



Annual Report
2013 - 2014

CARERS VICTORIA

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Contents

<p>4 Who we are Our Vision Our Purpose</p>		<p>26 Community Engagement Fundraising Partnerships Sharla-Rose's Story Communications and Media Library Events Letter from Minister Woolridge</p>	
<p>5 What we do</p>		<p>30 People & Culture Our Staff Policies and Procedures Veronica's Story</p>	
<p>6 President's Report</p>		<p>32 Our Leadership Team</p>	
<p>8 CEO Report</p>		<p>34 Corporate Support Services Office and Facilities Information Communication Technology Finance Risk Quality</p>	
<p>10 Year at a Glance</p>		<p>36 Governance Board Committees 2014</p>	
<p>12 Support Services Better Start Information and Advice The Siddig's Story Counselling Education and Training Give me a break</p>		<p>37 Our Board</p>	
<p>15 Western Support Services Aged Naavah's* Story The Lincoln Family's Story Disability Mental Health Older Families Young Carers</p>		<p>38 Treasurer's Report</p>	
<p>19 Representation</p>		<p>40 Financial Statements</p>	
<p>22 Carer Engagement Membership Lloyd's Story Carer Consultations Carer Support Groups Young Carer Scholarships Mingles Amanda's Story*</p>		<p>45 Acknowledgements</p>	
		<p>47 How to get involved</p>	

Who we are

Carers Victoria is a not for profit organisation that works to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and economic security of family carers.

We are funded by a mixture of government and philanthropic grants and through the generosity of private donors.

Through this, we operate a number of state-wide services for carers including a free call advisory line which offers information, advice and referrals, specialist counselling in a variety of modalities and carer education workshops.

In addition, we provide a range of supports and services for carers living in Melbourne's Western Metropolitan Region (WMR), including information, carer support, and respite coordination.

Carers Victoria strives for improved services, systems and supports for caring families by raising awareness of carers' needs; liaising with governments, community and corporate partners and the broader public.

We are a member of the National Network of Carers Associations and are incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 2012 (VIC).

Our membership comprises approximately 5,700 members: carers, former carers, carer support groups, organisations and other interested members of the community.

Carers Victoria supports thousands of Victorian carers through our services each year.



Our Vision

Carers and caring families are valued and supported by the Australian community.

Our Purpose

Carers Victoria will provide advice, information and support for carers to improve their health, wellbeing, capacity, financial security and resilience.

"I was surprised that other carers were feeling the same as me, it was good to talk to someone who understands how you feel."

Carer, Aged Support Team
(May 2014)

What we do

Supporting Family Carers



To improve the health, wellbeing, capacity and resilience of carers, we offer a range of programs and services including:

- information and advice
- emotional support and counselling
- education and training, and
- practical support and respite (for carers living in Melbourne's west)

Representing Caring Families



We take a leadership role in advocating for the needs of family carers. This includes:

- a focus on evidence-based research and outcome data
- representing the needs and issues of carers to businesses, Ministers, Government Departments and service providers, and
- providing expert knowledge to reference and advisory groups
- developing policy papers and positions

Carer Engagement



We listen to carers so that our work is informed by their needs and issues. We do this through:

- our Membership
- carer consultations, enquiries, hearings and other events
- feedback and surveys, and
- linking carers to research and focus group opportunities

Community Engagement



We continue to raise awareness of carers' needs and issues will help us to build understanding and support for carers; helping us to achieve our vision of caring as a community responsibility. We do this through:

- our communications activities, including our website, newsletters and social media
- fundraising and events, and
- our partnerships and collaborations



David Fitch

President

President's Report

Carers Victoria's mission is to provide advice, information, and support for carers to improve their health, wellbeing, capacity, financial security and resilience.

In 2013–2014, we did this through 28,545 interactions with carers. This number is a testament to the staff and Carers Victoria community.

However, there are still hidden carers – carers who may not identify as a carer, who don't see themselves in a caring role and therefore may not access services made available to them. Alternatively, and often as a consequence, professionals may not be aware of the existence of these carers and therefore do not identify their need for help.

In an effort to reach those hidden carers over the course of 2013–2014 Carers Victoria began putting more effective functions and programs in place.

This included improvements to our Carer Support Centre function in the form of a new helpdesk model – a front door for carers to access their community, carer support programs and carer support groups. This helpdesk focuses on customer service and a streamlined holistic approach to carer support. It also strengthens Carers Victoria's position as a central contact point for and about carers and caring families.

In the future, the helpdesk will become the basis of a state-wide 'Hub' in our Carer Support Centre service delivery model. This function will help reduce the silo approach many carers feel when initially trying to access supports. For the first time, they will have access to all services from one direct line.

While pursuing this project the organisation also began developing new initiatives for identifying carers within the community. For example, a new carer referral process for health professionals – called Carers-ID.

The aim of Carers-ID (development of which began in early 2014) is to increase the referring professionals' awareness of carers and caring issues. A streamlined referral process has also begun to support these professionals, and we are excited to see how this will build over the next financial year.

In alignment with the Strategic Plan (2012–2015), Carers Victoria has begun to stretch its reach through to regional, rural and remote Victoria. The most significant step towards this was the opening of a new office in Geelong, where carers and their families can learn more about the services and supports that are available to them. We will carry this momentum into the next financial year and again stretch our services, so every Victorian carer understands that this organisation is here to provide them with the support they deserve.

Also of note, Carers Victoria has entered into a number of relationships during the last financial year. We developed a partnership with the Country Women's Association (CWA) – a relationship that will see an extended reach across regional Victoria. We signed an agreement with the Association for Children with Disability, with whom we developed the Confident Connected Carers

Project to support carers to navigate the Barwon NDIS environment. We also engaged in new partnerships with the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) and Independence Australia (IA).

I would like to thank my fellow Board members and the staff of Carers Victoria. Your support and knowledge has guided this great organisation for the past 12 months. I am proud of the work that we have been able to achieve, and the plans that we have put in place for the future.

I also wish to thank our members – who attend forums, share information, support our research and inform our plans. You have been able to lend us volume when we needed to have our voice heard.

Lastly, and as always, thank you to the carers. I am inspired by the generosity you show every day, in the happy times and the trying times. Your contribution to the lives of your friend, neighbour or family member is commendable.

Thank you



CEO Report

I am incredibly proud of the achievements of Carers Victoria as we continue to support tens of thousands of carers across the state for a twenty-second year.

Every year we support carers through information, training and education programs, respite support and counselling, and by being a voice for carers on a public platform.

The 2013–2014 year was no different. We continued our support of Victorian carers by adapting our services to fit the introduction of new reforms. We continued to be advocates for carers on a state and federal level, and we provided support and information in innovative ways through the launch of our eLearning platform/programs.

Carers Victoria has always been proud of the work we have achieved in promoting the needs of caring families. We have fought to increase access to support and assistance for carers, ensuring the health, wellbeing and financial security of carers. In 2014, our work within this area was honoured with the Victorian Office of the Public Advocate's (OPA's) award. This award acknowledges the hard work of our Social Policy and Leadership teams who sit on influential committees, panels, reference and advisory groups, to ensure the clear and accurate representation of carers. It also symbolises the importance of carers and the support they provide to some of the most vulnerable people within our community. In receiving this prestigious award, Carers Victoria knows that our representation is being heard and we will continue to advocate on behalf of unpaid carers.

Another achievement this year has been the awarding of our internationally-recognised Accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards. Our staff worked hard to attain this award and it is another fantastic acknowledgement of the excellent services our staff provides across Victoria.

As a voice for carers, we also understand our role in providing information and sharing knowledge for the benefit of all carers across Victoria (and beyond), especially in this ever-changing social sector.

In 2013–2014, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial site in Barwon continued to provide opportunities and struggles for carers. As a way of supporting carers during this period and to help them navigate the NDIS, our Carer & Community Services team (with the support of the Victorian Government, the Association for Children with a Disability, and the National Disability Insurance Agency) developed a workshop series entitled Confident Connected Carers. These workshops assist carers to develop skills to select a service provider, negotiate services, monitor their plans, and problem solve. For Carers Victoria, this model for capacity building has been a great success and has now been adopted by other organisations and is leading to further opportunities for Carers Victoria to work alongside the government.

While 2013–2014 had overwhelming achievements, we have to acknowledge that we also experienced some lows.

Unfortunately, a number of our grants came to an end and we lost some funding, as many organisations did within this harsh environment. The impact of this upon Carers Victoria is that we are in the midst of re-shaping our service delivery model. Carers Victoria is well positioned to do this with a highly committed Board and Leadership team, skilled community partnerships and a passionate and enthusiastic staff who, together, will embrace the challenges of the future.

There is a lot of work still to do, but our sole passion and focus will remain steadfastly with the unpaid carers and caring families across Victoria.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who has partnered with us, sponsored us, or donated to us. I am also grateful for the support of the Carers Victoria Board; these volunteers have guided us through a challenging year.

And of course, I would like to thank Victoria's 700,000 carers. You might not realise how important your job is to your loved one, your friend, your community, but we at Carers Victoria do.

Thank you





Caroline Mulcahy

CEO



Year at a Glance

43,198 

Information products were distributed

1,355 

Facebook Likes

6,214 

Carers attended carer workshops

28,545 

Interactions with Victorian carers were delivered

1,950 

Twitter Followers

1,237 

Professionals attended carer workshops

\$248,284

Received in monetary donations

170 

LinkedIn Followers

407 

Carer focused workshops held

We partnered on **21** submissions and consultations

Supported **8** research projects

Were active members on **15** advisory boards and groups

2,400 

Carers received practical support and respite within Melbourne's Western Metropolitan Region

5,728 

Members

259 

Young Scholarships Awards

434 

Better Start Registrations

9,853 

Calls answered by our
free Carer Advisory Line



1 in 8 

Victorians are
in a caring role



Support Services



Carers Victoria offers a wide range of support to carers across Victoria including providing carers with practical, emotional and financial support.

