



Annual Report 2014–15



Carers Victoria

A Year at a Glance



16,495

carers connected with services and supports through the Carer Advisory Line

50,673

interactions between carers and Carers Victoria services

528

Victorian Carer Support Groups

6,426

Carers Victoria members

4,271

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

6,313

carers attended Education and Training sessions

Carers in Victoria

774,000

carers in Victoria who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, addiction or who is an older person

9.7%

of all Victorian carers are under the age of 25 years

217,800

Victorian carers are considered primary carers

43.1%

of all Victorian carers are over the age of 65 years

Carers Victoria

Carers Victoria is recognised and funded as the leading body for carers and caring families in Victoria. We work collaboratively with Carers Australia and the other State and Territory-based Carer Associations to represent and advocate, and provide carer services on behalf of carers throughout Australia.

CEO & President's Report for 2014/2015

The last financial year (2014/15) was one of significant achievement and growth for Carers Victoria. In the midst of major sector reforms, we made real progress in our mission to powerfully represent the 774,000 Victorian carers and to be a sustainable and innovative organisation.

Some highlights delivered by our team of 88 dedicated professionals include:

- Conducting a comprehensive state-wide carer consultation process to collect concerns from 421 carers, representing 1,622 collective years of caring. These findings have informed the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan which will see us become the 'voice' of carers and a key advocacy body.
- Developing a prototype for an online Carer Portal, providing carers with a personalised single point of entry resource to support and maintain their caring capacity. This included mapping carer services across Victoria.
- Lobbying the state government to develop a whole-of-government state-wide Victorian Carer Strategy which recognises and includes carers in the aged care, disability and mental health reforms.
- Interacting with 35,000 carers 44,360 times through our support services during the 2014/15 reporting period.
- Linking 16,495 carers to our support services through further rollout of the Carer Advisory Line and Helpdesk model. This service provides carers with emotional support, as well as the latest information related to reforms, policy and services based on a carer's local region.

- Expanding the Carers ID program, further improving "carer awareness" and educating health professionals to refer carers to our services before they reach crisis point. This program was our second highest referral for services, second only to self-referral, and there are opportunities to extend it into other settings in 2015/16.
- Mapping 528 Carer Support Groups across Victoria to expand and improve our ability to link carers with peer support in local regions.

Now, in 2015/16, a key part of our Strategic Plan is to strongly focus on collaboration with the national body, Carers Australia, and with other State and Territory-based Carer Associations. Our clear goal is to better represent and advocate for carers throughout Australia to ensure they have access to the supports and services they so greatly deserve.

Carers Victoria works to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of family, community and government.

We want to support carers better; we want to make carers' lives better.



Caroline Mulcahy

Caroline Mulcahy
CEO, Carers Victoria



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David Bartlett
President, Carers Victoria

Services



Carers Victoria continues to support carers through practical, financial and informative services. These services include a number of state-wide services which help carers navigate the different challenges they may face.

In 2014/2015 our practical support services collectively interacted with carers 44,360 times across the State. We further interacted with carers through information distribution and our education and training services.

Carers Victoria continues to understand the geographical issues and time restraints of rural carers and is consistently looking for innovative ways to expand our services. This has included the redesign of our Carer Advisory Line and a higher amount of regional programs by our Education and Training teams.

Carer Advisory Line

Carers Victoria's Carer Advisory Line, as part of our redesigned helpdesk model, undertook an external review process to help improve the service. The results showed the move to the new business model had been a success. While Carers Victoria is yet to realise full achievement of desired outcomes, we are confident all intended benefits will be achieved with continued attention on implementing the new model and recommendations provided within the external report for the benefit of carers.

The Carer Advisory Line received or made 16,495 calls during the 2014/2015 period, an increase of 38% from the previous year.

Counselling

Carers Victoria's counselling service continues to be highly appreciated by the carers who access it through face to face, telephone and our Skype counselling services. In 2014/2015 Carers Victoria provided 5,312 hours of support through this service.

Education and Training

Carers Victoria continued to educate carers and service providers throughout Victoria. In an effort to support carers through changes brought about by the reforms, Carers Victoria developed new four-part education programs. These programs include 'Aged Care: carers, families and the system' to assist carers to understand the changes in the Aged Care sector, and a program to assist carers to develop skills, knowledge and capacity to manage the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Education and Training completed 429 carer workshops across Victoria supporting 6,313 carers. The team

also completed 104 professional development workshops for 2,336 service provider employees, an increase of 1,100 from the 2013/2014 period.

Operational Support, Information Distribution and Better Start

Through the redesign of the Carer Advisory Line and helpdesk, Carers Victoria's information and distribution service saw an increase in disseminating information to carers, service providers and community organisations (including libraries and schools).

