

Carers

news

Summer 2018



***Integrated Carer
Support Service***

A new horizon

***Royal
Commission***

Spotlight on aged care

***Dynamic
Duo***

Carer stories

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Message from Scott

Welcome to the Summer 2018 edition of Carers News.

As another year draws to a close, I can't help but reflect on what a huge year 2018 has been for Carers Victoria and the carer community. We've achieved some key milestones including the launch of a whole of government Victorian Carer Strategy, a successful gala night in partnership with the Odonate Foundation to raise funds for young carers, and another colourful celebration for National Carers Week. While every year brings its highs, there has also been a significant low for us with the recent passing of former Carers Australia President and Carers Victoria board member, Wolfgang (Ben) Chodziesner.

Ben was well respected for his absolute dedication to improving the lives of carers and for the contribution he made to both organisations.

Ben joined Carers Victoria in 1997, while he was in a caring situation himself. He was president from 2004-until he retired in 2010.

He joined the national body, Carers Australia in 2000, remaining for seven years and was president for two years.

Always representing the interest of carers, Ben had the utmost dedication to their cause. He contributed a great deal to putting carers on the map and increasing community awareness of the issue.

Ben's advocacy, networking and connecting helped achieve a Carers Payment and for carers to become part of the framework through which government made pertinent policy decisions.



The organisation was incredibly fortunate to have Ben at the helm for many years. On behalf of the Carers Victoria board and staff, I thank and acknowledge Ben's tireless passion, commitment and drive in guiding Carers Victoria from its small beginnings to the vibrant and growing organisation it is today.

With 2019 approaching, this Carers News edition is themed 'new horizons' to mirror the changes upon us. At the time of print, we await the impact of a newly elected State Government and clarity on how the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and Integrated Carer Support Service framework will reshape Carers Victoria and the broader health industry. You can read more about each of these important topics in this edition, along with some inspirational pieces to help you make the most of summer.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Walker', written in a cursive style.

Scott Walker
Chief Executive Officer, Carers Victoria

#CarersCountToo

— Victorian State Election campaign

In the lead up to the Victorian State Election on 24 November 2018, Carers Victoria launched its #CarersCountToo Election Campaign calling on all members to get involved and get active in making carers' needs count!

#CarersCountToo was launched following the Andrews Labor Government election promise on 13 September committing over \$50 million in funding toward additional respite and carer support if re-elected. The historic pledge was a resounding testament to Carers Victoria's advocacy efforts in recent years, which were a key influence on this outcome. The proposed funding package also provided significant leverage for Carers Victoria to seek similar commitments from other political parties and work to secure bi-partisan support for carers this State Election.

Feedback received from the Carers Victoria Carer Election Survey — where over 700 carers responded to questions about what they wanted most from a new Victorian Government — highlighted key areas of focus:

The results informed Carers Victoria where to focus its advocacy efforts and shaped the #CarersCountToo election platform. #CarersCountToo empowers carers to be heard at both the Local Government Area and State Government levels. The campaign web page contained useful tools to get onboard with making carers heard. These included a checklist of ideas on how to participate, a template letter for contacting a local Member of Parliament (MP) and key messages to communicate to both politicians and family and friends.

Thank you to all carer members who supported Carers Victoria in advocating for the needs of Victorian carers. Your contribution has helped raise awareness of the caring role and will go a long way toward building a more carer aware community!

Stay tuned

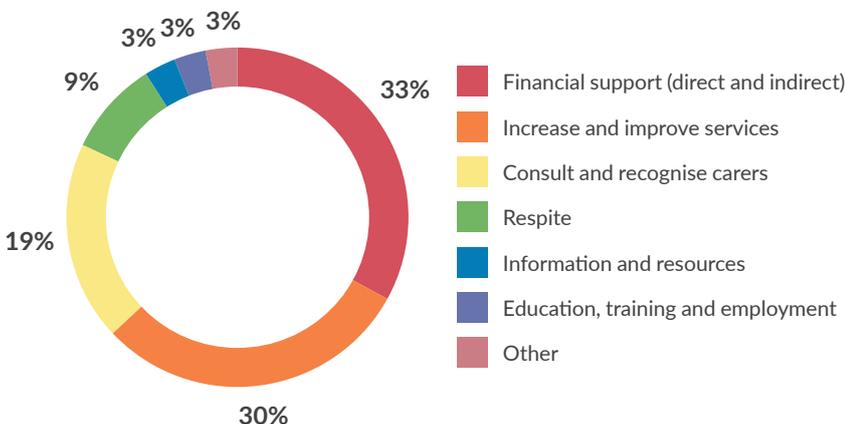
Stay tuned for a special report in the next edition of Carers News magazine examining what the State election outcome means for Victorian carers.

Carers meet with local MP to say #CarersCountToo



Above // Carers Fay and Barry met with their local Labor candidate for Tarneit, Sarah Connolly, at the Little Growling cafe. Armed with their #CarersCountToo material in hand, Fay and Barry spoke about what carers need from their local Member of Parliament.

Top six most important things





Above // Carers Victoria staff dressed up as “Sweet Treats” to entertain carers on the day.



Above // L-R: Cr Maria Sampey (Silverleaf Ward), Annie Hayward (General Manager Policy, Strategy & Public Affairs, Carers Victoria), MP Gabrielle Williams (Parliamentary Secretary - Carers and Volunteers), Scott Walker (CEO, Carers Victoria) and Sue Peden (President, Carers Victoria).



Above // Carers Victoria CEO Scott Walker with carers at the mobile Mingle of the Silo Art trail.

Mingles 2018 — *A sweet treat for carers*

Carers Victoria's 2018 Mingle Program saw over 1,000 carers enjoy a day out at events at the Melbourne Zoo, Mildura, Skyhigh Mount Dandenong, Preston, Ballarat, Dandenong, Wangaratta, Manningham, Melton and Kingston.