Better Start

Carers Victoria supports carers of children with disabilities through the successful delivery of the Registration and Information Service for the federal Better Start for Children with Disability Initiative. Through this funding, children between the ages zero to six, can access a range of early intervention services. Evidence shows that targeted early intervention for children with disabilities better prepares them for transition to school. In 2013–2014 the program recorded 527 initial enquiries that resulted in 434 registrations.

In 2013 Carers Australia signed a funding agreement with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA), now known as Department of Social Services (DSS) to deliver Better Start Moving Forward workshops.

Carers Victoria have since developed these workshops for families who are nearing the end of the Better Start funding period and considering options for their child as they commence school. Families are provided with information and strategies to assist them in accessing support as they consider the future for their child after Better Start funding has been utilised.

Information and Advice

In 2013–2014 Carers Victoria distributed 43,198 information products. This represents a significant reduction in the distribution of hard copy material, as we foster increased access to information online. A number of services in the community have made significant improvements to their websites over the last year. Under guidance by Carers Victoria advisors, carers have been directed to service provider websites where they are able to access to the most up-to-date, relevant information and are provided with direct links into those organisations.

In July 2013, the first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was rolled out in Victoria at the Barwon trial site. In response the Confident Connected Carers project was developed to support the needs of family carers in the rapidly changing disability environment in Barwon.

The new initiative, funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS), includes the development of several workshops that focus on supporting family carers of people with a disability, to help implement their NDIS participant's plans.

The Siddig's Story

The Siddigs, a Sudanese family whose child has Cerebral Palsy, had registered with Better Start, and were contacted by one of our advisors, via an interpreter. The advisor realised the family had only one year left of funding, and yet no funds had been accessed.

The family indicated that they didn't know how to go about accessing services due largely to language barriers.

With the family's permission, Scope (a Better Start provider) was contacted by the Carers Victoria advisor. Through discussions with Scope, arrangements were made for one of their workers to do a home visit to the family with an interpreter. As a result, Scope was able to establish a plan for the child to begin accessing therapies.

The family was contacted a few months after the initial consultation to see how things were going. They happily advised that the child had been attending regular therapy sessions, and they were putting together a plan to purchase the same resources in the future.

The family advised there had been a noticeable improvement in the child's movement; the physiotherapy sessions resulted in improvements in strength and muscle building.

Counselling

Carers Victoria's counselling program provides carers with access to counselling support to help them with their role as a carer. Carers across Victoria can access up to six free sessions of counselling. These counsellors are available through a professional network set up by Carers Victoria, and have an understanding of the specific needs of carers.

In 2013–2014, over 6500 hours of counselling sessions were provided to carers, through face to face counselling, on the phone or via Skype. Our counselling service offers flexible access options to ensure the carer is being supported in a way that best suits them.

The Counselling team continued with the Carer Counselling Sanctuary – a three day, two night intensive counselling experience). The sanctuary includes a number of counselling sessions, a silent bush walk, collection of pieces of nature and creation of a piece of art representing their caring role. The Carers in Transition program also continued through 2013–2014. Sixteen programs were delivered to 115 attendees across Victoria. The Carers in Transition counselling program covers topics such as considering residential care, how to share the care, and how to deal with loss and grief.

Education and Training

The Carers Victoria Education and Training program provides information and teaches skills by regularly conducting workshops with carers, carer support groups and service providers.

The educational training that we deliver to service providers supports and encourages workplaces to engage more effectively with caring families. The training programs not only focus on building skills, but also on creating better awareness of the caring role. Professional health workers learn

how to take into account the relationship between the carer and the person receiving the care. In 2013–2014, the Education and Training team delivered 68 training sessions to service providers, with 1237 professionals participating.

Throughout the year, the Education and Training team held 407 workshops for more than 6214 carers across Victoria. The participants were invited to explore topics from their perspective and which are relevant to their caring roles, while having the opportunity to meet with other carers within a social setting. The workshops supported carers to gain skills and learn strategies to assist them in improving their wellbeing and health.

Through feedback surveys, it has been found that approximately 90% of those who attended gained both new knowledge and practical strategies, and found that the workshop was a valuable experience.

Funding from the Victorian Department of Health, largely through Home and Community Care (HACC) and Capacity Building Grants, enables the Education and Training program to offer workshops and educational programs to carers and carer support groups free of charge across Victoria.

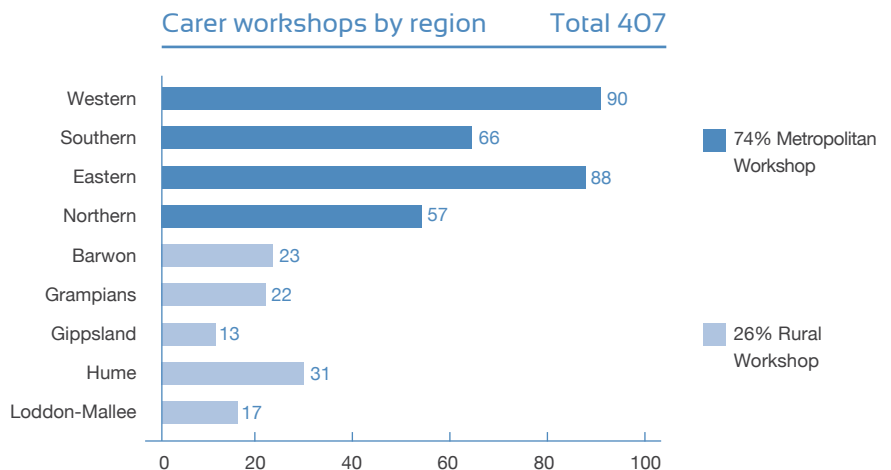
Give me a break

In November 2013, the Education and Training program launched its first eLearning module: 'Give me a break'. The online training tool supports carers who are unable to attend sessions due to time constraints or due to physical location - i.e. rural or regional areas.

The team has ensured the system is user friendly, and that supports are in place to address any questions or queries that carers using the system may have.

In addition to the first module, the team will launch two other modules entitled 'Communicating with professionals' and 'Supporting your ageing parents' in 2014.

The online training tool is available at www.givemeabreak.org.au



Western Support Services



Carers Victoria offers a range of respite and practical supports to carers living in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

Aged

In the 2013–2014 the Aged team provided respite and practical support to 809 carers of a person who is frail aged or has dementia. Each carer supported within the Aged team worked in partnership with a carer support worker – a person who supported them emotionally, linked them to services for respite, and developed a support plan to ensure the carers' needs were met.

809 carers were supported by the Aged team and received practical and emotional support, in addition;

- **400** carers were assisted to find appropriate residential respite, and also access brokerage funds to assist with the payment of these accommodation services
- **68** carers participated in the Carers@Work program, and
- **34** carers received support via the Respite@Home program.

Carers@Work provides assistance to carers of an aged person who is also in paid employment. This program aims to support

carers to remain in the workforce by providing regular short episodes of respite.

Respite@Home focuses on supporting carers from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background. In 2013–2014 it had a specific focus on supporting carers from the Vietnamese community within the Western Metropolitan Region, in partnership with the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association.

The Dementia Getaway Program continued to create support opportunities for carers who were reluctant to use traditional/formal respite. The program, which was held twice in 2013–2014, enables carers to enjoy a mid-week break with the person for whom they are caring. The program gives carers the opportunity to meet other carers in a similar situation, normalising their carer experience and bringing a greater understanding of dementia as an illness. The carers participate in a group education program, where they learn the importance of self-care and strategies for looking after themselves, as well as the person for whom they are caring. They also learn about dementia and how to equip themselves with strategies that can be applied to their individual care situations at home.



Naavah's* Story

Naavah* is 46 years old, a mother of three children, and runs a family business with her husband. She is also the carer of her mother, who has very limited mobility.

Naavah's mother can support herself with the majority of her everyday living tasks; however, she expressed to her family that she was feeling very isolated. Due to her own health issues and the family's commitment to the running of the family business, there was no time for Naavah to meet her mother's social needs.

Naavah felt the emotional and physical impact of caring for her mother while raising a family and running a business.

Carers Victoria received a referral from the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association, requesting assistance to provide Naavah with a break.

The Respite@Home service now funds a direct care attendant to support and transport Naavah's mother to the local community health centre once a week. While there Naavah's mother can join a group of other elderly Vietnamese people and undertake social activities within the community.

Naavah is very appreciative of this service and knows that, through this respite service, her mother's social needs and her access to the community have improved.



Disability

Throughout 2013–2014 the Disability team offered a specialist program and a wide range of workshops and events for registered carers. The program gave carers a chance to relax, experience respite, and socialise with other carers. The program hosts information sessions, including several sessions focusing on NDIS and advocacy. Health and Wellbeing workshops were also developed after carers identified the need to focus on their health, and learn simple relaxation methods to include in their every day routines.

The Disability team conducted a survey of families who receive funding under the federal governments support for carers of young people with severe and profound disabilities. The average rating of client satisfaction of Carers Victoria Disability Support in the Western Metropolitan Region was 4.2 out of 5. Questions related to issues such as clarity of information provided to carers, the team’s timeliness in responding to carer needs, whether the program met the carer’s needs and whether the service allowed the carer to maintain their caring role.

