

About Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria is the only statewide organisation that focuses solely on family carers. Our main role is to represent the interests of carers and advocate on their behalf with all levels of government and service providers. We also offer information and support, counselling and education.

Who is a carer?

A carer is a person who provides unpaid care and support for a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness or chronic condition. The person being cared for could be a child, an ageing parent, a friend or a spouse.

What does Carers Victoria offer to carers?

Counselling and support

Counselling is about talking with someone who can assist you in making a difference to your caring role and your life. Seeking counselling is not a sign of failure, of not coping or feeling inadequate. It is about looking after yourself too – otherwise how can you give the best care to the person you love or have a responsibility for?

Counselling is available in English and 39 languages other than English.

It can be provided by telephone or face to face. It is currently a free service for carers.

You can also get **support** through good information and help with specific problems, like how to obtain the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance.

These services give a high priority to confidentiality for carers.

Carer support groups

Your local ethno-specific service may offer a carer support group for carers in your community, or Carers Victoria may be able to help you to make contact with a group near you.

Carer support groups are a great help for carers. They are a place where carers feel understood and are able to share what is happening in their care role and they can learn from each other's experience. The group get together offer a break and rest from caring. There are social or educational activities designed to help the carer in their care role. Some groups are general and some are formed around a particular condition, eg Parkinson's disease, mental illness.

Supporting Family Carers

Carers Victoria, Level 1, 37 Albert Street (PO Box 2204) Footscray VIC 3011
P 03 9396 9500 F 03 9396 9555 E cav@carersvic.org.au

Education

Carers Victoria offers a statewide education program for carers. These are designed to help carers to look after their own health and wellbeing, so that they can maintain their energy for their care responsibilities, and also have some quality of life themselves. We tailor our programs to the special needs of groups if necessary. If you are a member of a carer support group, ask your facilitator to contact Carers Victoria to arrange a program.

This is a free service to carers. In some circumstances, a fee may apply.

For all our services contact: Freecall 1800 242 636*

Regional respite services

What is respite? It is a break from caring – time to rest, relax with your favourite activity or catch up with friends. There are nine regional respite services in Victoria. They can help you in regard to emergency respite, in-home or day care centre respite or longer respite where the person you care for is placed in residential care.

The purpose of respite is to help you keep a balance in your life as a carer. Caring offers many positives for carers – joy at keeping the person at home, best care, deeper intimacy. But it can also be hard work, stressful and can lead to ill health if care is not taken. Regular breaks from caring are essential for you to keep on providing care and having some quality of life yourself.

Freecall: 1800 052 222*

**Free call except from mobile phones.*

Financial support

Centrelink payments to support carers are:

Carer Payment is a means tested, income support measure, where a carer cannot continue in full-time work because of the care responsibility. If eligible, other concessions may apply such as telephone or rental assistance. Paid fortnightly.

Carer Allowance is not means tested and is a small amount of money to meet some of the expenses involved in caring for someone at home. A report from a health professional is needed when applying. Paid fortnightly.

Call Carers Victoria for advice in regard to completing the application forms.

Centrelink: 13 12 02