The Mingle Program aimed to recognise the valuable contribution of the caring role in our community combining entertainment, information on carer services and supports, health and wellbeing messages for carers as well as an opportunity for carers to make connections with other carers.

This year's Mingle theme of 'Reflections' encouraged carers to reflect on themselves, their life, their experiences, and the lives of those around them. In a funny and engaging

way, carers completed a personality quiz which revealed their dessert alter ego. The results offered insight on how they can use their personality characteristics in dealing with life.

In addition to the light-hearted entertainment supplied by Mingle hosts the “Sweet Treats”, participants were also given a laugh by local comedian Doug Chappel. This was complemented by a delicious morning tea and lunch to give carers a chance to get to know one another and find their dessert twins.

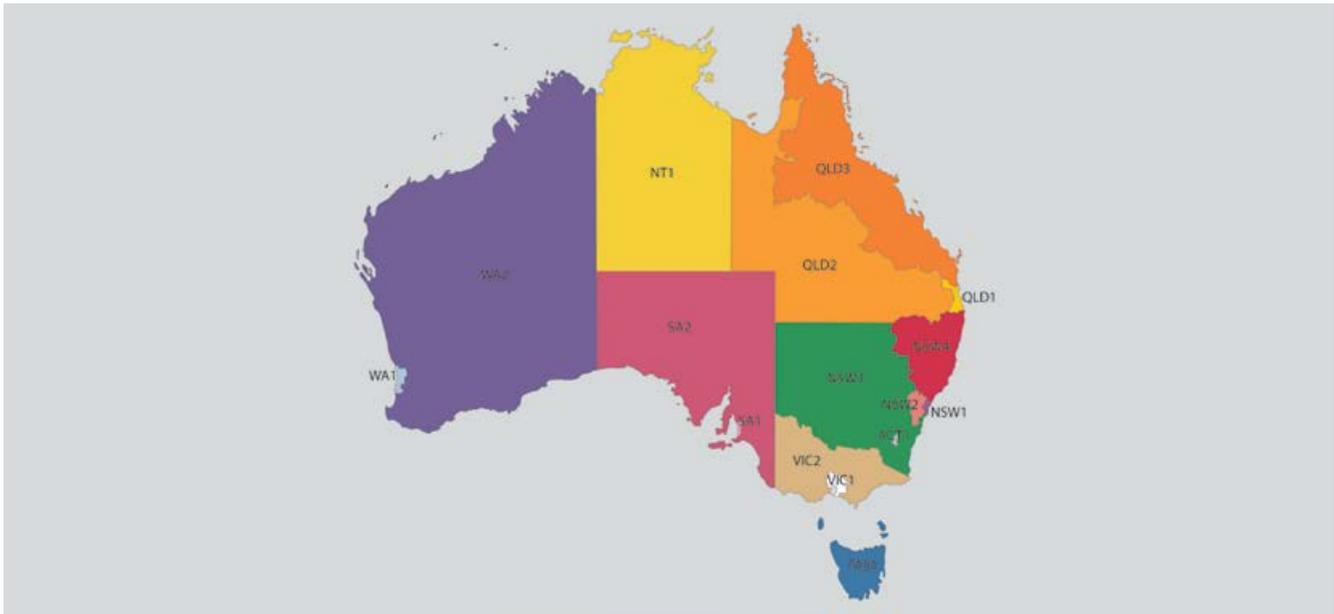
Thank you to the Victorian State Government, City of Dandenong, City of Manningham, City of Melton, City of Kingston and Carers Victoria's generous donors and supporters for enabling us to host our 2018 Mingle Program.

What the carers had to say:

- “It was wonderful to get out for the day and connect with other carers.”
- “Thank you for recognising us for the everyday things we do”.
- “I enjoyed the supports, chats, laughter, having a good time with other carers who understand”.
- “This really was something special and to look forward to. This got me through the past two months when I would otherwise have not got through. I sacrificed on alone respite to attend and I am so grateful. Thank you.”
- “Makes you realise you are not alone”.

More images

See page six to see more Mingle 2018 photos and how other States celebrated National Carers Week.



Above // The 16 service delivery regions under the new Integrated Carer Support Service model.

Integrated Carer Support Service – A new horizon

Australian Government funded carer support services are changing.

In 2011 the Australian government announced plans for new Carer Support Centres to replace the existing national network of Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCCs). In 2016 work commenced on designing the new Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS). Following many rounds of consultations and multiple submissions, the ICSS service model has been finalised. The aim is to provide a more consistent service experience to all carers, no matter where in Australia they live and to reach more carers earlier in their caring journey.

The ICSS components are:

Carer Gateway

- A national online and phone information service - the Carer Gateway established in 2016 www.carergateway.gov.au

Online services

- Counselling via telephone and web and online peer support –to be developed and delivered by CatholicCare Sydney

- Online carer coaching service – to be developed and delivered by Wellways Australia
- Online carer education resources – to be developed and delivered by Carers Australia

Regional Delivery Partners

- Intake, needs assessment and planning
- Face-to-face coaching
- In-person peer support
- In-person counselling
- Carer-Directed Support Packages
- Emergency Respite Care

The regional delivery partner services tender opened mid-November 2018 and will close 14 February 2019. The 16 service delivery regions will be much larger than for current CRCC services (see map). Each regional service provider across Australia will establish a regional hub and smaller local outlets to provide services to carers, as well as undertake service area planning and outreach services. They will replace the

100 organisations currently receiving Department of Social Services (DSS) funding to deliver carer services, including the national carer information and support service and national carer counselling programs currently provided by State and Territory Carer Associations.

There will be a transitional period between the commencement of the new Integrated Carer Support Service in September 2019 and the end of existing information, counselling and respite service provision in November 2019. This will help to ensure existing carer service users can transition to the new service model.

More information

For further information, go to: <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/carers/integrated-carer-support-service-model> or call 1800 242 636.