Carers Victoria continued to support families who received Better Start funding to understand early intervention and their entitlements under this funding scheme. In 2014/2015 Carers Victoria presented 59 Better Start workshops to 200 families across Victoria.

Respite Services (Western Region)

In conjunction with state-wide programs, Carers Victoria continues to act as the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre and State funded *Support for Carers* program for the Western Region of Melbourne.

In 2014/2015, Carers Victoria has been able to provide practical respite to 4,271 carers.

Continuing the need to prepare the organisation for the reforms and changes to consumer directed care, the Western Services have redeveloped the Service Development positions. These positions are working toward developing community partnerships and programs to support carers in different ways, including educational programs, supportive art therapy groups and school holiday programs.

Young Carers

Our Victorian Young Carer Action Team was involved in the inaugural Young Carer Festival held in North Melbourne with Little Dreamers. This Young Carer Festival was organised to give young carers and their families a day out. The day included soccer demonstrations, a silent disco, and reading workshops, along with information stalls to promote young carer services from across the State. The Festival had more than 200 young carers and their families in attendance.

Carers Victoria also undertook a project in conjunction with the HEY program (Healthy, Equal Youth) to support young carers who identify as LGBTI. This project will be completed in late 2015 and aims to educate youth workers, teachers and social workers on how to better support LGBTI young carers.

Carers Victoria continues to expand our services throughout Victoria, working with regional and rural carer support, respite and community services to ensure all carers are able to access as much support as possible.

Community Engagement

Carers Victoria grew our reach and engagement on social media.

*Facebook: 1,790 likes
Twitter: 2,554 followers
LinkedIn: 258 followers*



In July 2014, CEO Caroline Mulcahy undertook a state-wide Carer Consultation process. As part of Carers Victoria's Quality Review we consulted with clients and carers to review the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. Carers Victoria also invited participants to assist with the planning for the development of our new 2015-2018 Strategic Plan.

Through online and face to face consultations we consulted with 421 carers, collectively representing 1,622 years of caring. A report entitled '1,622 Years of Caring' was launched in March and outlined concerns and recommendations for Carers Victoria.

Carer concerns included the lack of consistency and access to services in regional and rural areas; the difficulty in navigating the systems; and community attitudes towards the caring role being indifferent, with many carers commenting that people did not understand or appreciate the role of carers in the community. These concerns have been developed into recommendations, and built into the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan.

Over the past year we saw an increase in membership numbers from 5,728 to 6,426, including carers, former carers, organisations, Carer Support Groups and interested parties.

Carers Victoria continued to communicate with the community, service providers and carers through the quarterly 'Carers News' magazine, the monthly ebulletin 'Voice', the website and social media.

A number of carer engagement events took place in 2014/2015. Carers Victoria successfully hosted eight Mingle events in Bairnsdale, Melton, Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Warrnambool and Mornington to give carers an opportunity to meet other people within their community, be introduced to local services and learn more about Carers Victoria's services. Post event surveys showed the 858 carers who attended reported high levels of satisfaction.

In 2014/2015 our Engagement Team undertook a large fundraising restructure. This included the development of an organisational wide fundraising strategy and the introduction of new fundraising positions, policies and procedures.

In 2014/2015, Carers Victoria introduced new programs and services to support carers and raise the awareness of carers within the community.

In February Carers Victoria launched the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) service for carers holding a health care card or pension card to access loans of up to \$1,200 for household items or medical aids.

Carers Victoria also continued to work with health providers including Australian Unity, Royal District Nursing Service and Centrelink to help raise awareness of carers and support their referral services. The Carers ID program trained 464 professionals on the effects caring can have on individuals and how early intervention can have a positive impact on the carer and the person they are caring for. In 2014/2015 Carers ID became the second highest referral to Carers Victoria's services.

In conjunction with these services Carers Victoria also undertook a large Carer Support Group mapping project. This project has mapped all Carer Support Groups in Victoria to help us connect carers to peer support in their local area. 528 Carer Support Groups have been identified. We are now working with many of these groups to further expand our advocacy,


communications and supports to more carers across the State.

In late 2014 the Victorian Government launched the Victorian Carer Action Agenda.

The Agenda included a \$200,000 investment in Carers Victoria to develop improved information access and conduct a consultation on priorities to improve supports for carers. As part of this initiative, Carers Victoria has begun to develop and build a web portal that carers can use to easily find essential localised information.

Planning for the Future





“All I can say is thank you. I have felt so much support from using your services. I now know I am not alone – I am strong and we can do this.”