710 

Carers

In 2013–2014, 710 carers of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses were supported with respite opportunities, emotional support, referral pathways and counselling.

\$41,622

Carer Support Groups

Over 2013–2014, Carers Victoria provided \$41,622 in funding to 18 disability carer support groups across the western suburbs of Melbourne. These support groups were invited to make submissions throughout the financial year to help support weekend retreats, events, excursions and family fun days.

The Lincoln Family’s Story

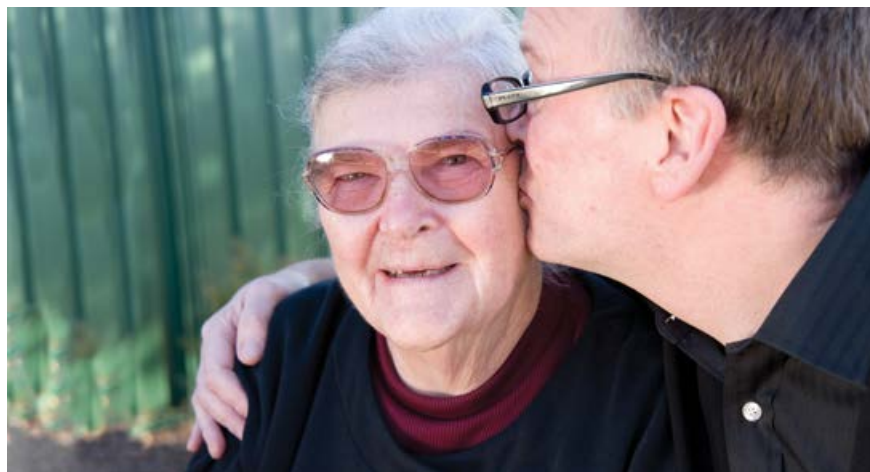
Caring for a daughter with complex mental health needs and suicidal ideation was having a heavy toll on the Lincoln* family.

They came to Carers Victoria for support, and through extensive counselling an understanding arose that each member of the family had different coping styles that were threatening the viability of the family’s relationships with each other.

Carers Victoria offered them a respite break and introduced them to other carers through carer support functions where they found friendship and the peer support.

Their skills and strengths were greatly enhanced. They undertook the ‘Navigating the Mental Health System’ course where they learnt new concepts that they are now applying everyday.

In their words, these small things “have made all the difference”.



Mental Health

The Mental Health program aims to support and raise the profile of carers and families of people with a mental illness in Melbourne's western region. Carers Victoria staff offer practical support to carers during stressful times and support with future planning. With an understanding of both carer issues and local mental health and community services, Carers Victoria assists by providing information, advocacy and referral services.

The Mental Health program supported 17 mental health carer groups with funding and information on the changing landscape of mental health services in Victoria. The carer support groups provide carers with support, time out from their caring role, an opportunity to share information, and a support structure which reduces feelings of isolation and offers social activities.

We continued to host successful well-attended group events. These events included monthly movie clubs, outings to Werribee Zoo Safari, morning melodies at the Arts Centre in Melbourne, and soap and candle making courses.

Members of the Mental Health team are active within networks and committees to ensure carers are represented within the community. These committees include Macedon Ranges & North West Melbourne Medicare Local, South Western Melbourne Medicare Local, Mid-West Mental Health Service Child and Family Alliance, Brimbank Service Provider network and others.

Older Families

This program supports carers who are over the age of 60 (45 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island carers) and care for a child or grandchild with a disability who still lives at home. The primary focus of the program is to find hidden carers who have had little exposure to respite and are concerned about what will happen in the future when they can no longer care.

The Older Family Support and Planning (OFSP) program assists by:

- providing specialised information and advice
- assisting in emergency planning and planning for the future
- assisting in arranging and funding short term respite
- providing monthly carer events including information workshops and social activities, and
- referring carers to supports and services.

Over the 2013–14 financial year the OFSP program held six information sessions and workshops including topics that explored Legal and Financial Issues, Navigating & Accessing DHS, and Housing. The team also delivered support via 19 Respite for Older Carers Packages.

“We were very fortunate to meet others with similar experience, children with similar issues. It’s easier to share experiences. Thank you for the opportunity.”



Young Carers

The Young Carers program supports children and young people (aged between 12 and 25 years) who cares for a family member or friend who has a disability, chronic illness, who is aged, affected by mental illness or who has a drug or alcohol dependency.

Through the program, young carers receive information, support and respite – giving them a chance to balance their schooling, their care responsibilities, and their emotional wellbeing.

During 2013–2014, the program has given direct support to 319 young carers across Melbourne's Western Metropolitan Region.

A highlight for the Young Carer team was the end-of-year formal held during Carers Week 2013. The formal was an opportunity for 48 young carers to spend time with their friends, dress up, have fun and acknowledge their caring efforts.



22



Research projects
supported in 2013–2014



Representation

Carers Victoria represents and advocates for the needs of caring families to state and federal government policy makers and to service providers. By consulting with groups of family carers, our policy work is informed by the experiences, issues and concerns raised by caring families.

A highlight in 2013–2014 was the completion of a discussion paper *Unfinished Business: Public policy and children in families with a person with a disability or mental illness*. Carers Victoria was pleased to release this important and timely work that was made possible through funding from the Helen McPherson Smith Trust.

The starting point for this project was that the growing awareness about the needs and difficulties faced by young carers, wasn't always leading to clear policy directions promoting appropriate responses to these needs.

The paper discusses these complex concerns and many others. Carers Victoria was helped in this by a series of interviews with experts from disability, mental health, drug and alcohol, and child welfare fields.

One of the key findings was that in order to respond more fully to the needs of young people and their families, shared policy goals across multiple sectors are needed to achieve the systemic improvements required.

The intention is for this paper to invigorate further debate and discussion about the possible policy directions the sector should be heading in to better develop supports and services for children and young people.

An abstract of the paper was accepted for a symposium on *Unfinished Business* to be presented at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) Conference in July 2014.

Our other work for 2013–2014 included the following submissions and consultations:

- Appraisal of and significant input into the Urbis consultant's discussion paper 'Developing a model for new Carer Support Centres (CSCs)'. The Policy team also provided significant input into the Network of Carer Associations' preparation for the expected CSC tender.
- Preparation of the national submission to the Department of Social Services (DSS) on the discussion paper 'Key Directions for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme' on behalf of Carers Australia.
- Consultation with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care on the draft 'Handbook for improving the Management of Cognitive Impairment in Acute Care'.
- Consultations regarding the proposed new Department of Human Services (DHS) Mental Health Advocacy Service for consumers.
- Consultations with National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) planners, managers and local area coordinators, DHS and early intervention staff, and other service providers in the Barwon trial site regarding impacts of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on carers.
- Participation at the 'Disability at the margins' roundtable, convened by the National Disability and Carer Alliance, to discuss people who may be at the margins of the NDIS with a focus on people with mild intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or autism.
- Submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into equal recognition before the law, and legal capacity for people with disability.
- Victorian government Pre-budget Submission – Consolidating support for caring families for the future.
- Contribution to Federal Pre-budget Bid and a range of other national submissions via Carers Australia (CA).
- Consultations on a whole-of-government older persons action plan with the Commissioner for Senior Victorians and the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Senior Victorians.
- Response to the Disability Services Commissioner's Occasional Paper No.2 Families and Service Providers Working together.
- Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Disability and Social Inclusion.
- Review of the Victorian Support for Carers Program guidelines.
- Final Report on Service Sector Reform: A roadmap for community and human services reform (Shergold Report).
- Review of the Victorian Consumer Participation in Health Strategy – 'Doing it with us, not for us'.



Members of the Carers Victoria Policy team with the delegation of master of Gerontology students from SIM University Singapore.

- Consultation on the development of the Victorian Advance Care Planning Strategy ‘Have the conversation’.
- Consultation on the Victorian GLBTI Health Strategy.
- Submission, with SCOPE, successful for funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board for a two year pilot project on supported decision making.
- Consultation on the preparation of the draft Guardianship and Administration and Powers of Attorney bills.
- Submission of a DSS Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing grant application to update ‘Surviving the Maze’.
- Consultation on Housing Opportunities for People with a Disability under NDIS convened by ARAFEMI.

In 2012–13 the Policy team commissioned KPMG to develop an ‘Adulthood and Disability: working it out’ tool. This comprehensive resource has been trialled with families of adults with decision making disabilities; it was completed and presented to the NDIA trial site managers who have responded favourably. Further funding is

being sought to provide parent carers with online access to this valuable tool.

The Policy team also completed the Older People, Carers and Community Care project, funded by the Victorian Department of Health. This sector development project aims to ensure that carers and the older people who use the services of the HACC and Support for Carers Programs have a voice in the future development and improvement of those services. The research was conducted in partnership with COTA Victoria.

Early in 2014 Carers Victoria was invited by State Trustees Australia Foundation to participate in the newly formed Ageing, Disability and Mental Health Collaborative Panel. The panel will work to help build the capacity of the ageing, disability and mental health sectors as these transition under the Government’s Reform Agenda.

The panel is newly formed but holds much promise to improve collaboration across the service systems with which caring families have contact.

Over the course of the year, Carers Victoria also participated in a number of external research partnership requests from universities, institutions and organisations.