 **NATIONAL CARERS WEEK** 14-20 OCTOBER **2018**
— *Round Up*

This National Carers Week carers across Australia participated in festivities hosted by their local Carers Association and other organisations to celebrate and recognise their outstanding contribution to the nation.

Carers were also active on social media and responded to this year's campaign tagline 'Why We Care' by sharing with the rest of the country their reasons for fulfilling the caring role. Australian Olympic swimming champions Cate and Bronte Campbell were the 2018 National Carers Week ambassadors. The sisters support their parents in providing unpaid care to their brother Hamish, who has cerebral palsy. Cate and Bronte offered a rare glimpse into their life beyond the pool to help raise better awareness of carers.

"Australia should care about carers because they're the lifeblood of our country. National Carers Week is about recognising these people and shining a light on what they do."

— **Bronte Campbell**

"I would say that Hamish is much more proud of me being a National Carers Week Ambassador than for pursuing my own goals and becoming an Olympian."

— **Cate Campbell**

Here's a snapshot of celebrations which took place in various States throughout National Carers Week:

Victoria

National Carers Week started with Carers Victoria's first 2018 Mingle event at Melbourne Zoo. This was followed by another at Sky High in Mount Dandenong later in the week. The annual Mingles are a fun day out for carers, filled with lots of laughs, entertainment and socialising. This year's theme was 'Reflections' and participants were treated to a dessert themed personality quiz, morning tea and lunch, and jokes from local comedian Doug Chappel. Mildura joined the Mingle fun with a bus tour of the scenic Silo Art Trail, where over 55 carers spent an adventure filled day on the road with plenty of stops along the way for meals and a chat.

Carers Victoria also sponsored 146 carer support groups with grants to host their own activities during National Carers Week. The events were open to all carers and included group lunches, movie outings, and day trips to popular attractions.



Above // Carer receiving a prize at the Melbourne Zoo Mingle.



Above // Carers at the mobile Mildura Mingle bus tour of silo artwork.



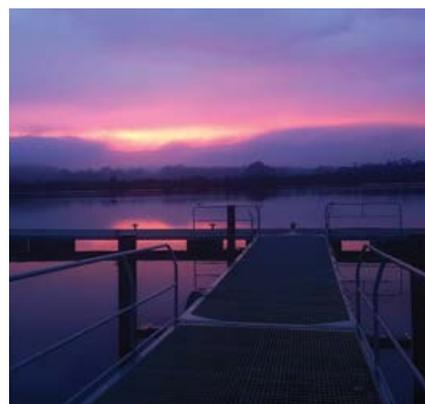
Above // Carers having a dance to the 'Macaroon-a'.



Above // Young carers, together with a digital music artist, spent 15 weeks creating a song, that was launched at a Shout Out to Young Carers event during National Carers Week. Mick Scordo (Regional Team Leader River Murray Mallee) with young carers celebrated the launch of their song.



Above // Learning the ins & outs of indoor bowls!



Above // Photography competition joint-winner, Jasmin Johnson (Hobart).



Above // Southern Fleurieu Carer outing at Raywood nursery then lunch at Normanville kiosk.



Above // Uplifting renditions from Hobart's Choir of High Hopes.



Above // Photography competition joint-winner, Robyn Walker (Launceston).

South Australia

Carers SA celebrated National Carers Week with a wide range of carer activities and events across seven locations. Activities included luncheons for carers across several regions, a visit to Raywood nursery, launch of young carers song in the Riverland, a BBQ on the foreshore, a family fun day and even an oyster bay tour. These activities brought many carers together for lots of laughs and great conversation.

Other activities included a video of carers stories and photos from regional activities posted through social media. Adverts also featured across seven radio stations, along with interviews on several stations, including a CEO interview with Today Tonight for the national Maven Dental offer for carers.

Tasmania

Carers Week was launched with a morning tea hosted by the Hon Jacque Petrusma MP, Minister for Disability and Community Development at the Premier's Reception Room. Carers and key stakeholders attended, including representatives from key Government departments.

Carers Tasmania's Launceston office hosted its first function for young carers in Launceston, with Laser Tag and pizza enjoyed by all.

Carers Tasmania's "Why We Care" Photographic exhibition of twenty photos submitted by carers was showcased across the state, with events in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Congratulations to winners Jasmin Johnstone for her photo "Time

out at Sunset" and Robyn Walker with "On Your Bike", an image of her handmade quilt. The twenty printed photos will be on permanent display across Carers Tasmania's offices.

The photographic exhibitions were held in local bowls clubs and many carers enjoyed a game of barefoot bowls. Highlights included the attendance of two founding Carers Tasmania members in Burnie, and Carers Tasmania staff singing with the Choir of High Hopes, and a touching speech by choir member Wayne, thanking his wife for her care and love.

Carers Week attracted media attention with the Examiner running a series of carer stories. Newspaper stories can be found via Carers Tasmania's Facebook Page.

Dynamic Duo

Maria and Rita's similarities are numerous. The two friends, who met through Rita's neighbour Angela, are both of Italian descent and mothers to an adult child with special needs. While their friendship is founded on common ground and they're regularly seen together at carer events, their individual caring journeys are one of a kind.



Above // Rita (pictured left) and Maria enjoying a carers event at an Italian restaurant, with iconic actress Sophia Loren pictured in the background.

Maria's story

"He was such a cute baby with black hair," says Maria as she fondly recalls her earliest memories of her son Joseph. "He was only two when diagnosed as intellectually delayed, which is what they called it [autism] back in the 80's. They picked it up at creche. I had no idea until then," she says.

Joseph is now 34 and living with autism and (controlled) epilepsy which hasn't stopped him from leading an active lifestyle. He attends the gym, functions, and has even tried a cooking class. Maria's caring role mainly involves prompting Joseph to shower, clean his room and go to bed. She credits early intervention with helping her take his diagnosis in their stride. "He didn't start speaking until he was six, but I put in a lot of work when he was younger. I used to tape him

when he was reading and play it back," explains Maria. Even now, she admits to regular doses of 'tough love'. "I'm always pushing him to wash the dishes, get a haircut, or tidy his room," she explains. "If he's tired he's not happy about it but I do it because I want to get the best out of him," says Maria.