Policy & Research



In early 2015 Carers Victoria delivered a Pre-Budget Submission to the Victorian Government during a time of wide-ranging reforms across the services sector. The reforms to disability, aged care and mental health services and funding demanded advocacy for the needs and concerns of carers at a time when their voices were struggling to be heard.

In this environment, Carers Victoria identified three priorities for our 2015-16 Victorian budget:

Priority 1: Develop a whole-of-government state-wide Victorian Carer Strategy.

Priority 2: Recognise and include carers in the significant reforms currently underway in aged care, disability and mental health.

Priority 3: Invest in carer identification, support and advocacy programs.

Carers Victoria was pleased to see funding in the budget for:

- up to 830 additional individual support packages that will provide care and support for people with disability, their families and carers
- support for the National Disability Insurance Scheme trial in the Barwon region
- indexation for Home and Community Care services, and
- a range of additional mental health services and supports.

This additional funding will assist some Victorian carers in their caring role. However, the budget contained no additional funding for carer-focused supports such as information, education and counselling that are proven to have a positive impact on carer wellbeing.

Carers Victoria advocated throughout the year on behalf of carers through submissions, participation in a range of public forums and conferences, along with representation on advisory panels and committees.

Carers Victoria continued to work closely with universities and research bodies; research titles have included:

- Supported Decision Making Project
- National Carer Strategy Market Research Project
- The role of family members in preventing medical errors during hospitalisation
- Knowledge and experiences of carers who are managing a mental health crisis
- Unwanted sexual contact and older women who are carers
- Development of guidelines for the public on assisting a person who is becoming confused
- Virtual Reality – enhanced health maintenance for older people with complex care needs: What works with other people?
- Investigation into the beliefs of older adults and carers about the process of withdrawing medicines
- A Randomised Controlled Trial to Improve Depression in Family Carers through a Physical Activity Intervention
- Older People's Understanding of Epilepsy & Epilepsy Management
- Tackling Epilepsy in the Later Years
- Caring for People Diagnosed with Bipolar/Substance use Disorders: Informal Caregivers' Lived
- Investigating the Needs, Gaps and Barriers to Mental Health Care for Mothers of Children with a Disability
- Ageing well at home: caring for the carers of individuals with dementia
- Smart Aged Care

We are the voice for carers on a State and Federal level; working towards an Australia that values and supports carers.

Our 2014/2015 Submissions

Title of Submission	In response to
User Rights Principles 2014 to reflect the requirements of consumer directed care (CDC)	Proposed changes to the User Rights Principles 2014 to reflect the requirements of CDC
Proposal for a National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework Consultation Paper released February 2015	The proposed national quality and safeguarding framework for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Commonwealth Home Support Programme Consultation	Consultation on three Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHSP Draft Programme Manual • CHSP National Fee Policy Consultation Paper • Good Practice Guide for Restorative Care Approaches
A Framework for Information, Linkages and Capacity Building – Discussion Paper released February 2015	The proposed framework for Information, Linkages and Capacity Building services that form part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Victorian Ombudsman investigation into how allegations of abuse in the disability sector are reported and investigated	An investigation undertaken by the Victorian Ombudsman into how allegations of abuse in the disability sector are reported and investigated
Pre-Budget Submission to the Victorian Government 2015–2016	
Towards Solutions for Assistive Technology – Discussion Paper December 2014	A proposal for providing assistive technology for participants of the NDIS
Home Care Today Legal Issues in CDC project (not public)	Home Care Today Legal Issues in CDC project
VCOSS Pre-Budget Bid (contribution to submission)	A request by VCOSS for input to inform their Pre-Budget Bid



Financial Report

Carers Victoria has faced another financially challenging year with reduced government funding, lowering public financial commitment, lower interest rates and continued pressure on labour and non-labour costs.

The net operating result of Carers Victoria for the year ended 30 June 2015 was a net deficit of \$229,996. This compares with a net deficit for the year ended 30 June 2014 of \$274,236.

Total revenue for Carers Victoria remained flat for the year at \$10.9 million, reflecting a small increase in brokerage funding and other non-grant income, offset by lower grant income and interest earned on investments.

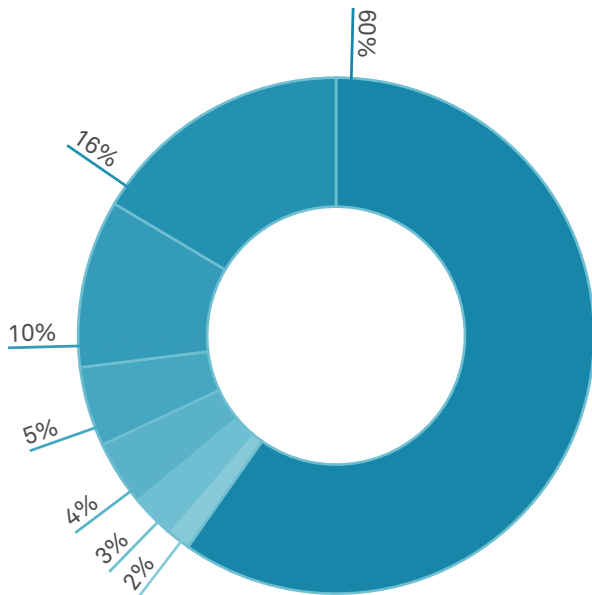
Fundraising continues to be a challenging avenue to raise revenue as general economic conditions tighten, with the revenue from this source 13% lower than in the prior financial year.