The research projects supported in 2013–2014 include:

- The Australian Centre for Evidence Based Aged Care (ACEBAC) and the Australian Institute for Primary Care and Ageing (AIPCA) project ‘Proxy decision making on behalf of people with dementia – how do surrogates decide?’ This project aims to explore the views of people who are the proxy/surrogate decision maker of a person with dementia. Proxy and/or surrogate decision makers may be the legally appointed guardian or Power of Attorney, or the informal ‘person responsible’ for making decisions.
- Deakin University Cancer Caregiver Study. This study aims to improve carers’ access to psychosocial care services by developing and implementing a screening program for carers that incorporates increasing access to The Cancer Council Victoria’s Cancer Helpline, its resources and support services. The objectives of this study are to develop and validate new approaches of information provision, guidance and emotional support by cancer nurses as patient care coordinators to ameliorate the impact of care on carers’ health.
- The Centre for Health Communication and Participation at La Trobe University on exploring family members’ roles in preventing medical errors or adverse events during their relatives’ hospital admissions.
- Deakin University School of Psychology on the knowledge and experiences of carers who are managing a mental health crisis. The aim of the study is to investigate how carers cope when the person they are looking after has a mental health crisis in the community. This study will identify the main issues that will help carers and the person with a mental illness, in the event of a crisis. In particular, this study is focused on

whether there are enough resources in the community to support carers. Griffith University pilot study on suicidal ideation. The objective of this pilot study was to gather preliminary evidence on suicidal ideation in family carers of people with dementia.

- La Trobe University ‘Helping Carers Care’ survey about how services are or aren’t helpful to carers of an older person.
- La Trobe University, Scope and Office of the Public Advocate Supported Decision Making Project. This research aims to understand the best way to support people with an acquired brain injury or intellectual disability to make decisions that are important to them.
- National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) A Randomised Controlled Trial To Improve Depression In Family Carers Through A Physical Activity Intervention. The aim of the study is to see whether carers who have some symptoms of depression would benefit from taking part in a physical activity program that can be done in the home together with the person they are caring for. Carers Victoria has supported this research project for the past couple of years.
- St Vincent’s Hospital Mental Health Services ‘Improving the mental health of carers of stroke patients: A pilot study of Australian Care Coordination’ (ACCORD). Carers are involved in an 8 week, 1 hour (once a week) program that aims to assist families who are caring for a relative or friend who has survived a stroke. The aim of program is to support carers with information and strategies that will make caring less stressful.

Members of the Policy team continued to be heavily involved in a number of important advisory groups and committees, raising awareness of issues for caring families with government departments, other peak bodies and service providers.

These groups included:

- Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency (now Aged Care Quality Agency) Liaison Group
- Older People’s Policy and Advocacy Network convened by COTA Victoria
- Ageing and Disability Advisory Group convened by NDS
- Victorian government Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Group
- HACC Departmental Advisory Group
- HACC Assessment Reference Group
- National Aged Care Alliance advisory groups representing Carers Australia on aged care reforms:
 - Home Care packages and Consumer Directed Care
 - My Aged Care Gateway
 - Commonwealth Home Support Program
- Chair of Mental Health Council of Australia working group on NDIS
- National Supported Decision Making Knowledge Network.
- Office of Public Advocate advisory group on the development of The Interagency Guideline for Addressing Violence, Neglect and Abuse (IGUANA)
- Palliative Care in Aged Care special interest group convened by Palliative Care Victoria
- RDNS Consumer Participation Advisory Committee and Broadband Enabled Innovation Project
- PDRSS Reform Reference Group convened by Tandem (formerly Mental Health Carers Network)
- St Vincent’s Hospital Consumer Advisory Council
- Transport Accident Commission and Worksafe Disability Reform Working Group
- NDIS Readiness Network in the Barwon Trial Site, and

- Victorian Office of the Disability Services Commissioner project to develop practice guidelines to improve family engagement by disability services providers.

The Policy team also presented at the following:

- Presentations to the Beaconsfield mental health carer support group, the SWAN Carer Support Group, and the Western Metro Carer Network regarding the NDIS; how NDIS will affect carers and what it will look like in practice, updates in the Barwon trial site, and what can be done to support caring families ahead of national rollout.
- Presentation of the Carers Victoria produced Adulthood and Disability Resource to NDIS launch-site managers in Barwon in early 2014 to seek funding to web-mount the resource and roll out workshops for carers of adults with decision-making disabilities.
- Presentations to Carers Victoria staff regarding the NDIS and updates in trial site, and coordination of internal working group around NDIS to share information and updates.
- Acceptance of an abstract of Unfinished Business: Public policy and children in families with a person with a disability or mental illness for a symposium on Unfinished Business to be presented at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) Conference in July 2014.
- Presentation at Leading Aged Services Australia’s (LASA) Community Care Forum on carers and consumer directed care: Rights, risks and responsibilities.
- Presentation of a webinar on behalf of the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) on the carer perspective on elder abuse.
- Presentation on Carers in Victoria to a delegation of masters of Gerontology students from SIM University Singapore.



1028



New members
in 2013-2014.

Carer Engagement



Connecting and engaging with Victoria’s carers is integral to Carers Victoria as they guide and shape our work.

Membership

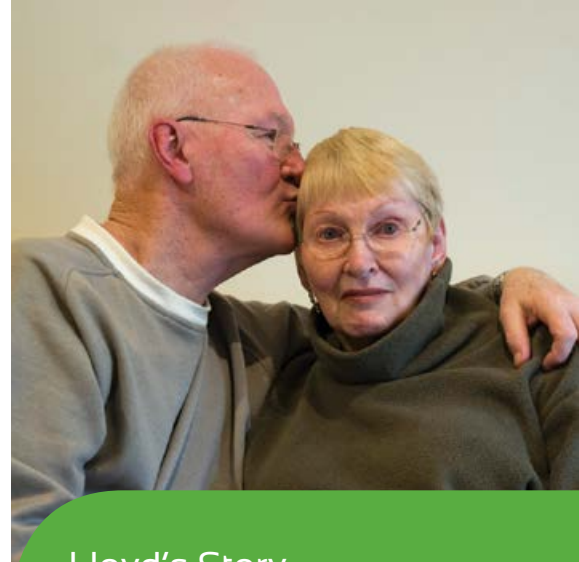
Carers Victoria members support and inform our work. They include carers, former carers, carer support groups, interested persons and organisations. At the end of the financial year we had 5,728 members, an increase of 17% from the previous year.

In 2013, the Carers Victoria Membership team undertook a review to decide on the best way forward for our membership program. The review involved the analysis of costs and processes and incorporated

the feedback of over 5,200 members. This review showed that improvements needed to be made to ensure our membership program remains sustainable and continues to be free of charge to carers.

One step toward this was implementing an automated renewal system and the introduction of a digital version of the ‘Carers in Victoria’ magazine. A hardcopy is still available to carers for a small printing fee.

Member Types	No. of Members
Carer/Former Carer	5372
Carer Support Group	249
Interested Persons	28
Organisational	79
Grand Total	5728



Lloyd’s Story

Lloyd is a true romantic. Forty-four years have passed, but his face still lights up thinking about when he first saw Bonnie across the bar in her yellow pant suit.

“I knew as soon as I met her that she was the woman I was supposed to live the rest of my life with,” Lloyd gushed, “and nothing has changed.”

However, after 35 years of marriage, Bonnie and Lloyd’s life took a sharp right turn. They were told Bonnie had a 15 millimetre aneurism on the carotid artery behind her left eye. Bonnie now suffers from Aphasia, a condition with similar symptoms to that of a stroke.

Shortly after Lloyd became Bonnie’s full time carer he joined a carer support group in his community, where he was introduced to Carers Victoria.

Through his membership, Lloyd receives the quarterly *Carers News* magazine, information regarding training and education programs, is involved in research projects, and is an active member of our Speakers Bank.

“I didn’t know much about a caring role or Aphasia until I was thrown in the deep end. Now I am able to support and teach other carers who might be going through the same things.”



Carer Consultations

Carers Victoria understands the importance of regularly consulting with carers to ensure that our strategic direction, planning and delivery of programs are informed by carer needs and issues. Consultation is, therefore, a key component of our work across all programs, through feedback and evaluation mechanisms as well as through focus groups, interviews and meetings.

The Policy team has a dedicated Carer Consultation Coordinator to ensure that caring families are consulted with and receive feedback around key policy and research issues. Feedback from caring families about key challenges they face enhances the work of our policy and research projects, and our service development.

Consultations conducted for 2013–2014 include:

- Focus groups with carers of adults with disabilities in Barwon who have undertaken the NDIS planning phase, to understand caring family experiences of the planning process.

- Two focus groups with carers of people with intellectual disability and ABI to inform the collaborative Supported Decision-making project.
- Individual consultations with carers regarding challenges with Guardianship and Administration laws, shortages in supported housing, and family concerns regarding quality and adequacy of service provision in adult disability day services.
- Consultations with carers of individuals with mental illness regarding current challenges in the Mental Health sector in Sunbury and Mornington.
- Consultation with carers (in partnership with OPA) to better understand challenges faced by families under current Guardianship and Administration laws, and with complaints resolution bodies (ODSC, MHCC).
- Consultations to recruit carers for various forums and workshops both internally and with external organisations and government bodies.

In conjunction with these consultations, Carers Victoria embarked on a series of statewide carer consultations in June. These were an opportunity to gauge the perception of how well Carers Victoria is providing its services – whether we were meeting the needs of carers, and how we could improve upon our services.

We were overwhelmed with the honest feedback, and while the message was clear that we are meeting needs in general, it was evident that no two needs were necessarily the same. It was also evident that there are positive opportunities for furthering our engagement and service improvement.