She also had to lay down the law when her son went on an expensive shopping spree. "Joseph loves watches. We once received a letter addressed from Customs asking us to pay a \$300 duty tax because he ordered a designer watch on my husband's credit card without our knowledge. We couldn't ring up and say it was fraud because it's our son and we didn't want to get him in trouble." But we did have to sit down and talk with Joseph. He now knows not to do that."

Learning to tame her Sicilian passion is something Maria has progressively learnt through her caring journey. She now knows speaking quietly with Joseph achieves a better outcome. "I have to say a million times 'Joseph do this, Joseph do that' and the same thing will happen the next day, but I continue to ask him to do things calmly because getting angry won't make a difference. I know if I say it a million times he will do it one day."

"If I could go back and tell my younger self anything it would be to keep my cool and my wits about me. When I was younger I used to lose my patience a lot more, but I have learnt to handle the rage in me."

Rita is sitting beside Maria and agrees. "I was always a patient person but occasionally you do snap. They [Joseph and her daughter Chiara] can't change so we are the ones who have to adapt."

Rita's story

Rita recalls how the joy of giving birth to her daughter quickly turned to shock when Chiara was diagnosed with Down syndrome a day after she was born. "It was a time when they were beginning to close institutions [where children with Down syndrome were sent to] and encouraging parents to take their child home instead," says Rita. "I must admit I was in a very good environment and my gynaecologist and paediatrician were amazing."

Integrating Chiara at the local Catholic school wasn't easy. Despite having some supportive teachers who embraced Chiara, others didn't know how to respond to a child with special needs in their classroom. "One nun thought it was a good idea to give Chiara a tea set to play with in the corner rather than get her involved in class activities," says Rita. It wasn't just the staff Rita had to contend with, there was resistance from parents too. "Some mothers complained to the school because they were worried Chiara would take up all of the teacher's attention," says Rita. "Thankfully, her teacher responded to this negativity by politely advising that the school across the road had vacancies." When she reflects on the lukewarm reception received from the school community, Rita is forgiving. "It was a different time and I felt for the teachers. They weren't equipped to deal with a child with special needs, much less so than they are today," she says.

As Chiara blossomed into a teenager Rita thought the worst was behind them, but the feelings of shock and horror resurfaced when, aged 16, Chiara was hit by a car and

sustained an acquired brain injury. She is now 38 years old and lives with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) as a result of the accident.

"I'm home a lot and always tidying up after Chiara", says Rita. "Because of her OCD, she constantly washes her hands and changes towels every five minutes. She uses bowls as props for her DVD collection and puts things all over the place. Sometimes she can't even get into bed because there is stuff everywhere," says Rita.

Rita admits being a sole parent and caring for a daughter with a dual disability can "wear you out" and says finding balance is challenging. As much as Chiara jokes Rita is her mother and not her carer Rita admits the reality is "I do care for her and Chiara takes up 50 per cent of my time while my three other children get the remaining 50 per cent". A bystander once called Rita 'lucky' to have her children, 40-year-old Bianca, 33-year-old Isabella and 28-year-old Jonathan as 'built in babysitters', but Rita says this couldn't be further from the truth. "Bianca helped and would take Chiara to school, but I always did everything myself. I didn't want to give my kids that added responsibility," she says.

Sharing the caring journey

Maria agrees the caring role is something she inherently accepted as part of being a mother. "I never gave the caring responsibility to my husband. It was my job to look after Joseph." Both mothers never identified as carers until they became members of Carers Victoria. Rita believes this is why she'd never considered respite. If there's one piece of advice she has for other carers, it's to never underestimate the importance of taking time out. Rita vividly remembers hearing those words of wisdom decades ago from another carer and wishes she'd listened.

"I still remember her telling me to 'always make sure you take a break'. I now realise the importance of those words. My daughter still doesn't go to respite and now it's too late. Start early and ensure you take time out. Sometimes you just need to walk away for a bit".

Although respite opportunities are rare for Rita, Maria regularly visits as her caring situation is different. "Joseph has always been at programs, so I have more time for myself," Maria explains. "I visit my mother daily in hospital and always try to see someone every day." She also donates her time to the local soup van and James Marcon Youth Health Foundation, established by a friend to honour her son - who committed suicide - and support others living with depression.

Maria also loves to cook when she wants to relax. Therefore, it's little surprise one of her favourite carers social events was a cooking class she recently attended. "It was lovely and inclusive. You get to share a meal with everyone in the end. I find these types of events keep us in the loop and it's nice to meet other people and hear their stories," says Maria; as Rita jokes "Maria knows everyone!"

The two friends try to attend as many carer events together as possible. "The outings are useful," agrees Rita. "My advice is to take up whatever is available to you." And on that note, they discover Carers Victoria has free tickets to see a musical on the weekend and start planning their day out.



How to avoid festive stress

Being a carer is busy enough, but December often places extra demands on your time and money due to get-togethers and finding gifts. The crowds and change of pace can also make it a challenging period for the person receiving care. Here are some tips to remain calm and enjoy the busiest time of year.

Assess what is realistic

The fastest way to eliminate stress is to drop any perfectionistic ideals of what the festive season should look like and avoid trying to do too much by yourself. Have a conversation with the person you care for and consider their physical and emotional needs before committing to any

plans. Family and friends may have unrealistic expectations which need to be managed, so talk with them about any foreseeable challenges and try to problem-solve them in advance. Learn to say 'no' if it's more than you or the person with care needs can handle. Instead, make the festive season your own and organise plans based on what works best for the both of you.

