

MEDIA RELEASE: CARERS' MENTAL HEALTH WORSE THAN MOST DURING PANDEMIC

Melbourne, 6 April 2022

In a survey of over 1100 unpaid carers, 76% of carers reported increased levels of loneliness due to the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to 54% reported by the general public.

A further 86% said their satisfaction with life had declined. Carers continue to experience isolation, mental health issues, difficulties in accessing health services, financial difficulties, and a lack of available respite services.

There are currently over 700,000 Victorians in unpaid caring roles. Anyone at any time can be a carer. It is estimated that the economic cost of the support provided by Victoria's carers is equivalent to over \$19 billion every year.

Adding to the psychological distress during COVID-19, carers were providing more care, including more complex care. For many carers, this exacerbated the social isolation and poorer health and wellbeing they may have already been experiencing, with pre-pandemic data indicating that carers experience poorer wellbeing at 2.5 times the rate of people not in caring roles.

These findings will inform Carers Victoria's policy position in the lead up to the state election.

Judith Abbott, CEO of Carers Victoria says "It has been a particularly challenging time for carers, who already had a complex and sometimes difficult role before the pandemic hit. As we rebuild and reconnect across Victoria, it's important that carers and the people they care for don't get left behind."

When asked to describe his experience "about caring for my loved ones through the Covid, simply, it was like carrying an elephant, barefooted and uphill on a never-ending track full of thorns."

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About Carers Victoria

As the state-wide peak body for all carers, we engage with carers and analyse research and evidence to understand current and emerging issues that may impact their caring role.

Alongside this we deliver support programs, provide information to and create connections between carers, and advocate for changes that can make carers' lives better.

About Carers

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to a person due to disability, mental illness, or to an older person with health needs. Carers could be a parent, child, spouse/partner, grandparent, other relative or friend.