

CarersACT

Sharing the care for more than 30 years.

FAMILIES AND THE REDISTRIBUTION OF CARE IN AUSTRALIA

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CarersACT

Operating on Ngunnawal country, Carers ACT is a not-for-profit organisation solely dedicated to supporting and representing unpaid carers in the ACT for more than 30 years.

We advocate on behalf of carers and support them to undertake their caring role through a range of programs and services that build carer capacity and strengthen carer wellbeing.

Together, we share the care



Who are carers?

Carers are unpaid family members, friends or neighbours who provide assistance to a person who:

- has a disability
- has an ongoing medical condition (terminal or chronic)
- has a mental illness
- is aged and frail, and/ or
- is a child or young person in a kinship or foster care arrangement

Carers Recognition Act 2021 (ACT)

Carers often provide emotional support, personal care, medication management, appointment scheduling, transport, help with banking, household tasks, communicating with services, connection with community etc.



Carers in Australia:

- 3 million Australians provide unpaid care, that is 12% of the Australian population
- 68% of primary carers are women
- 43.7% of primary carers have disability
- The average age of a carer is 50 years
- 13 years is the average duration of care provided

What does it cost to be a carer ?

Economic cost	Wellbeing cost
➤ \$ 77.9 billion is the estimated contribution in annual replacement care costs value of informal care in 2020 ➤ 2.2 billion of hours of annual unpaid care provided by both primary and non-primary carers ➤ \$392,500 in lost lifetime income and \$175,000 in lost superannuation to age 67, that's \$567,000 combined ➤ 70.4% were employed vs 79.3% of non-carers ➤ 64.6% of primary carers were less likely to be in the labour force than other carers 79.9% and non-carers 82.0% ➤ 71% missed out on promotions due to their caring responsibilities	➤ 61.1% of carers report low wellbeing vs 33.6% of the general population ➤ 42.7% reported feeling lonely "often or always" vs 11.9% of adult Australians ➤ 72.1% said they had no choice about becoming a carer ➤ 23.9% parents of children with disability reported higher levels of distress vs 11% of other parents ➤ 47.8% reported loneliness vs 31.0% of other parents ➤ 64.6% worried they were not meeting their own expectations as parents vs 47.7% of other parents ➤ 37.7% reporting fair or poor physical health vs 20.7% of other parents

How are families *changing*?

- Australia's demographic and economic factors
 - Australians are living longer
 - From **81.3 years for men and 85.2 years** for women in 2022–23, to **87.0 years for men and 89.5 years** for women by 2062–63
 - Cost of living pressures
 - Increased number of women in the workforce over the past **50 years**
 - People are having children later: In 1975, less than **20%** of births were to mothers aged **30 to 39**; **by 2022**, this had risen to nearly **60%**

Why and how is the *distribution of care changing?*

- NDIS reform
- Aged care reform
- Older people ageing at home longer
- Ø Workforce shortages

Together, these pressures are reshaping the balance between formal services and unpaid family care.

Sandwich Carers

- A sandwich carer is "somebody who is both parenting and caring for their ageing parent, which means they're sandwiched in between the two different types of responsibilities" - Annabel Reid, Former CEO Carers Australia
- An estimated **1.5 million**
- Almost **97%** face or anticipate challenges such as balancing caring responsibilities with personal life and emotional health and delaying life events.
- Spending an average of **14.5 hours** a week caring for ageing parents and a further **15.2 hours** a week on children, leaving under **10 hours** a week for themselves
- Sandwich carers are often financially supporting both generations

The *questions* this poses :

What will this mean for carers?

- Caring for longer across multiple systems
 - service navigation, service gaps to fill, uncertainty of future supports
- Adaptation to the caring role to meet the needs of both generations
- Ø Wellbeing impacts...
- Ø Socio-economic impacts...

What future policy reforms should we be considering now?

- Recognition of carer impacts in reform agenda
- Consideration of carers in service design, policy and funding
- Improved service and system integration and connection
- Ø Superannuation for carers

References

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- ✓ [BaptistCare, The sandwich generation phenomenon unpacked \(2025\)](#)
- ✓ [National Seniors Australia, Concerns for 'sandwich carers' \(2024\)](#)
- ✓ [2023 Intergenerational Report | Treasury.gov.au](#)
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- ✓ [BaptistCare - Sandwich generation phenomenon](#)
- ✓ [The Australian Seniors Series – Sandwich generation report 2025](#)
- ✓ [Parenting-Supports-That-Help-Children-With-Disability-Thrive-Insight-Brief.pdf](#)
- ✓ [Introducing the sandwich generation | Australian Unity](#)

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THANK YOU!