Prepare ahead for gatherings

If you're hosting a get-together or attending one arranged by a family member or friend, agree on a team approach well before the festivities start. Everyone being on the same page can reduce stress and conflict on the day and make festivities run smoother.

Let others know how your routine works and try to stick to it as much as possible. Have regular crockery and familiar foods on hand to maintain a sense of routine.

Group gatherings are often noisy so allocate a dedicated "time out zone" to give the person with care needs a quiet and calm space they can escape to if they start to feel overwhelmed. Remember it's okay to advise others you may have to leave early rather than feel obligated to stay all day.

If eating out at a restaurant, call ahead of time and notify the restaurant of any special meals and where you would prefer to sit (e.g. in a quiet corner). Ordering meals in advance will also help to avoid food delays on the day.

Ease the load if you're hosting

Write a to-do list for the festive season and get everyone involved by designating tasks. If you're hosting a gathering at your house, don't be afraid to ask guests to bring a dish and help with cleaning up afterwards. Children can also be involved by thinking of ways to keep the other kids entertained on

the day. Ask the most outgoing guest to be master of topping up glasses – they'll relish in the role! Take the pressure off by buying pre-cut vegetables or a ready-made cake to make things easier and minimise food preparation. Try to be realistic with the amount of food required to avoid over-catering.

Also, ask family and friends to share the care. Assign them as a "buddy" to spend a little one-on-one time with the person you care for on the day, to help you enjoy the festivities as well. Most people are happy to help if you tell them how they can assist.

Be gift savvy

Ask family and friends to organise a name draw to eliminate the need for buying multiple gifts. Consider shopping online to skip the crowds at large shopping centres. Alternatively, visit the websites of stores you plan to buy from and check if they offer a click and collect service, or enquire in advance if the items are in stock and put them on hold. Pick them up on a weekday morning when shopping centres are at their quietest.

Did you know?

Coles has recently expanded its low sensory Quiet Hour on Tuesdays from 10.30am to 11.30am (with reduced noise, lighting and in-store distractions) to 173 stores Australia-wide. The supermarket is also a great option for picking up last minute gift vouchers.

Remember to pace yourself

Be kind to yourself and schedule down time, even if it's just 30 minutes a day. Use this time to read a book or take a walk in the fresh air; it'll help reset the stress levels and instantly boost your mood.

Some helpful tips

For some of us the festive season can intensify feelings of grief or loneliness, especially if you have recently lost a loved one or are isolated from family due to conflict or distance. Here are some suggestions to fight the holiday blues:

- Reach out to family, friends or neighbours and express how you feel. Some may not even realise the emotions you are experiencing and might invite you to join them.
- Phone apps such as Whatsapp, Skype or Viber are great alternatives to chat face to face and feel closer to loved ones which are separated by distance.
- Volunteer at the local shelter and help spread joy to others in need. It'll take your mind off things and making such a positive contribution may to make you feel better.
- Get out and attend local community events such as carols in the park or neighbourhood light shows.
- Make plans for special public holidays. Book in for lunch at the local RSL or treat yourself to a day outdoors with a picnic in the park.
- Broaden your social network and find virtual companionship by joining online groups and forums. You may find comfort knowing there are others in the same situation.
- Remember to stay healthy by eating well, keeping active and getting enough sleep to manage your stress levels.
- If your feelings of loneliness or grief are severe, seek professional help to get the support you need. Call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyondblue on 1300 224 636 to speak with someone who can listen and guide you through your emotions.



Get the *best* out of a *holiday*

Summer is here and some of us may use this time of year to get away and recharge. Organising a break can be stressful and travelling with a person with care needs presents extra considerations, both before and during a journey. The good news is, with a bit of forward planning everyone can have an enjoyable holiday.

Plan ahead

Removing the predictability of a daily routine and familiar environment can affect the person with care needs by causing confusion and anxiety. Prepare a 'holiday' version of their daily routine to help them adapt to their new surroundings on arrival. Get everyone involved and rehearse common scenarios, such as arriving at the airport or visiting a tourist attraction. Try to anticipate any tricky situations which

could arise and openly discuss how each person can support you. This will help everyone cope better if things don't go as planned and avoid stress from unanticipated events.

Also, remember this is a holiday for you too — ask for support so you get some time out too. Ask your travel companions if they can give you and the person with care needs a break from each other for a couple of hours each day and share chores such as organising dinner. Small

gestures can make all the difference and help you catch some 'me time'.

It's also important to be clear with others about the needs of the person your care for, especially airline and hotel staff. Explain the difficulties or limitations the person may have so everyone knows how they can offer support. Most people are happy to help if they are asked. With good planning and open communication, everyone can get the best out of their holiday.

Here are some tips for planning your next getaway:

Accommodation

- Hotels.com has specific search criteria including facilities for people who are hearing impaired, require braille signage, accessible parking, a roll-in shower and more.
- Smaller, lower-rise properties are generally quieter and a good choice for those with sensory overload issues. Request a room at the end of a hallway away from the elevator to minimise passing traffic.
- Hotel rooms with separate sleeping and living areas can have a calming effect.
- Don't be afraid to ask staff for additional photos to be sure it's the right choice for your needs.
- A holiday home offers greater privacy and control over your environment. Stayz.com.au and Airbnb.com offer online rentals which can be filtered by whether they are accessible.

Flights

- Notify the airline in advance of your requirements and see what assistance is available for passengers with special needs. Most airlines offer help on departure and arrival, including wheelchairs and pre-boarding, and special meals inflight.
- Check the airline's wheelchair policy. Some airlines prohibit battery-operated wheelchairs or charge extra for mobility aids which exceed baggage weight limits, while others have a two-wheelchair limit on flights.
- Ask the airline if the aircraft has accessible features. Most newer wide-bodied jets, such as the Boeing 787 and Airbus A380, have accessible toilets and may allow carriage of collapsible wheelchairs on board.
- Virgin Australia recently announced certain types of postural support

seats designed for special needs children can now be taken onboard.

