

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

27 July 2015



National Carer Awards opens to celebrate exceptional contribution of carers

Unpaid carers and foster/kinship carers will be recognised through this year's National Carer Awards, highlighting their significant contribution to society and the economy.

Now in its second year, the National Carer Awards is a partnership between Carers Australia and Life Without Barriers and runs in every state and territory to publicly recognise and celebrate unpaid carers and foster/kinship carers.

All Australians are being asked to participate by identifying and nominating people in their local areas who are making a contribution to the community through their caring roles. This may include family members or friends who provide care and support to people with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, acquired brain injury, degenerative or terminal illness or who are frail aged. The awards also capture those foster and kinship carers supporting vulnerable children and young people across the country.

There are over 2.7 million ¹ unpaid carers in Australia of which over 770,000 are primary carers. There are a further 9,000 people who are foster carers and thousands more who care for a child who is known or related to them but not their own, known as kinship carers.

Chief Executive of Life Without Barriers Claire Robbs said "carers often take on an immense workload and the National Carer Awards has been developed to raise awareness of their extraordinary efforts."

"We recognise that unpaid carers and foster care/kinship carers often go unnoticed in the community, quietly meeting the needs of the people they care for," she said. "Their commitment deserves acknowledgement and these awards are a great way to show our appreciation."

CEO of Carers Australia, Ara Cresswell, said that "carers are an integral part of Australia's health system and are the foundation of our aged, disability, palliative and community care systems."

"Being aware of the diversity of unpaid carers and caring situations in Australia, and providing relevant, ongoing supports, is vital to our economy and collective wellbeing," Ms Cresswell said

The National Carer Awards are an opportunity for Australians to show their support for unpaid carers and foster / kinship carers from a variety of backgrounds and geographic locations.

Australians are urged to show their appreciation by nominating a carer who they believe is making an exceptional contribution to the person or people they support.

The National Carer Awards are supported by Telstra, Volkswagen Group Australia and Volkswagen Financial Services.

www.carerawards.com.au #CarerAwards2015

Ends –

¹ ABS 2012, Survey of Disability, Ageing & Carers

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Life Without Barriers www.lwb.org.au

Life Without Barriers is a national not-for-profit organisation working in more than 260 communities across Australia. The organisation delivers services in the areas of disability, out-of-home care, aged care, mental health support for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as support services to homeless people and to youth involved with the justice system.

LWB was established through the shared determination of local community members in Newcastle who, motivated by their own experiences, wanted to improve the lives of people with a disability. Today, it is one of the largest providers of social services in Australia, working with individuals and their carers and in partnership with others in the community including elders, government and the private sector to improve the lives of others. We believe in the rights of people and the importance of relationships. These foundations shape our unique approach to care and underpin our values.

Carers Australia www.carersaustralia.com.au

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's unpaid carers, advocating on behalf of unpaid carers to influence policies and services at a national level. It works collaboratively with partners and its member organisations, the Network of state and territory Carers Associations, to deliver a range of essential national carer services.

Carers Australia's purpose is to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security of carers and to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of family, community and government.