



FEDERAL BUDGET 2019-20

WHO CARES FOR OUR CARERS?

Mental Health Carers Australia welcomes the announcement of \$736.6M in funding to improve access to mental health services.

We are disappointed that no new funding has been announced to support mental health carers who are at the frontline of Australia's mental health crisis. Mental health carers are the families and friends of people living with a mental illness. **They give so much in their caring role and ask for little in return.**

It is estimated that at any point in time one in five Australians are experiencing mental ill health. Of these, it is estimated that 690,000 Australians are living with severe mental illness.

Supporting carers to continue in their caring role is in the interest of all Australians. An estimated 240,000 Australians provide care and support for an adult living with a mental illness.

We know that mental health carers are exhausted, experiencing challenges with maintaining their own mental health, and face multiple barriers to gaining and keeping employment leading to long-term financial insecurity.

Mental Health Carers Australia calls on this Government to **care for our carers.**

We ask the Government to:

- **identify** and fund the gaps in mental health carer services as the NDIS and Integrated Carer Support Service reforms roll out nationally
- **increase** its investment in respite services so that carers have a break from their caring role
- **remove** barriers to mental health carers' access to education, training, employment and volunteering
- **fund** mental health carer peer workers.

The cost of replacing informal mental health care with formal services is estimated at \$13.2 billion¹ per annum. **Given this, carers must be given the recognition and support they deserve.**

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¹ Diminic S, Hielscher E, Lee YY, Harris M, Schess J, Kealton J & Whiteford H. The economic value of informal mental health caring in Australia: technical report. Brisbane: The University of Queensland; 2016