- Not all airlines or airports use an aerobridge to board and disembark passengers so let your carrier know if climbing stairs is not possible. Some carriers charge a fee to arrange a Disabled Persons Lift.
- Check your eligibility for a Qantas Carer Concession Card which entitles a passenger and their carer to discounted domestic travel on selected flights, provided they meet certain criteria. For more information visit the People With Disabilities Australia website or call **1800 806 769**.

Travel insurance

- Read the Product Disclosure Statement to know what you are, and are not, covered for. Many insurers will not cover certain pre-existing medical conditions or any claims which arise from these conditions.
- A letter from a doctor may assist with getting insured, particularly if it states the condition is under control and unlikely to require medical or hospital treatment while away.
- Travelling with a wheelchair, mobility aid or hearing aid will also require insurance.

Transport

- Avis and Hertz offer wheelchair-accessible vehicles in their fleets which feature modifications such as hand controls, swivel seats and transfer boards. Enquire in advance as numbers may be limited and availability offered in major cities only.
- Disability transport specialists such as Wheelaway and Wheelies Van Rental also offer vehicle rentals Australia wide.
- Affordable ridesharing app Uber has an Uberassist option providing extra assistance to people with different accessibility needs, including seniors

and people living with a disability. It's available 24/7 across most major Australian cities and costs the same as a regular Uber ride.

Directories

- Disability Online **disabilityonline.community** has a dedicated information page with links to travel companies, car rentals, accessible accommodation, and more.
- Cangoeverywhere.com.au** helps anyone with special requirements to find accessible accommodation, activities and restaurants Australia wide.
- Lonely Planet **lonelyplanet.com** has a section on accessible travel.
- Have Wheelchair Will Travel is a comprehensive blog by Sydney based mother Julie who shares her family's experiences and thoughts on accessible travel both domestically and abroad.

General

- Travel outside of peak periods to benefit from cheaper costs, fewer crowds, and staff who can devote more time and attention to your needs.
- Arrange a pre-trip consultation with your GP to discuss any medical clearance, prescriptions or vaccinations required.
- Research what medical facilities are available at your destination and how to access them should they be required.

Remember, the internet is a powerful tool

Help other carers plan their holiday by sharing your experiences and advice through reviews, forums and social media.

Policy Update

— Royal Commission into Aged Care



Concerns?

If you have immediate concerns about the safety or quality of aged care provided to someone you care about, contact the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner on **1800 550 552** (9am–5pm, Monday to Friday) or lodge a complaint online www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au

Royal commissions are the highest form of inquiry on matters of public importance in Australia. Calling a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety means the Australian government has taken the concerns of older people, their families, carers and advocates seriously.

The Royal Commission will determine the full extent of problems in aged care and make recommendations to meet the challenges of delivering aged care services in the future.

A Judge of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, the Honourable Justice Joseph McGrath and former CEO of Medicare Australia and Australian Public Service Commissioner, Lynelle Briggs AO have been appointed as Royal Commissioners

The Royal Commission will be based in Adelaide and hearings will be held around the country. It will provide an interim report by 31 October 2019 and a final report by 30 April 2020.

Members of the public made over 5,000 submissions to inform the terms of reference for the Royal Commission.

Terms of Reference include:

- Quality of aged care services and the extent of substandard care, mistreatment and all forms of abuse

- How to best deliver care services to people with disabilities in aged care facilities including younger people
- How to best deliver care to the increasing number of Australians living with dementia
- Future challenges and opportunities for delivering accessible, affordable and high quality aged care services, including care in people's own homes, and aged care in rural, regional and remote Australia
- What the Government, the aged care sector, Australian families and the wider community can do to strengthen care services to ensure quality and safety
- How to allow people greater choice, control and independence and how to improve engagement with families and carers
- How to best deliver sustainable aged care services through innovative care and investment in the aged care workforce and infrastructure
- Any matters the Commissioners believe is relevant to their inquiry.

These terms are very broad, allowing the Commission to inquire into all types of Commonwealth-funded aged care services, wherever they are delivered. It is also to consider

previous reports and inquiries and to report on how best to build a culture of respect for older Australians.

The national network of Carer Associations is working together to plan submissions to the Royal Commission. There will be opportunities to have input via Carers Australia or your State Carer Association. Individuals and families are also encouraged to make submissions. These can be made public or kept private. See the advocacy fact sheet on the Carers Victoria website for tips on making a submission. See the advocacy fact sheet on the Carers Victoria website for tips on making a submission: www.carersvictoria.org.au/publications/factsheets.

The website for the Royal Commission will provide information about:

- The work of the Royal Commission
- How submissions can be made
- When and where hearings will be held.

To receive up-to-date information on the Royal Commission, subscribe via the website: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/news/Pages/Mailing-list.aspx>.

Anyone supporting a relative or friend using aged care services can contact the Carer Advisory Line on **1800 242 636** for information, support and referral to counselling and other support services.

Accessible Beaches — Making Waves

Councils and lifesaving clubs are making Australian beaches more accessible to give people of all abilities the chance to enjoy a day by the sea.



What is an accessible beach?

An accessible beach removes physical barriers to allow easier access to the sand and sea for people with special needs. It can have one or a combination of special features including beach matting, specialised wheelchairs, accessible change room facilities and disabled parking by the foreshore.

Beach matting rolls on top of sand to provide a direct pathway down to the water for people with wheelchairs, prams or walking and mobility aids. Some beaches offer specialised wheelchairs built with large tyres to travel on dry and wet sand. Some are designed to get a person to the water's edge and let them dip their toes in shallow water, whilst others allow users to enter deeper water and experience floating in the sea thanks to floats built into its arm rests. All beach wheelchairs require at least one support person and cannot be independently pushed.

Advanced bookings are often required, and availability may be limited to peak periods. Contact your local council or Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) for more details.