This feedback has been built into our business plans and is integral to how the organisation will move forward.

Carer Support Groups

Carer Support Groups are a great way for carers to meet with other people in similar situations. They provide invaluable opportunities for carers to come together for mutual support, self-help and social interaction, helping carers to feel more empowered and less isolated.

As at June 2014, 249 Carer Support Groups were registered with Carers Victoria, providing support to more than 5,000 people. To facilitate the development of these groups and to connect carers with them, each group can have its details added to our data base, enabling us to provide those details to carers who are interested in joining them.

A Carer Support Group mapping project has been established to locate support groups who may benefit but currently do not receive support from Carers Victoria. We will see the results of this project in early 2015.

In 2013–2014, Carers Victoria provided financial assistance to 124 carer support groups across Victoria. As a result, an estimated 3,000 carers participated in social celebrations and awareness raising activities to mark Carers Week.

Young Carer Scholarships

Our Young Carer Scholarship program is now in its seventh year and continues to grow in demand with 58% more applications being received in 2014.

In 2013–2014, Carers Victoria distributed scholarships of up to \$500 each to 259 secondary school students across Victoria.

The scholarships were supported by WCF Thomas Charitable Trust, Rotary club of Mount Eliza, Rotary club of Dingley Village and benefactor Susan Fincham.



Amanda's Story*

Amanda* is a teenager and lives with her mother, father and brother in the Southern Metropolitan Region of Victoria.

Amanda helps care for her father who has Multiple Sclerosis, her mother who has a physical disability and her brother who has autism. All of this leaves little time for Amanda to focus on her school work and even less time to focus on herself. Amanda has a passion for photography and with her 2014 Young Carer Scholarship she was able to buy herself some specialised photographic equipment. Amanda hopes to keep working on her skills, and one day to become a professional photographer.

Amanda's mother expressed her gratitude:

"Our sincerest gratitude for your magnificent assistance; it has provided Amanda with equipment we would never have been able to access. Not only did you recognise Amanda's patience, love and care of her father and brother and myself, I cried my eyes out with relief that she was being awarded a scholarship to support her art.

"Your work makes the difference between a child coping or being severely depressed and affected badly for life. You have saved my Amanda."

The individual scholarship funding goes toward general school expenses such as books, uniforms and excursions, as well as extra-curricular activities; driving lessons, art programs and sporting activities.

The scholarships are an important opportunity for Carers Victoria to recognise, engage and support young carers.

In 2013–2014 Carers Victoria increased promotion of the Young Carer Scholarship within schools. With this came a significant increase in demand for the scholarships and also increased the number of schools referring students to young carers programs. These carers might have otherwise been hidden carers.

Mingles

Mingles are designed to celebrate, recognise and reach out to family carers. Mingles aim to increase awareness of the health benefits of being connected with other carers and the community. They are an opportunity to link carers with local support services, for carers to meet other carers, and to give carers the recognition they deserve.

The 2013 Mingle program delivered a theme of Connections and looked at how being connected can improve carer health and wellbeing by avoiding social isolation.

Those who attended the event took home a booklet that included tips and information on how carers can connect to their local services, community programs and each other. The main entertainment was provided by Frank Lee Darling whose act was inclusive and entertaining. The events were uplifting and light hearted, and gave carers the opportunity to briefly forget about the challenges that they may be facing.

In 2013, ten Mingles were held across Victoria. They were held in Geelong, Warrnambool, Ballarat, Frankston, Bendigo, Horsham, Wodonga, Shepparton, Sale and Melbourne. A total of 884 carers attended the ten events.

Location	Attended
Geelong	105
Warrnambool	58
Ballarat	83
Frankston	95
Bendigo	64
Horsham	43
Shepparton	29
Wodonga	45
Sale	57
Melbourne	305

In 2013, we received the last instalment of our three years' funding from the VV Marshman Charitable Trust. This generous support allowed us to expand the Mingle program; increasing its reach in regional Victoria by more than 100% over the past three years. We also held double the number of events moving from five to ten, eight of which were rural events. We would like to thank VV Marshman Charitable trust for supporting us to bring Mingles to thousands of carers over the past three years.

"I would like to thank all the workers at Carers Vic for their great effort and commitment to be our voices. Thanks again, it was excellent. Please keep them happening – we need it."



\$248,284



Received in monetary and in-kind donations, grants, trusts and foundations, and event registrations.

Community Engagement




Sharla-Rose's Story

Sharla-Rose knows firsthand how hard it is to be a young carer. For the past nine years she has been caring for her older sister, Aimee, who has mental health issues, chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia. She also understands how important Carers Victoria support can be.

"After my school referred me to Carers Victoria, I was provided with a Japanese tutor, driving lessons, gift vouchers and counselling. I was also connected to a social worker who I know I can turn to whenever I need to," Sharla-Rose said.

So in March 2014, Sharla-Rose and her sister dared to go bare, chopping off their long locks in a bid to raise funds to support young carers of primary school age.

Sharla-Rose said "I know young carers go above and beyond to care for others and often neglect to take care of themselves. That's why Aimee and I wanted to raise money to support the young carers program."

Sharla-Rose and Aimee raised over \$2000 which went directly to Carers Victoria's western programs, while Aimee's hair was donated, through Pantene's Beautiful Lengths program, to create wigs for women and children in need.

"Thank you Aimee and Sharla-Rose, for your wonderful and generous effort."

Through the generosity of our community Carers Victoria is able to improve recognition and support for caring families, through all levels of society.

Fundraising

In 2013–2014, Carers Victoria received a total of \$143,825 from Trusts and Foundations, including:

\$75,000 from Portland House Foundation to continue the development of our eLearning program

\$30,000 from WCF Thomas, \$4,500 from Rotary Club of Mt Eliza and \$5,000 from Rotary Club of Dingley Village for our Young Carer Scholarships

\$10,000 from City of Melbourne, \$6,250 from Melton Shire Council, \$5,500 from City of Ballarat, \$3,000 from City of Greater Bendigo, \$2,000 from East Gippsland Shire Council and \$1,250 from City of Greater Geelong for our Mingle program 2014

Carers Victoria also received a generous \$93,424 in donations (member contributions, general donations, in memory and workplace giving gifts), and gifts in kind to the value of \$360; and through our events, Carers Victoria received \$11,035 in registrations.

Partnerships

It was a great year for harnessing new partnerships and relationships with important people within our community.

We entered into partnerships with Australian Unity, State Trustees, the Country Women's Association (CWA), the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) and Independence Australia (IA). Further to this, we entered an agreement with the Association for Children with Disability, for collaborative delivery of our Confident Connected Carers Project. We also hosted a visit from a Masters of Gerontology class from SIM University, Singapore, which gave us an opportunity for international cooperation.

These strategic partnerships offer a unique mix of understanding, skill, service capacity and community linkages to help build our support services and those of other like minded organisations.



Bill Shorten, MP, Leader of the Opposition with Caroline Mulcahy Carers Victoria CEO, at the International Women's Day event.

Communications and Media

In 2013–14, Carers Victoria's online presence grew significantly, with increases across each of our online platforms.

Traffic to our website saw a 299.88% increase in total visits (from 93,006 in the previous year to 371,913 this year) while unique visitors increased by 4.06% (from 65,247 to 67,897). These statistics show that people who visited the website either had a good look through the content or frequently came back. The website continues to maintain a strong Google ranking.

Social media participation grew with a 53.98% increase in Facebook Likes to 1355. Our Twitter followers grew 53.66% to 1950, and our Tweets were re-tweeted 42.55% more than the previous year. Compared to other Network of Carer Association members, including Carers Australia, Carers Victoria is second only to Carers Queensland for Facebook Likes, and leads the country for Twitter followers.

There were 16 issues of Carers Victoria's ebulletin, 'Voice', published throughout the year, with subscribers increasing by 10.78% to 4019. Open and click through rates dropped marginally but still remain well ahead of industry benchmarks.

Fewer media releases were issued than in the previous year; these dropped from twelve to six. Carers Victoria will be more active in this space in 2014–2015.

Library

Our library is an information and research service for caring families and the professionals who support them.

The decline in demand for traditional book borrowing continues from last year and the year before, almost at the same rate. There was approximately a 45% decrease in 2014, compared to 30% decrease in 2013, and 27.5% decrease in 2012. This year 83 people borrowed 197 items from the library. However, in an effort to increase accessibility to our library we have been

moving publications online, where people can download and read publications at their leisure.

Extended library requests (ie, reference and research queries) decreased slightly from 209 in 2012–13 to 196 requests in 2013–2014.

These requests included reference requests, research requests and a research bulletin. Again, as we build our online resource centre these requests will increase without the need for administrative processing.

Each month, a service is provided to compile the latest evidence-based research on caring topics including current trends and best practice models from Australia. Results are circulated via our ebulletin and online.

Events

Walk to Care

Our Walk to Care event was designed to be a fun, family day out and a great platform to raise awareness of carers within the Victorian community.

Ambassador and carer Moira Kelly, AO and TV personality Charlie Pickering were the leaders of the pack for the 4km walk along the Maribyrnong River on Sunday 17 November 2013.

The 2013 walk saw more than double the number of registrations than previous years.

Many people who registered jumped on the fundraising bandwagon, with thousands raised in aid of funding the vital services and supports needed by carers across the state. Although based in Melbourne, carers, family members and friends from across the state showed their support of registered walkers by donating to the cause.

Hundreds of carers, their families and their dogs enjoyed the leisurely stroll along the Maribyrnong River. They were welcomed back to the hub of activity with face painting, a jumping castle, food and drinks, a health and wellbeing tent and much more.

