the contribution of carers more deeply, Carers Tasmania, in conjunction with Carers NSW and the national carer network, conducted a survey of 7,735 carers between May and July. The initial results were released today and include responses from over 1,000 Tasmanian carers.

The survey was conducted under the guidance of an expert panel that included academics from several leading universities.

The survey captured insights from carer groups that are often hidden, including Aboriginal carers, young carers under 25, LGBTIQ+ carers and those that are culturally and linguistically diverse.

### Key findings from the 2020 National Carer Survey include:

- The average age of survey respondents was 58 years, with the oldest respondent being 94 years of age.
- Survey respondents were most likely to be caring for their child (including adult children) or caring for their partner. One in four respondents cared for more than one person.
- The most common group of people being cared for by survey respondents were people with physical disability, followed by people with a chronic condition or people living with a mental illness.
- Nearly half of the carers who responded were experiencing high or very high psychological distress, and one in three felt highly socially isolated, which may have been influenced by the COVID-19 lockdowns in place in many states and territories at the time.
- One in three respondents said they *never* get time out from their caring responsibilities, with only around half having enough time to keep on top of other responsibilities.
- Large numbers of carers reported *not* being asked about their own needs when accessing disability, aged care, health and mental health services with or on behalf of the person they cared for.
- Up to one in three carers had found it difficult to get information about, and to organise, services to support the person they care for.
- One in four carers reported spending more money than they made in the past 12 months.

“This first national survey highlights the impact on carers’ emotional wellbeing and general circumstances is significant, made more so by COVID lock-downs,” said David Brennan, chief executive officer of Carers Tasmania.

“In these extraordinary circumstances, carers have played a significant role in flattening the curve by locking-down homes and keeping vulnerable community and family members safe from the virus.”

The 2020 National Carer Survey and another COVID-related survey conducted only in Tasmania demonstrate that carers carried the weight of care with the impact being reduced wellbeing and higher levels of psychological distress and social isolation.

“We owe Tasmania’s 85,000 family carers a debt of gratitude for stepping-up to provide increased levels of care in areas like financial management, practical and emotional supports and medication management,” said Mr Brennan.

“This first national survey is critical to a deep understanding of carer contexts and provides the ability to represent their needs, influence policy and legislation, and improve services and supports for carers across Tasmania.”

Anyone at any time can become a carer, providing support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, alcohol or drug dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail due to age.

There are over 85,000 unpaid family and friend carers in Tasmania, which represents 1:6 compared with a national ratio of 1:8.

“With one in six houses having a carer in Tasmania, during National Carers Week take the time to say hello, thank them for their contribution and wish them a happy National Carers Week,” Mr Brennan said.

## Notes to the editor

### Reports

Copies of the two referenced reports can be found at [www.carerstas.org/resources/publications](http://www.carerstas.org/resources/publications)

- 2020 National Carer Survey summary report – <https://www.carerstas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2020-National-Carer-Survey-Summary-Report-2.pdf>
- COVID Road to Recovery Survey report – <https://www.carerstas.org/ctas-road-to-recovery-survey-report/>

### Key Statistics

- There are approximately 85,500 carers across Tasmania<sup>i</sup>
- It is estimated that carers provided 2.2 billion hours of unpaid care in 2020<sup>ii</sup>
- The replacement value of that care (if care were replaced and provided by paid support workers) is estimated at \$77.9 billion, over \$1.5 billion per week<sup>ii</sup>
- The demand for unpaid carers is at an all-time high and set to increase in the future<sup>ii</sup>

*i. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers*

*ii. Deloitte Access Economics (2020) The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2020*

## About Carers Tasmania

Carers Tasmania is a non-profit body supporting informal carers across the state. They were appointed the state's Peak Body for carers in July 2018, recognising their central role as the lead agency for family and friend carers. Carers Tasmania has offices in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

## About carers

An informal, unpaid carer is often a family member that cares for someone suffering chronic or life-limiting illness, has a mental health illness, is frail aged, has a disability or alcohol or other drug issue.

Informal carers are distinct from paid support workers who are also colloquially also called 'carers', but who are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. Conversely, family carers perform their caring duties without remuneration, other than minimal carer payments and allowances from the Department of Social Services.

## Media contact

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