Where can I find an accessible beach?

Here are Australia's most accessible beaches to consider for your next day trip or a future getaway:

- **South Australia:** Adelaide's Seacliff beach is one of eleven patrolled beaches Australia-wide to regularly use accessible mats. It also has specialised wheelchairs and a slat-based beach access ramp. Nearby Henley Beach also intends to soon become permanently accessible with beach mats and specialised wheelchairs.
- **Queensland:** Gold Coast's Southport Broadwater Park has permanent beach matting and a liberty swing (a world-first Australian innovation) to give children in wheelchairs the joy of experiencing a swing in the park. Nearby Burleigh Heads is a national case study for beach accessibility and offers beach matting, floating wheelchairs, an accessible bathroom facility, and disabled parking. The Sunshine Coast's Alexandra Headland provides accessible matting and beach wheelchairs over peak periods in the warmer months.
- **New South Wales:** Sydney's Collaroy beach offers matting, disabled toilet and shower facilities, and a liberty swing. The Collaroy Ocean Pool also has a ramp for easier access. Avoca beach located on the central coast also provides beach matting.
- **Victoria:** Melbourne has some of the country's most accessible beaches despite its infamous 'four seasons in one day' weather. Hobsons Bay City Council in the city's south west has 24/7 beach matting at its two neighbouring Altona and Williamstown beaches. Both beaches offer special wheelchairs, accessible parking, toilets, and showers. Altona also has an adult changing facility with a hoist for wheelchair transfer (accessible only by individuals with a specially designed Master Locksmith Access Key which universally unlocks all accessible facilities fitted with one). St Kilda and Mount Martha beaches also provide beach matting and wheelchairs and accessible bathroom facilities.
- **Tasmania:** Surf Life Saving Tasmania rotates beach wheelchairs across various locations around the State, including the North West and North East Coasts.

More information

To find out more contact the local council or SLSC or visit AccessibleBeachesAustralia.com for a full directory of accessible beaches across Australia.



Did you know?

The Starfish Nippers program is available at selected Life Saving Clubs around Australia and caters for young children and adults with special needs aged six years and older. The program offers beach safety and water awareness skills and is run entirely by volunteers. For more details visit: www.starfishnippers.com.au.



10 Ways to Beat the Heat

1 Block out the sun

Close the blinds at home to stop direct sunlight from entering your home. Blocking all north and west facing windows before the strong afternoon sun hits will stop the room temperature from climbing and limit the need for energy-zapping cooling appliances.

2 Turn down the power

The sun isn't the only culprit for radiant heat: everyday appliances and lighting also actively heat the home. Take advantage of the longer days by switching on lights only after dark and try swapping hot meals for summer salads to avoid using the oven. This will keep you cooler indoors and reduce your next energy bill.

3 Get spritzing

Buy a cheap water mist spray bottle and keep it topped up and refrigerated for quick access on hot days. Simply spritz your face once or twice and, as the water evaporates, it'll regulate body temperature and cool you down.

4 Create a compress

Similarly, keep a damp towel in the fridge and apply it to the inside of your wrists or back of neck to chill the body's core temperature super-fast.

5 Choose breathable fabrics

Pack away clothes and bedding made from synthetic fabrics, such as polyester, to avoid that sticky feeling. Instead, dress and sleep in loose, light-coloured cotton or linen to promote air movement next to the skin and help with sweat evaporation.

6 Stay hydrated

No summer list is complete without mentioning water! Drink often to avoid dehydration and replace moisture lost through sweating. Trick yourself into drinking more fluids by adding your favourite fruits for an infused twist. Coconut water is also refreshing and has natural cooling properties.

7 Stay hydrated

If possible, avoid heading outdoors during the peak times of 10am – 2pm when the temperatures and UV rays are at their highest. Try to schedule activities during the 'golden hours' of before sunrise and after sunset when the weather is at its coolest.

8 Dip your toes

At the beach, community pool, or even at home! If you live near the coast or a lake, plan a day out by the water to cool off. Remember to slip, slop, slap and find a shady spot. Alternatively, soak your feet and ankles in a bucket of cold water for instant relief – especially after a long day in shoes.

9 Have a fun day in

Escape the sweltering heat and explore the local air-conditioned shopping centre, museum, cinema or library. There are hours of fun to be had on any budget – from free activities such as window shopping or reading a book, to checking out the latest movie or exhibition. Offset the cost of admission prices at museums and cinemas by bringing your own snacks.

10 Think cool

If all else fails, play some mind tricks! Chill out by listening to soothing sounds of the ocean or rainfall and take a few deep breaths. Or relax on the couch and read a book where the storyline is set in winter or snow.

Carers Online launch

— helping older Australians Be Connected

To coincide with National Carers Week and Get Online Week, Carers Victoria launched its new Carers Online program to help carers aged 50 and over navigate the internet confidently and safely. The program is in partnership with a national 'Be Connected' initiative which aims to improve the digital literacy of older Australians.

To promote the program, Carers Victoria's Carer and Community Education Officer Annie Keogh has hosted information stands at Mingle events throughout October and November. Carers used the opportunity to find out more about the workshop and #Try1Thing on the iPads provided.

With a growing number of carer supports and services transitioning online, the need to be digitally savvy has become increasingly important. The Carers Online workshops offer a friendly environment for carers to learn how to access digital resources and use the internet to connect with others. Each workshop is free and has a limit of ten participants to best support carers in achieving their desired learning outcomes.

Carers Victoria is also engaging with other organisations and businesses to host a Carers Online workshop in their area or become a Be Connected network partner.



Above // Carers Online information stall.



Above // Carers #Try1Thing on the iPads provided.

More information

To find out more about the program and register your interest visit <http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/carersonline> or ring Carers Victoria on 1800 242 636.