Much to everyone's delight the day brought with it plenty of sunshine, and plenty of entertainment, including a special appearance by Emmanuel Kelly (from 2011 X-Factor). Emmanuel, dance troops and choirs kept the crowd entertained, while a Zumba performance got everyone up and moving. We would like to thank all the wonderful volunteers without whom the day would not have been possible. Carers Victoria would also like to thank all participants, their families and friends for their support in making this day such a success and helping to raise community awareness of family carers.

Thank you to everyone who helped us raise much needed funds, and spread both the message of the event, and what it is to be a family carer.

International Women's Day

In celebration of International Women's Day 2014, Carers Victoria held A Standing Ovation gala dinner at Federation Square, Melbourne in honour of the inspirational women within our community – many of whom are carers.

The evening included speeches from speaker, Chloe Shorten who is passionate about improving the lives of women, children and people with disability, and Co-Chair of the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, Kirsten Deane.

Guests were also treated to the sounds of the Choir of Hope and Inspiration, an award winning choir created for people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage (formerly known as the Choir of Hard Knocks). Assistant Music Director Levi McGrath credited the family carers of many of the participants stating they would not be where they are in their lives today if not for them.

The night ended with Debra Byrne, an iconic Australian performer, taking the stage. Revealing to the audience that she too was a family carer, Debra shared stories that brought laughter and nodding heads from carers who could relate to her personal experiences.

The evening was a success in both celebrating women and carers, and acknowledging the need to support carers within our community.

Event Image – Bill Shorten, MP, Leader of the Opposition with Caroline Mulcahy Carers Victoria CEO, at the International Women's Day event.

21 Years Celebration

On Wednesday 16 October Carers Victoria held an afternoon reception at Government House, hosted by The Honourable Chief Justice Marilyn Warren AC, Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, to celebrate 21 years of service to the community.

Carers, volunteers, government officials, community partners, and other supporters joined Carers Victoria staff and Board members in the State Drawing Room to celebrate Carers Week and the 21st birthday of Carers Victoria. There was entertainment, followed by formal speeches and an afternoon tea, followed by an invitation to tour the State Apartments.

Included among the guests was Joy Ambrose, the first member of Carers Victoria and a notable figure in the establishment of Carers Victoria 21 years ago. At the other end of the scale, our youngest guest, Courtney Howard, a young carer wasn't even born when Carers Victoria first opened its doors to support family carers.



L-R: Caroline Mulcahy, Carers Victoria CEO, with Joy Ambrose and Ara Cresswell, Carers Australia CEO.

Letter from Minister Woolridge

In acknowledgement of Carers Victoria's 21 years supporting carers within the community, the Hon. Mary Woolridge MP (Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Disability Services and Reform) wrote:

Traditionally 21st celebrations provide an opportunity for reflection on the achievements of the last two decades, and I truly believe Carers Victoria can be proud of the important work you have done and contribution you have made to the live of carers and people they care for.

The role of Carers Victoria also includes contribution to government policy development and the Victorian Government greatly values the insights and input of that Carers Victoria makes in representing the needs and issues of over 5000 members.

Your input was key in the establishment of Victorian Carers Recognition Act 2012 and continues to play an important role in the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Victorian community has been well served by Carers Victoria. You have done a huge amount of work to improve the day to day lives of people in care relationships.

“Congratulations Carers Victoria on 21 years of advocacy and achievement.”



113



Make up Carers Victoria's workforce – with 15 casual staff members, 70 part-time and 28 full-time.

People & Culture



Veronica's Story

Veronica began volunteering at Carers Victoria in 2006; but has been volunteering within the community for 17 years.

"People shouldn't complain that there is nothing to do – there are plenty of organisations and people out there who could use the hand," Veronica states.

Supporting the Community Engagement team, Veronica comes in up to two days a week and completes administration tasks and event preparation.

Volunteering is seen as a great way to meet likeminded people and become engaged within the community. More than 6,000,000 people volunteer throughout Australia because of the difference they make to the community, and the sense of purpose it gives them, according to a 2011 survey conducted by Volunteering Australia (www.volunteeringaustralia.org).

"I volunteer because I like what the organisation does..." Veronica says, "I think I will be volunteering with them for some time to come; I feel like a part of the team."

"Carers Victoria would like to thank all of our volunteers, with a special mention to Veronica, who always comes in with a smile on her face and a willingness to get the job done. Thank you."

At Carers Victoria we value our dedicated, skilled employees and aim to create a flexible and supportive workforce for all staff.

Our Staff

Carers Victoria's workforce is made up of 113 staff – with 15 casual staff members, 70 part-time and 28 full-time.

In November 2013, Carers Victoria undertook the third annual staff survey with 77% of staff participating, an increase from previous years in which 74% of staff actively participated. This high level of participation is positive evidence of strong staff engagement across the organisation.

The survey results showed that 82% of the respondents felt proud of the work they do at Carers Victoria. This is an attribute that is highly valued in our workforce.

The results are consistent with previous surveys and show not only a commitment and passion toward the organisation, but the dedication that staff at Carers Victoria have toward people in caring roles across the state.

The results of the survey highlighted a number of strengths within our workforce. Carers Victoria has developed an action plan for areas identified as in need of improvement. These initiatives will focus on cultural changes, improved communication and celebrating achievements; and will further enhance our position as an employer of choice.

Policies and Procedures

Carers Victoria continued its ongoing process of improvement of organisational policies and management. These practical guides help our organisation to facilitate discussions internally while providing consistency of practice across the organisation.

In conjunction with this, the Corporate Services team have revised, reformatted and implemented new policies and procedures within their areas. This includes updates to the office management and fleet policies, information technology and finance policies, all leading to a greater level of professionalism and assurance for our quality checks.

The existing set of human resources policies were further enhanced with the addition of some new policies and the program areas converting their policies into this framework.

Other areas of focus have been in staff development, in particular the introduction of a group supervision model to support our program staff. This has been well received by employees.

Our Leadership Team



Caroline Mulcahy

Chief Executive Officer

Caroline joined Carers Victoria as CEO in November 2010.

Caroline began her 'caring' career over 30 years ago as a nurse and has worked in health in various roles in the UK, Hong Kong and Australia. Her experience has included clinical care, operational and strategic planning and senior management roles. Caroline has a Master's degree in Health Sciences, majoring in research methods and remains passionate about enquiry and evidence-based practices.

More recently, Caroline has been engaged to review, design, and plan services, and in doing so, has led organisations through substantial change. Caroline is able to take a helicopter view of an organisation's culture, systems, and processes, and is able to transform these to benefit those they serve. Caroline has established new models of effective governance, and has been instrumental in building robust and effective business models that also facilitate compassionate and sensitive treatment of clients.



Alastair Stott

Chief Operating Officer

In his role as Chief Operating Officer, Alastair has responsibility for service delivery, innovation and partnerships.

A qualified MBA from the Melbourne Business School, Alastair has had leadership roles with Lonely Planet Publications and Racing Victoria as well as significant organisational change consulting experience in multi stakeholder environments with major corporate, not for profit and government clients across Australia and New Zealand.



Andrew Hunt

General Manager, Finance and Business Support

Andrew uses his skills and experience to support Carers Victoria to achieve its goals, and is committed to providing leadership and guidance to enhance the organisation's business, finance and ICT systems.

Andrew has had over 25 years of experience within the financial sector, including obtaining a Bachelor of Economics from Monash University, becoming a Certified Practising Accountant and a Fellow of the Institute of Company Directors.

Before joining Carers Victoria in 2012, Andrew was a Senior Project Manager, representing the Victorian government on a major irrigation project in Northern Victoria. Previously he was the Executive Manager of Business Services at Coliban Waters.



Jenny Cobby

Human Resources Manager

Jenny joined Carers Victoria in 2007, as the Human Resources (HR) Manager. In this role, Jenny focuses on staff engagement and strategic guidance, overseeing departmental policies and procedures.

Jenny's experience includes extensive roles within recruitment and employee consultation, as well as managing teams and strategic HR duties.

Jenny has specialised in supporting Health and Community Services workforces since 1999.



Kate Johnson

Operations Manager

Kate has worked at Carers Victoria since 2011. As Operations Manager, Kate oversees the service delivery areas of Carers Victoria – including the Statewide Advisory, Counselling, Better Start and Education and Training Services, as well as the Western Respite and Carer Support Programs.

Prior to coming to Carers Victoria, Kate worked as a freelance consultant to many carer and community service organisations, in both Victoria and Tasmania. In this role she worked closely with Carers Victoria as part of the Victorian Carer Services Network for more than 7 years.

Kate's background is in psychology and aged care.

“The leadership team would like to thank Carers Victoria staff, past and present, whose skills, knowledge and commitment to their work improve the lives of Victorian carers everyday.”

Corporate Support Services



Office and Facilities

In an effort to support more regional carers, especially those who are currently living in the NDIS Barwon site, Carers Victoria opened our first office in Geelong in partnership with Independence Australia (IA). The office is being used as a site where carers can access information about what supports are available to them during the transition to an NDIS environment. We are also able to use the space for our Education and Training programs, and for counselling support.

The office is another example of how Carers Victoria is using community partnerships to broaden our brand. As we partner with IA, we have been able to develop connections to carers who might otherwise remain hidden within the community, and therefore without the support they deserve and need.

In 2014, the Office and Facilities team also ensured that Carers Victoria would hold residence at the Footscray address until 2017. This decision provides surety to our carers, staff and our programs.