Carers Victoria will continue to monitor possible changes to the funding

landscape as both the Federal and State Governments review distributions to the community sector. Changes expected to have a direct and material impact on revenue streams of Carers Victoria include the move toward Consumer Directed Care within Disability, Aged Care and Mental Health sectors. This will see significant parts of existing government funding to Carers Victoria shift to the control of the person who is receiving informal care by a family member or friend. As a result, Carers Victoria will need to respond to carer needs in new ways and with new innovative products and services.

We are also establishing strategies which include linking with business partners to support proposals that will tender for new services as they become available.

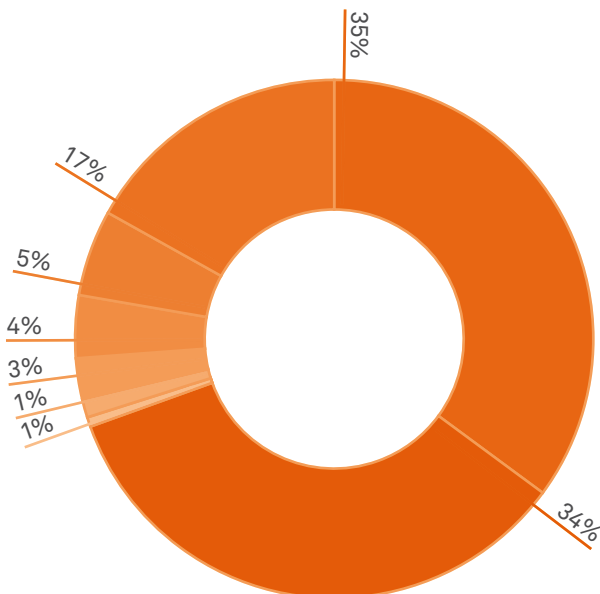
The Carers Victoria financial report is available upon request. Please email finance@carersvictoria.org.au



Expenses

● Vehicle and Travel Expenses	175,661
● Consultants Fees	294,632
● Rent and Rates	453,595
● State Brokerage Expense	554,626.49
● Other Expenditure	1,167,424
● Federal Brokerage Expense	1,827,941.51
● Salaries, Wages and Oncosts	6,633,981

Total **11,107,861**



Income

● Donations	65,485
● Sponsorships	125,260
● Grants for Special Projects	277,468
● Other Income	425,142
● State Brokerage Income	585,359.25
● Federal Brokerage Income	1,838,027.75
● State Government Grants	3,819,401
● Federal Government Grants	3,741,722

Total **10,877,865**

Acknowledgements

Our advocacy and representation means that we are invited to represent carers on a number of advisory and working groups including the following committees:

- Aged Care Quality Agency Liaison Group (Vic)
- COTA Vic Older People's Policy and Advocacy Network
- Victorian government Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Group
- Victorian government HACC Departmental Advisory Group
- HACC ASM Client and Carer Outcomes Project Reference Group
- Victoria Police Seniors Portfolio Reference Group
- ECCV aged care and policy sub committee
- Palliative Care in Aged Care special interest group convened by Palliative Care Victoria
- NARI IMPACCT research project advisory group
- Deakin University/Cancer Council PROTECT research project advisory group
- Victorian NRCP state wide Network
- National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) advisory groups representing Carers Australia on aged care reforms:
 - Home Care packages and Consumer Directed Care
 - My Aged Care Gateway
 - Commonwealth Home Support Program
- DHHS Mental Health Carer Partnership Dialogue
- Tandem (Mental Health Carers) Network meetings
- Tandem NDIS and Mental Health Working Group
- ECCV Health Policy Subcommittee
- Office of the Public Advocate Policy and Research Advisory Group
- NDS Barwon Implementation Group (BIG)
- Purple-Orange Disability Support Organisations (DSO) Evaluation Sub-Committee
- National Road Trauma Institute (NRTI) Invite only Forums
- National Supported Decision Making Network
- NDS Ageing and Disability Advisory Group
- National Policy Advisory Group of Carer Associations across Australia



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