



# Carers Count

## In the Victorian election '26

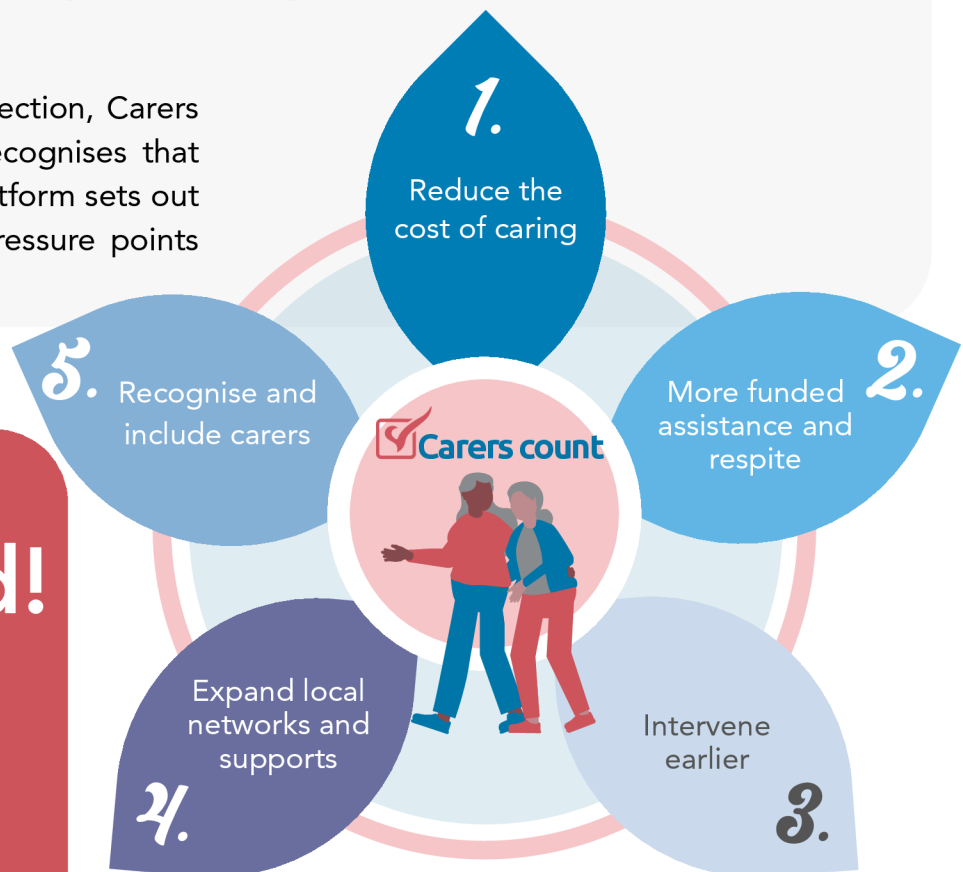
**More than 750,000 Victorians are unpaid carers, and that number is growing rapidly.**

Every year, carers collectively provide over 500 million hours of care with an economic replacement value over \$18 billion each year – about the same as what the state spends on health care<sup>2</sup>. Just imagine for a moment where we would be without all that care.

Our already stretched GPs and hospital emergency departments would be critically impacted. Our paramedics and nurses, who are already in short supply, would be at higher risk of burnout. And our regional areas would feel these impacts even more.

Yet many carers in Victoria also pay a big cost for caring, and recent data tells us loud and clear that they are struggling.

In the lead up to the 2026 State Election, Carers Victoria is calling for action that recognises that Carers Count. Our Carers Count Platform sets out a five point plan to address key pressure points experienced by carers.



### Get involved!

- Read our Pre-election Policy Platform 2026
- Speak to candidates in your electorate
- Share your experience
- Spread the word

see over for more details of our **Carers Count Platform**



### 1. Reduce the cost of caring

Deliver targeted discounts and concessions to Carers Card holders, including energy concessions, discounted road tolls, and assistance with hospital parking costs.

Deliver additional financial relief for young carers, by extending free public transport to young Carer Card holders aged 18-25; by expanding the L2P program to young Carer Card holders; and by matching funding for the Young Carer Awards program.

Support recommendations of the Victorian Public Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS) alliance to adjust funding rates and complete a review of the broader scheme.

Advocate for updates to Carer Payment and Carer Allowance rates, and eligibility as well as superannuation to be paid on Carers Payment.

### 2. More funded assistance and respite

Expand funded carer respite targeted to growth corridors and rural Victoria, alongside targeted programs for multicultural and First Nations carers.

Expand the Gather My Crew-led Kind Crew initiative in partnership with Carers Victoria to connect carers with neighbourhood-based volunteer support, including social connection, gardening and assistance with meals.

### 3. Intervene earlier

Invest in the expansion of the Step into Caring early intervention program so more carers are connected to support early in their caring role.

Partner with Victorian health services to routinely identify and include carers in key planning processes and connect them to support.

### 4. Expand local networks and supports

Fund a collaborative project with councils and neighbourhood houses to automatically link carers in their local areas to their wellbeing programs.

Make it easier for carers to find what they need by contributing information to a statewide, online service and information portal and providing data to support catchment based service planning.

Create local connections for carers in underserved areas by allocating one-off grants to establish new carer support groups.

### 5. Recognise and include carers

Actively involve carers in service planning, advisory and policy processes by creating designated positions for people with lived experience of caring and support their skills development.

Commit to making Victorian Government departments and agencies carer friendly.

Enhance arrangements in schools, TAFEs and universities so that the needs of young carers are understood and routinely accommodated.