



06 support for carers & community care seniors fact sheet

This fact sheet outlines ways in which the Howard Government supports people who have caring responsibilities, and people who require care.

Family, friends or neighbours undertake the vast majority of caring by helping people with disabilities, those with chronic illness or those who are frail because of age. Carers allow people to stay at home for as long as possible. There are a variety of care services provided by the Australian Government to assist older people and their carers.

Carer Payment

Carer Payment provides income support for people who, because of their caring responsibilities, are unable to support themselves through substantial paid work. Carer Payment is subject to income and assets tests and is paid at the same rate as other pensions. From 1 April 2005, the time carers can participate in work, training or study without losing eligibility for Carer Payment will increase from 20 to 25 hours per week. For further information on Carer Payment, call Centrelink on **13 2717**, or visit www.centrelink.gov.au

Carer Allowance

Carers may also be eligible for Carer Allowance, which is an income supplement available to those who provide daily care. For further information on Carer Allowance, call Centrelink on **13 2717**, or visit www.centrelink.gov.au

Commonwealth Carelink Centres

Commonwealth Carelink Centres provide a single point of contact to obtain information about community care services, Aged Care Assessment Teams, health services and aged care homes across Australia. Centres maintain comprehensive databases of information about services which operate in

their local area, from home nursing or home modification services to meals, transport or aged care homes. For further information call FREECALL™ **1800 052 222**, or visit www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

National Respite For Carers Program (NRCP)

Under the NRCP, the Australian Government provides funds to assist family carers to obtain information and other support, including access to short-term and emergency respite. This enables the carer to take a break from their caring role. The NRCP comprises:

- > **Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres** provide carers with support and information on how to better manage the needs of the care recipient and other government programs that assist carers and care recipients. These centres also provide access to professional counselling for carers through the National Carer Counselling Program. To contact your nearest centre, call FREECALL™ **1800 242 636**.
- > **Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres** arrange, directly purchase or subsidise short-term or emergency respite for carers and their care recipients. They also provide information about residential, community and in-home respite care from local support services. To contact your nearest centre, call FREECALL™ **1800 059 059**.
- > **Respite Care Services.** There are more than 450 NRCP funded carer respite services across Australia, including specialist dementia services. For respite care in a Commonwealth subsidised aged care home, approval from an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) is required. ACAT contact details can be found in the Telstra White Pages 'Age Page' or obtained from local Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres on FREECALL™ **1800 059 059**.

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Further information on the NRCP is available from www.health.gov.au/acc/carers/nrcprog.htm

Community Care

There are three main programs which provide community care to people who wish to and are able to remain at home.

- > **The Home And Community Care (HACC) Program** provides services which support people who are at risk of premature or inappropriate admission to long term residential aged care. The Program also supports their carers.
- > **Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs)** are individually planned and coordinated packages of care for people with complex care needs who would be eligible for low level residential care.
- > **Extended Aged Care At Home (EACH)** are individually planned, coordinated and managed packages of care targeted at people who would be eligible for high level residential care.

Further information about these programs is available by calling your local Commonwealth Carelink Centre on FREECALL™ **1800 052 222** or visiting www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

Grandparents

Grandparents are an essential part of children's lives and the Australian Government is taking a strong lead in recognising the value and role of grandparents within families and within communities. Grandparent and other relative carers are eligible for the same family assistance and other payments as parents or foster carers. This includes Family Tax Benefit and Parenting Payment. In addition, grandparent carers can get concession card coverage for their grandchildren via one of a number of different types of concession cards (eg the grandparent's Pensioner Concession Card, or a foster child Health Care Card). Concession cards entitle the carer to a reduction in the costs of certain prescription medications, and Medicare services for the child.

The Australian Government is delivering an election commitment to grandparents who

have the primary responsibility for raising and caring for a grandchild. They may now be entitled to additional support through Child Care Benefit (CCB), which provides more help with the costs of approved child care. The CCB work, training and study test has been waived for eligible grandparent carers who have primary care of their grandchildren so they can access up to 50 hours of CCB for each child in approved child care per week. In addition, an eligible grandparent carer in receipt of an income support payment is able to receive Grandparent CCB (GCCB), which will cover the full cost of approved child care for up to 50 hours per child, per week.

For more information, telephone the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150**, or visit www.familyassist.gov.au

2004 – 05 Budget Measures

The Government is committed to providing strong support for those who provide care for relatives, friends and acquaintances in the community. In the 2004–05 Budget, the Government announced it will spend an additional \$461 million to support carers. The 2004-05 Carer Package includes:

- > a one-off Carer Bonus of \$1000 to eligible recipients of Carer Payment. Carer Allowance recipients received a one-off payment of up to \$600 for each eligible person they provide care for. These bonuses were paid prior to the end of June 2004;
- > an additional \$106.9 million for extending Carer Allowance eligibility to carers who do not live with the person they provide substantial levels of personal care to on a daily basis;
- > \$26.6 million for additional respite services and age-appropriate information to help young carers stay in education while also providing care; and
- > a guarantee, when matched by State and Territory governments, to provide up to four weeks respite for parents over 70 years of age who are caring for a son or daughter with a disability. Parents aged 65 to 69 who care for a son or daughter with a disability and need to spend time in hospital will be eligible for up to two weeks respite care.