



# Carers Victoria

*Disadvantage, women and caring*



- Who we are

- Carers in Victoria - some statistics

- Women and caring

- Issues faced by women carers

- Carers Recognition Act

- Where to from here?

Who we are

Carers Victoria is the statewide voice for family and friend carers, representing and providing support to carers in Victoria

Carer Advisory Line:  
1800 242 636



# What We Do



# Carers Victoria advocates on:

New models of caring

Caring to be valued and supported

Financial security for carers

Flexible workplaces

High quality and flexible support services

# Carers in Victoria

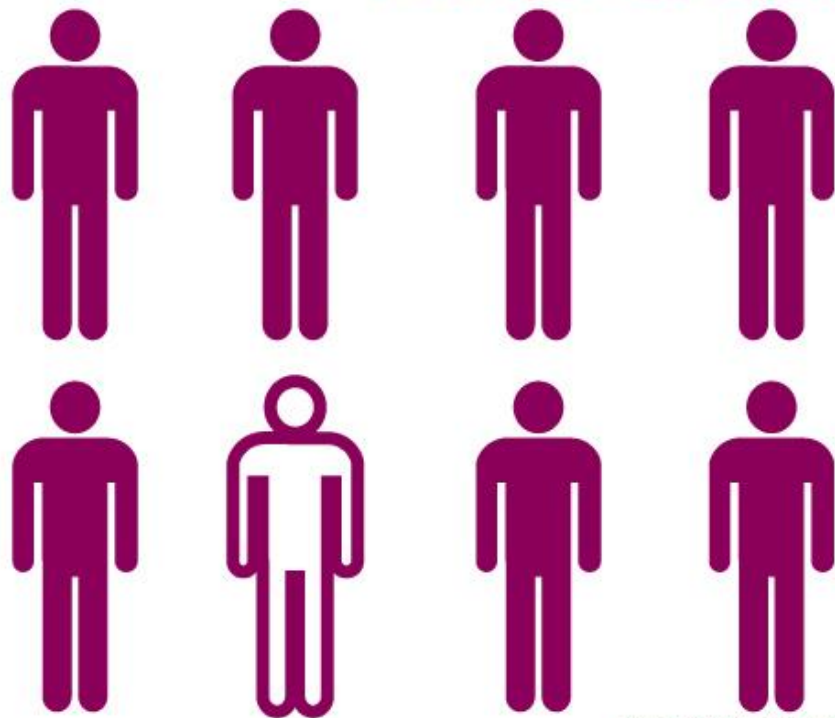






There are  
**2,700,000** carers in  
Australia

or 1 in 8 Australians



There are  
**774,000** carers  
in Victoria



or  
13.6%  
of the  
state

Source: ABS (2012) Survey of  
Disability, Ageing and Carers.

The cost of **replacing** care  
by family and friends in  
Australia is estimated at  
**\$60.3 billion** annually.

Deloitte Access Economics, 2015

Financial disadvantage

# Reasons for financial hardship

- Care responsibilities can make it difficult to remain in full-time paid **employment**
- Extra **costs** relating to illness, disability and care can be significant
- Working age carers find it difficult to **combine** work and care responsibilities. Work opportunities can also depend on respite availability
- Carers need **reform** to income support, taxation and superannuation systems to increase their financial security

Social disadvantage

Carers have the **lowest wellbeing** of any large group measured by the Australian Unity Wellbeing index.

Deakin University, 2007



**Many carers feel isolated**, missing social opportunities associated with work, recreation and leisure activities

The demands of caring can **leave little free time** for other family members or friends.

**Carers often have to deal with strong emotions**, like anger, guilt, grief and distress, that can spill into other relationships and cause conflict and frustration.

When there is a lack of flexibility of and access to supports for a caring role, it can **take the freedom and spontaneity out of life**.

**These issues can be exacerbated for people who live in regional rural and remote areas.**

Risk of homelessness

*“Caring families may not be able to accumulate assets during their working life, and as a result may not be able to enter into home ownership, or maintain their home ownership status.”*

Carers Victoria submission Residential Tenancies Act Review Laying the Groundwork  
– Consultation Paper. August 2015

Families are the primary source of housing and housing assistance for adults with a disability yet **minimal targeted government assistance is provided**.

**Eligibility rules for government assistance can determine choices** in housing for carers and the people they care for.

**Carers have higher rates of unemployment and lower workforce participation** than those who are not carers.

Caring can be associated with **lifelong renting**. Private rental tenure is often unaffordable, unavailable or unstable.

**Housing costs in private rental continue to rise** over time and particularly disadvantage families on fixed incomes.

# Women and caring

# Women are more likely to take on caring responsibilities.

In 2012, 55.9 per cent of all carers in Victoria were female. Approximately 71 per cent of all \*primary carers in Victoria are female.

Around 15 per cent of all women in Victoria (432,100) were carers in 2012, and 5.4 per cent (155,100) were primary carers.

This compares to 12.1 per cent of men in Victoria (341,200), with 2.3 per cent of men (65,100) primary carers.



# Disadvantage and women carers

**Some issues are unique to women carers, that mean physical health, mental health and financial wellbeing can be harder to achieve.**



- **Around 45 per cent** of all women carers in Victoria are in their prime working ages (45 - 64 years).
- Women carers who do work **earn a lower median gross weekly income**
- Women carers are less likely to have high levels of **educational attainment**
- Women in caring roles are also **more likely to have a disability themselves**
- **Many women may not be recognised as carers** due to stereotypes and assumed roles of women being nurturers, wives and mothers.

Where to from here?

# HACC service providers can:

- Educate your staff, clients and carers about the Carers Recognition Act (2012)
- Include carers in assessment and care planning. ASM is for carers too.
- Check eligibility for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance and State government concessions
- Recognise the financial barriers to accessing alternative care
- Refer carers for additional respite care and support

# Further reading

**Victorian Gender Equality Strategy Consultation Paper by Carers Victoria**

**Carers Victoria submission Residential Tenancies Act Review Laying the Groundwork – Consultation Paper**

**Time of our Lives? Building Opportunity and Capacity for Economic and Social Participation of Older Australian Women by the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation.**

**Women Carers in Financial Stress Report – Lifetime health and economic consequences of caring: modelling health and economic prospects of female carers in Australia.**

**Victorian Carers Recognition Act 2012**



**Thank you.**



# Any Questions?

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