Information Communication Technology

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) department had a productive year in 2013–2014. The team assisted the designated project team with the implementation of a new client management system called BUD. The system went live for our Advisory, Better Start and Counselling team in July 2013, and was later implemented for the management of our respite, brokerage, education and training, fundraising, and membership departments.

The BUD system was developed after we mapped the process how Carers Victoria delivers its services, and identified opportunities to streamline and standardise our delivery processes. This included improvements to how our IT supports our end-to-end business processes.

Also in 2013–2014, in an effort to better support staff, the ICT department updated the security IT firewall. This improvement is an example of how our IT is moving to better support our services to ensure professional services are delivered to our carers.

Finance

In 2013–2014, Carers Victoria saw the implementation of the new complex SACS payments for Carers Victoria staff. The calculation and distribution of this means that Carer Victoria's pay rates are gradually increasing under the Equal Remuneration Order made by the Fair Work Commission. Our Finance team will work towards ensuring the increase set out by the Fair Work Commission will be fully applied as funding is received by 2020.

Risk

Risk management is essential in business development and growth, and the management of risk is a fundamental aspect of Carers Victoria's governance and operations.

During 2013–2014, Carers Victoria implemented a risk management framework that complies with the AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 standard. This framework provides guidance and principles to enhance activities in all areas of Carers Victoria. Moving forward in this fashion has ensured that risk management is an integral part of the decision making processes across all levels of the organisation.

Quality

Carers Victoria prides itself on meeting high quality standards. During 2014, the organisation was reviewed externally for accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) and Department of Human Services (DHS) standards.

The summary report from Quality Innovation Performance, the external assessment provider, noted: "This is an

extremely well-governed and managed organisation. The range of documentation, breadth of detail, strategic approach, and commitment of the Board is outstanding. This is a textbook example of good Governance. The enthusiasm and strategic approach of the Board is matched by the apparent competence and forward thinking of the CEO".

This is very high praise for the organisation and a true reflection on the staff, Leadership team and the board members of Carers Victoria.

In order to keep the quality of our work at this high standard we have implemented a Quality Champions committee, who work alongside the Manager for Quality and Governance. The committee's role is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of Carers Victoria's quality framework and to facilitate the development and embed a culture of continuous improvement.



Governance

Board Committees 2014

Governance

David Fitch (Chair)

Mary Anne Noone

Christine Phillips

Audit, Risk and Compliance

David Bartlett (Chair)

David Fitch

Katrina Price

Mark Van Zuylekom

Business Development and Marketing

Wesa Chau (Chair)

Sue Peden

Helen Johnson

Simon Hampson (ex-officio member)

Recruitment, Remuneration and Review

David Fitch (Chair)

David Bartlett



L-R: Katrina Price, Christine Phillips, Mary Anne Noone, David Bartlett, Honourable Chief Justice Marilyn Warren AC, Caroline Mulcahy (CEO), Mark Van Zuylekom, Helen Johnson, Wesa Chau and Sue Peden at the 21st Celebration Event. (President David Fitch and Briony Dow not in attendance).

Carers Victoria is a body corporate, incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).

At the Annual General Meeting in November 2013, the members passed a special resolution to adopt Carers Victoria's new Constitution which was revised to comply with the requirements of the new Act. Subsequently, the Board has also revised the Regulations which give effect to the Constitution.

The Constitution establishes the Board as the legal authority for the organisation – its members are trustees representing the interests of the organisation's members:

The Board of Carers Victoria is an elective, representative and collective body.

- Elective – Carers Victoria's members determine its Board members via the election process

- Representative – no member can be mandated to adopt a particular position if they do not believe it to benefit Carers Victoria. All Board members are committed to acting selflessly and making decisions solely in Carers Victoria's best interests, and
- Collective – while each Board member should express their point of view, once a collective decision has been taken, members are required to support that decision.

The Board is responsible and accountable for ensuring and monitoring that Carers Victoria is performing well, is solvent and is complying with all of its legal, ethical and financial obligations. The Board's focus is on strategic direction and core policies and it avoids becoming involved in day-to-day operational decisions.

Our Board

David Fitch

President

Board member since 2010

After retiring as Chief Executive Partner of significant mid-tier commercial law firm Lander and Rogers in July 2009, David remains with the organisation as Consultant. In addition to a law degree, David is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds various certifications for executive coaching.

Helen Johnson

Vice President

Board member since 2005

Helen works as a Parent Support Worker with Association for Children with a Disability, and previously worked as a Community Education Coordinator for the national organisation: Australian Association for Families of Children with a Disability (AAFCD). Helen also contributes skills in finance, marketing and media.

David Bartlett

Treasurer

Board member since 2010

David has over 25 years' senior executive and board experience gained in private and public sector organisations, including the not for profit sector. David is currently a corporate banker with National Australia Bank and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Mary Anne Noone

Board member since 2005

Mary Anne is a Professor in the School of Law at La Trobe University and has been

involved with improving access to justice and social justice throughout her working life. Mary Anne has many years' experience in practical, governance and policy level in poverty law and legal aid.

Mark Van Zuylenkom

Board member since 2012

Mark has held senior roles in a range of profit and not for profit organisations. Currently Mark is the Director Corporate Services at the Victorian Cytology Service. Mark is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has an MBA from the Melbourne Business School and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Melbourne.

Wesa Chau

Board member since 2012

Wesa is currently a Director of Cultural Intelligence, which specialises in cross-cultural training, orientation and consultancy. She is recognised for her work in advocacy through many awards and was named Young Victorian of the Year 2010. A graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Wesa holds tertiary qualifications in management, law, commerce and engineering.

Katrina Price

Board member since 2013

Katrina currently works in the education sector managing compliance and risk. Katrina is a Director of Waverley Industries Limited, an Australian Disability Enterprise and holds tertiary qualifications in management, engineering and arts. Katrina is the Carers Victoria representative on the Carers Australia board.

Briony Dow

Board member since 2008

Retired August 2013

Briony's career experience spans various social work positions; including community aged care, disability and mental health. Briony is currently the Director of the Preventative & Public Health Division of the National Ageing Research Institute and is also President of the Australian Association of Gerontology, Victorian Executive.

Christine Phillips

Board member since 2013

Christine has over 20 years' experience in the Australian commercial property market and is currently employed as Mandate Manager for one of the largest superannuation funds in Australia. Prior to her current role, Christine was the Fund Manager for a \$2.1 billion property investment fund and has proven experience in delivery of investment outperformance within a strong corporate governance framework.

Sue Peden

Board member since 2013

Sue is currently Director of Thread, a company specialising in advertising and communications. With over 25 years' experience with large advertising agencies, Sue's professional interests are focused on business and brand strategy and stakeholder management. Sue has a commerce degree, majoring in accounting from the University of Melbourne.

Treasurer's Report



David Bartlett, Carers Victoria Treasurer

Carers Victoria has just completed one of the more financially challenging years of recent times and the future holds further financial challenges ahead as:

- Government funding contracts conclude
- Government funding goes through fundamental structural changes
- Interest rates remain low
- Cost pressures increase, and
- Funding from the general public and philanthropic organisations continues to be competitive and tight.

In the 2013–14 financial year, Carers Victoria reports a net operating deficit of \$274,236, a result mainly driven by restructuring costs required to right size our organisation for the future.

Overall, total revenue increased by nearly \$125,000 (just over 1%) and is now approaching \$10.9 million.

Our total grant revenue, which represents over 94 % of our total revenue base, increased by 2.4%, with the majority of the increase being targeted at brokerage, or direct support for carers.

The overall rise in grant income comes despite the loss of a number of existing programs including:

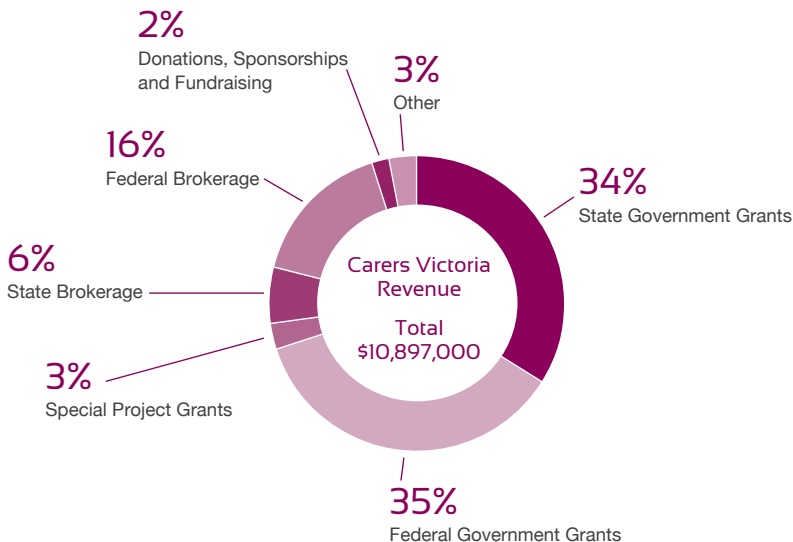
- The building further capacity program funded by the department of health, and
- The National Carer Support Service & Newsletter funded by the Commonwealth.

Donations and sponsorships were \$85,000 below the level achieved in 2012–13, which was a disappointing result, reflecting the increasing difficulties in engaging donors and sponsors on a traditional giving model.

“A major focus for this year has been the development of a planned and targeted staff training program which has doubled our costs in this area (by \$41,000).”