Caring Fairly

— a campaign about mental health carers

Carers Victoria CEO Scott Walker attended the Mind Australia launch of their 'Caring Fairly' national campaign in Canberra. Carers Australia CEO Ara Creswell was keynote speaker at the launch of the advocacy-raising campaign which aims to improve and realise the economic, social and cultural rights of mental health carers. Over a three year period the campaign aims to:

- influence and change legislation and public policy arrangements for mental health carers

- improve employer and workplace practices for mental health carers
- increase public awareness on the situation of mental health carers.

In Australia approximately 240,000 people provide unpaid support to people with mental illness each year. They contribute at least \$13.2 billion of services to the economy, often at the expense of their own financial, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Caring Fairly is led by Mind Australia and supported by a nationwide coalition of organisations, including Carers Victoria, Carers Australia, and other peak bodies and national non-government organisations.

More information

To find out more about the campaign and how you can contribute, visit mindaustralia.org.au/caring-fairly or contact john.foley@mindaustralia.org.au.





Take a Break

Sudoku

		7			4	5	6	8
		2	5			9		
5							7	
		6	1		8			
2	7						1	6
			6		9	3		
	8							1
		1			3	2		
4	2	5	9			6		

Sudoku Answers:

4	2	5	9	8	1	6	3	7
5	8	2	3	9	4	6	3	2
6	8	3	7	5	2	4	9	1
1	5	8	6	7	9	3	2	4
2	7	9	3	4	5	8	1	6
3	4	6	1	2	8	7	5	9
5	3	4	8	9	6	1	7	2
8	6	2	5	1	7	9	4	3
9	1	7	2	3	4	5	6	8

Source: www.sudokuoftheday.com

The Country Women's Association's Marie Vassallo shares a favourite recipe from her blog, Rie's Kitchen. "This dish is perfect for that special occasion, or to add some "wow" factor to a dinner party. It is simple to prepare and takes only minutes to put together. Don't be put off by the Gorgonzola. The creaminess and picante adds so much depth to this dish without being overpowering," says Maria.

Asparagus with Speck and Gorgonzola

Ingredients

- Olive oil
- 1 large red onion
- 100 g speck diced
- 2 bunches of green asparagus
- Balsamic vinegar
- 100 g Gorgonzola broken into small pieces

Instructions

1. In a fry-pan, heat a little olive oil. Gently sweat onions until they start to caramelize. Remove from pan.
2. Add speck to pan, and on a high heat toss until speck is crispy. Meanwhile blanch asparagus.
3. Return onions to fry-pan with the speck and warm through. De-glaze pan with balsamic vinegar.
4. Arrange asparagus on a serving dish. Pour over onions and speck. Sprinkle with Gorgonzola. Allow cheese to melt and then serve.

Reprinted with permission from Marie Vassallo. For more tasty recipes, visit rieskitchen.blogspot.com.

Secrets to Grants Success

Funding is a common challenge faced by most carer support groups when it comes to securing meeting venues or organising an event.

With this in mind, financial assistance in the form of community grants are something to consider. Grants are offered by all levels of government, philanthropic groups, corporations or high-net-worth individuals to fund a project or activity. While all grants vary in their requirements and eligibility criteria, most follow an application process with specific selection criteria. If this sounds daunting, don't panic! There are resources and guidance available to help you find a suitable grant and write a winning application.

Where to start

Local councils are a good source of community grants for Carer Support Groups, and can cover social activities, venue assistance and neighbourhood projects. Visit your local council website and search under community grants or register for their e-bulletin to see what funding opportunities

exist. For example, Wyndham City Council has a Community Grants Directory e-newsletter which lists all grants offered, while Melton City Council frequently invites suggestions for funding of community projects and groups. GrantGuru.com.au has Australia's most comprehensive listing of government grants and offers free advice on its website.

How to write a winning application

- Do your research – ensure you meet the eligibility criteria and have a clear goal in mind.
- Work to a deadline – grant submissions often have strict cut-off dates. Allocate enough time to gather your evidence and give yourself the best chance for success.
- Be specific about how you'll use the funds. The more detail, the better!

- Gather local support – use social media or start a petition to demonstrate that others believe in your cause.
- Get a second opinion – have someone else read your application before submitting it. Do they have any unanswered questions? Chances are if they do, the person reviewing your application will too.
- Double check you've addressed all criteria before hitting the submit button.

If in doubt, contact the grant provider

Most councils have a dedicated community funding team to offer advice on the grants process. If you are unsuccessful, remember to ask for feedback to improve future applications. Don't be shy to seek clarification at any stage of the process – they're there to help!

A case in point

Lisa Petersen and the team from Hearts in Mind Project received a council grant from Nillumbik Shire Council to refurbish a meeting room at Greenhills Neighbourhood House, with additional community support from the local Bunnings and nearby sporting clubs.

Hearts in Mind was established for women who are carers of family members with disability, autism or other long term additional needs, to focus on their own wellbeing. The reinvigorated 'Green Room', launched during National Carers Week, now offers a wellbeing space for women carers and other

community groups to use for peer support and workshops.

Lisa offers some advice for other carer support groups considering applying for a grant:

"The process of grant seeking for us as a grassroots program supporting carers has been both a rewarding and challenging one! Challenging in terms of finding grants that are suitable...and rewarding in terms of getting a grant that can really make a difference and bring a special idea to fruition. The most achievable grants for us have been those that are smaller and local, such as community grants from Local Council or the Bendigo Bank grants for example."

To find out more about Hearts In Mind visit heartsinmindproject.com or [facebook.com/heartsinmind](https://www.facebook.com/heartsinmind).



Above // The Green Room Launch (L-R: Lisa Petersen (Co-founder, Hearts In Mind), Vicki Ward (MP - Member for Eltham), Gabrielle Williams MP (Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers) Anna Lee (Co-ordinator, Greenhills Neighbourhood House), Danielle Green (MP - Member for Yan Yean) and Georgina Mills (Co-founder, Hearts In Mind). Image credit Maria Colaidis.



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