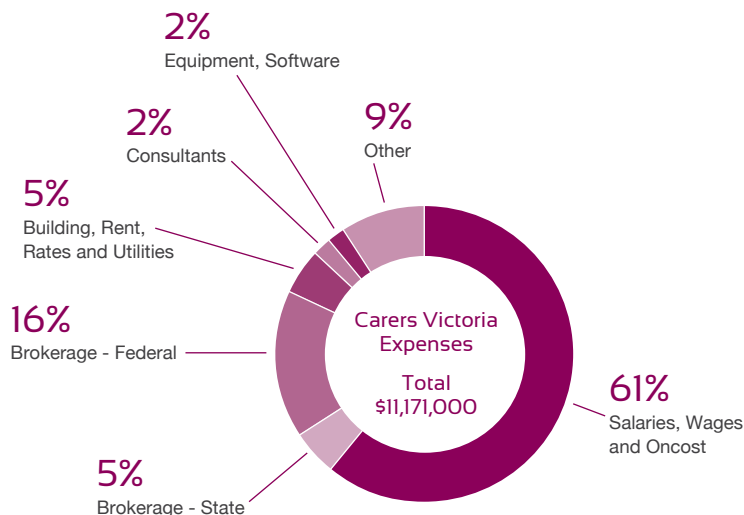
Carers Victoria Revenue

Total \$10,897,000



Carers Victoria Expenses

Total \$11,171,000



We are identifying strategies to move to more corporate sponsorship and partnership based models to improve uptake of revenue in this area.

Unfortunately, as we look into the 2014–15 financial year, we anticipate the loss of even more government grant sources and the elimination of roll over grants that were available to us in 2013–14.

The largest anticipated grant losses are for:

- Carelink (which has moved into the Aged Care Gateway), and
- Components of the Better Start for Children with a Disability programs.

In total, reductions in income from grants will exceed \$375,000 next year compared to this year.

To meet the challenge of managing these reductions, at the end of the financial year, we embarked on cost saving initiatives, including a restructuring program, and 13 positions were, reluctantly, made redundant at a cost to our organisation of \$246,000.

Staffing costs, excluding redundancies, represent 59% of total expenses and nearly 75% of our total expenses if you exclude brokerage expenses.

In total, labour costs, excluding redundancies, were almost \$6.6 million for the year –, a 5% increase from the prior year which is an increase of \$574,000 (\$328,000 excluding redundancy costs).

We have; however, been able to reduce our non-labour expenses from the previous year by over \$200,000 (10%).

Savings for the year in non-labour costs include:

- Rental relief (one month free rent) obtained from our landlord for early exercise of the 3 year option on our building lease arrangements
- A significant reduction in our use of consultants
- A reduction in vehicle costs due to the rationalisation of our vehicle pool, and

- A reduction in photocopying costs as a result of improvements to our monitoring capabilities.

We have continued to maintain a healthy liquidity level ending the year on a ratio of 1.425:1. Notwithstanding that the ratio has declined during the year due to pressure on our cash reserves. We have at all times been able to, and continue to be able to, meet our current financial obligations.

The pressure on our cash reserves is a direct result of experiencing a cash outflow from our operating activities. In the 2013–14 financial year, we experienced a cash outflow of \$123,000, as opposed to the last financial year, in which we had a cash inflow from operating activities of nearly \$50,000. Consequently this year's result is \$173,000 lower.

We will continue to maintain a strong focus on the margins obtained on our operating cost centres and monitor these closely during the year.

The real challenges in the coming years derive from the significant changes in the way the community sector is financed and funded.

With this in mind, our business focus is moving to anticipation of the future of revenue generation and assessing how our organisation needs to adapt to meet any significant changes to funding.

We continue to closely monitor the projected future of our grants over the next five years, and look forward to addressing the multiple challenges facing the organisation, to enable us to continue to support carers in Victoria as we have done over the last 22 years.

David Bartlett

Carers Victoria Treasurer

Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2014

	2014 \$	2013 \$
Income		
Grant Income	10,328,795	10,086,363
Interest Income	154,956	201,200
Other Income	412,804	484,282
	10,896,555	10,771,845
Expenses		
Salaries, Wages and Oncost	6,945,532	6,390,332
Carer Discretionary Expenditure	2,366,810	2,198,186
Other Expenditure	1,858,449	2,064,273
	11,170,791	10,652,791
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for year	(274,236)	119,054
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income	(274,236)	119,054

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2013

	2014 \$	2013 \$
Members' Funds		
Total Reserves	1,519,110	1,793,346
Represented by		
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank and Financial Assets	3,235,914	3,688,512
Sundry Debtors, Grants Receivable and Inventories	95,311	145,153
Shareholdings	5	5
	3,331,230	3,833,670
Non-Current Assets		
Fixed Assets at written down value	125,173	184,554
Intangible Assets at written down value	573,067	275,185
Total Assets	4,029,470	4,293,409
Current Liabilities		
Sundry Creditors and Accruals	1,398,505	1,000,594
Staff Leave Provisions	634,241	655,793
Grants received in Advance	95,598	335,560
Gift Fund	249,829	318,441
	2,378,173	2,310,388
Non-Current Liabilities		
Staff Leave Provisions	132,187	189,675
Total Liabilities	2,510,360	2,500,063
Net Assets	1,519,110	1,793,346

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Balance at the Beginning of the Financial Year	1,793,346	1,674,292
Surplus/(Deficit)	(274,236)	119,054
Balance at the End of the Financial Year	1,519,110	1,793,346

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts from Grants, Sponsorships, Members and Customers	11,553,043	11,523,249
Interest Received	154,956	201,200
Payments to Employees and Suppliers	(11,831,406)	(11,675,553)
Net Cash used in Operating Activities	(123,407)	48,896
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Payments for Property, Plant and Equipment	(11,783)	(58,657)
Payments for Intangible Assets	(317,408)	(277,456)
Net Cash used in Investing Activities	(329,191)	(336,113)
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash Held	(452,598)	(287,217)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Financial Year	3,688,512	3,975,729
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Financial Year	3,235,914	3,688,512

Copies of more detailed financial statements are available from Carers Victoria on request.



Independent audit report to the members of Carers Victoria Incorporated
Report on the financial report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Carers Victoria Incorporated (the Association), which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2014, and the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended on that date, notes 1 to 16 comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information and the statement by the members of the Board.

Association's committee members' responsibility for the financial report

The members of the Association are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the special purpose financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 2 to the financial statements is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The members' responsibility also includes such internal control as the members determine necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Association's committee members, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and basis of accounting described in Note 2 to the financial statements so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Association's financial position, and of its performance and cash flows.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.



Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board.

Auditor's opinion

In our opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Carers Victoria Incorporated as of 30 June 2014 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 2 to the financial statements.

Basis of accounting

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 2 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Carers Victoria Incorporated to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

A handwritten signature of the KPMG firm, written in black ink.

KPMG

Melbourne

30 October 2014

Acknowledgements



Government

Carers Victoria receives funding from the Australian Government Departments of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Social Services.

Trusts and foundations

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
 Myer Foundation
 Portland House Foundation
 VV Marshman Charitable Trust
 WCF Thomas Charitable Trust

Donors

Carers Victoria is grateful for the generosity of individuals who have made donations during the year. All donations, small and large, cash or in-kind, are much appreciated.

We also want to acknowledge the individuals who have named Carers Victoria in their will; your support will ensure that we can continue to provide services for carers into the future.

Carers Victoria is a registered charity. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Corporate Supporters

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 Australian Institute of Family Studies
 Australian Nurses Federation
 Australian Unity
 Autism Victoria
 Ballarat Health Services
 Barwon Health
 Bendigo Health Care Group
 Bouverie Centre
 Brainlink
 Brotherhood of St Laurence

Carers Australia and the National Network
of Carers Associations
Centre for Multicultural Youth
Centrelink
Chronic Illness Alliance
City of Ballarat
City of Greater Bendigo
City of Greater Geelong
City of Melbourne
Coalition for Disability Rights
Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria
Country Women's Association
Deakin University
Department of Education and Early
Childhood Development
Disability Services Commissioner
Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Vic)
East Gippsland City Council
Edith Cowan University
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
Every Australian Counts
Families of Parents Mental Illness
General Practice Victoria
Griffith University
The Gwen and Edna Jones Foundation
Hesta Superfund
Independence Australia
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LaTrobe Community Health
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Mental Illness Fellowship
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MIND
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National Ageing Research Institute
National Disability Services
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RMIT
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Veterans Home Care
Victoria Police
Victoria University
Victorian Carer Services Network
Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS)
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human
Rights Commission
Victorian Mental Health Carers Network
Western Health
Western Region Health Centre

Individual supporters

Linda Betts – Aquarius Consulting
Dr Sally Cockburn
Michael Goldsworthy – Australian
Strategic Services
Emmanuel and Ahmed Kelly
Maira Kelly
Tony Lang
Captain Richard Coates
Melissa Manning
Charlie Pickering
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Al Meredith
Amelia Ballard
Doris Lee
Helen Carr
Simon Harvey
Georgia Harvey
Huynh Hanh
Jinming Cui
Kumarinee Liyanage
Marlie Curtis
Madeleine Buchner – Little Dreamers
Mary Predebon
Mel Carron
Nurul Nadiah Noryatim
Naomi Rhode
Shobhna Pandey
Shoko Satake
Rick Mattisse

***Photos and names have been
changed to protect privacy**

How to get involved

There are many ways you can get involved and support Carers Victoria's work, ensuring we can continue to assist people who are in caring roles:

- Donate
- Leave a bequest
- Volunteer, and
- Work with Carers Victoria.

For more information on how you can support our organisation visit our website:

www.carersvictoria.org.au






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